



SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (PEACE)

Sunday, December 8, 2013

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The unit you are viewing, Second Sunday of Advent (Peace), is a compact unit. This means that it is not a complete commentary of the Scripture(s) selected for this day on the calendar, nor does it have a full, supporting cultural resource and worship unit. Instead, to enliven the imagination of preachers and teachers, we have provided a sermonic outline, songs, suggested books, and suggested articles, links, and videos. For additional information, see Advent units in the archives of the Lectionary for 2008–2012.

I. Description of the Liturgical Moment

In the Lectionary Commentary for the Second Sunday in Advent 2010, Diane L. Hayes wrote:

Today we celebrate the second Sunday of Advent, a time of hope and anticipation, as we await the birth of the Christ child. Historically seen as a time of preparation but also a time of penitence, we review our lives and look ahead to Jesus' birth and the joys and challenges it brings. Advent is a time of journeying with all of the faithful to renewed life in Christ. It is also a time of celebration of God's first breaking into human history and a reminder of his promise to come again. We recognize in the revelation of God in Jesus that all of creation is reconciled to God. As we wait in joyful expectation, we also pay heed to our own responsibility in helping to bring about a more just and peaceful world. As African Americans especially, we acknowledge as his mother did that Jesus has come to restore the balance of the world so that it leans towards justice and away from evil. Jesus is the one who righted the wrongs of humanity and blessed us with hope for a better day.

With this material as a backdrop, we provide a sermonic outline for the Second Sunday in Advent (with an emphasis on PEACE) for 2013.

II. Second Sunday in Advent: Sermonic Outline

A. Sermonic Focus Text(s): Psalm 85 (New Revised Standard Version)

(v. 1) Lord, you were favorable to your land; you restored the fortunes of Jacob. (v. 2) You forgave the iniquity of your people; you pardoned all their sin. (Selah) (v. 3) You withdrew all your wrath; you turned from your hot anger. (v. 4) Restore us again, O God of our salvation, and put away your indignation toward us. (v. 5) Will you be angry with us forever? Will you prolong your anger to all generations? (v. 6) Will you not revive us again, so that your people may rejoice in you? (v. 7) Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation. (v. 8) Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts. (v. 9) Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land. (v. 10) Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other. (v. 11) Faithfulness will spring up from the ground, and righteousness will look down from the sky. (v. 12) The Lord will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase. (v. 13) Righteousness will go before him, and will make a path for his steps.

B. Possible Titles

- i. A Peace That Represents Christmas for Me
- ii. All I Want for Christmas
- iii. A Prayer for Peace

C. Points of Exegetical Inquiry

In any text, there can be several words or phrases that require significant exegetical inquiry. Exegetical inquiries raised by today's text are as follows:

Verses 4, 7, 9

Salvation (from the Hebrew *yēša'*) carries as its most basic meaning, "to bring into a spacious environment." It suggests a 'freedom from limitation' and therefore implies deliverance from that which binds, enslaves, or constrains.¹

Verses 7, 10

Steadfast love (from the Hebrew *āsed*) is a loving kindness characterized by loyalty and faithfulness.

Verses 8, 10

Peace (from the Hebrew *shalom*) connotes wholeness, well-being, security, health, and salvation. It is not the mere absence of conflict or violence but the state of completeness, soundness, and well-being.

Verses 10, 11, 13

Righteousness (from the Hebrew *□e□eq*) refers to relationships between human beings and relationships between God and humans. When applied to relationships between human beings, it is “action which conforms to the requirements of the relationship and in a more general sense promotes the well-being and peace of the community.” Therefore it is linked to justice. When applied to relationships between God and human beings, righteousness connotes a “correct relationship to the will of God” which is based on the covenant between God and Israel.²

III. Introduction

For 2013, the African American Lectionary has selected a theme for the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Sunday of Advent. On the 1st Sunday in Advent, we focused on World AIDS Day. **Our Advent theme for this 2nd Sunday is peace.** For many, this theme is paradoxical. On the one hand, we enter a season in which we await the angels’ proclamation of “Peace on earth.” We enter a time in which we prepare for the coming of the one Isaiah called the Prince of Peace. And yet many of us are experiencing everything except peace.

On an individual level, we are experiencing turmoil, stress, and confusion. Even as we prepare for the Christmas season, some of us are concerned about how to make ends meet for the necessities of life, let alone preparations for the holiday. We see violence in our communities. We experience conflict and confusion in our churches. Even as we scan human history, it is hard to find peace:

A former president of the Norwegian Academy of Sciences and historians from England, Egypt, Germany, and India have come up with some startling information: Since 3600 B.C. the world has known only 292 years of peace! During this period, there have been 14,351 wars, large and small, in which 3.64 billion people have been killed. The value of the property destroyed would pay for a golden belt around the world 97.2 miles wide and 33 feet thick. Since 650 B.C. there have also been 1656 arms races, only 16 of which have not ended in war. The remainder ended in the economic collapse of the countries involved.³

Yes, it is hard to find peace. Perhaps that is why we are told to expect it during the Advent season. Because when you think about it, it is in the midst of turmoil, confusion, and stress that peace is really needed. Just as the angels spoke peace to the shepherds and just as Isaiah prophesied the coming of a Prince of Peace, we hope and pray for peace, and Psalm 85 shows us how to obtain peace.

IV. Moves/Points

Move/Point One – Remember God’s past performance.

- a. There is more to our story than the present difficulties;
- b. This is not the first time we have endured hardship; and
- c. Recall the favor, fortune, and forgiveness extended to us in the past.

Move/Point Two – Rather than complain, commit present needs to God in prayer.

- a. Pray for restoration because we have broken some things through our misdoings;
- b. Pray for revival because some stuff is dead and we desire reasons to rejoice rather than mourn; and
- c. Petition God to “show us” the steadfast love and salvation needed for us to be restored and revived.

Move/Point Three: Turn our hearts to God so that . . .

- a. Steadfast love and faithfulness meet in our actions and interactions;
- b. Our righteousness brings peace close enough to kiss; and
- c. We expect God to give what is good.

V. Celebration

This is the hope of Advent, the joy given to the world, the peace that has come to earth, and the manifestation of God’s love: That no matter how bad it is or how bad it gets, God still shows up, shows out, and shows us how.

The Advent season reminds us that God will get involved. Not from a distance, not from far away, not at arm’s length, because God will not send a representative, middle man, or substitute. God has already robed Godself in flesh and stepped through 40 and 2 generations until God steps right up in the human condition.

And we may be surprised by how God shows up, when God shows up, where God shows up, or among whom God shows up. But we cannot ever lose our expectation to the point that we are surprised by the fact that God does show up.

So

- Ask and expect God to answer;
- Believe and expect God bring it about;
- Call on God and expect God to come through;

- Delight yourself in God and expect God to give you the desires of your heart;
- Pray and expect God to provide your peace.

Just expect God because God will show up.

VI. Illustration(s)

Healing a Nation

A father wanted to read a magazine but was interrupted by his little girl. She wanted to know what the United States looked like. He tore a sheet out of his new magazine on which was printed the map of the country. Tearing it into small pieces for each state, he gave it to his daughter and said, “See if you can put this together. This will show you our whole country today.”

After a few minutes, she handed him the map correctly fitted together with tape. The father was surprised and asked how she had finished so quickly. “Oh,” she said, “on the other side of the paper is a picture of Jesus. When I got all of Jesus back where He belonged, then our country just came together.”

—“Healing a Nation” received from C. Higley via the Internet by
Ellen Klinke (March 4, 2006).

Online location:

<http://www.sermonillustrationlibrary.org/illustration30>

A little girl was pushing the limits of her mother’s very last nerve. Mom was nearing the end of a hectic season of cooking, cleaning, shopping, wrapping, and church stuff. She was also nearing the breaking point with her little preschooler. Finally the little girl was bathed and ready for bed. As she knelt to say her prayers, Mom listened as her sweet three year old theologian “customized” her evening prayer, “And forgive us our Christmases, as we forgive those who Christmas against us!”

—Author Unknown

If there is righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in the character. If there is beauty in the character, there will be harmony in the home. If there is harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation. If there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world.

—Chinese Proverb

A Wardrobe from the King

Long ago, a man sought the perfect picture of peace. Not finding one that satisfied, he announced a contest to produce this masterpiece. The challenge stirred the imagination of artists everywhere, and paintings arrived from far and wide. Finally the great day of revelation arrived. The judges uncovered one peaceful scene after another, while the

viewers clapped and cheered.

The tensions grew. Only two pictures remained veiled.

As a judge pulled the cover from one, a hush fell over the crowd. A mirror-smooth lake reflected lacy, green birches under the soft blush of the evening sky. Along the grassy shore, a flock of sheep grazed undisturbed. Surely, this was the winner.

The man with the vision uncovered the second painting himself, and the crowd gasped in surprise. Could this be peace?

A tumultuous waterfall cascaded down a rocky precipice; the crowd could almost feel its cold, penetrating spray. Stormy-gray clouds threatened to explode with lightning, wind, and rain. In the midst of the thundering noises and bitter chill, a spindly tree clung to the rocks at the edge of the falls. One of its branches reached out in front of the torrential waters as if foolishly seeking to experience its full power.

A little bird had built a nest in the elbow of that branch. Content and undisturbed in her stormy surroundings, she rested on her eggs. With her eyes closed and her wings ready to cover her little ones, she manifested peace that transcends all earthly turmoil. This was peace.

—Berit Kjos.

Online location: <http://www.sermonsearch.com/sermon-illustrations/topic/194/peace/>

See the Sermon Illustrations section of The African American Lectionary for additional illustrations that you may wish to use in presenting a sermon for this moment on the liturgical calendar.

VII. Sounds, Sights, and Colors in This Passage

Sounds: Cries of suffering people; prayers of petition; groans; whines;

Sights: Fruitful lands; abundant harvests; riches; and

Colors: The green color of lands; the red of anger; the black of mourning; and the grey of rags.

VIII. Songs to Accompany This Commentary

A. Hymn(s) and Congregational Song(s)

- It Is Well with My Soul. By Horatio G. Spafford. Tune, (VILLE DU HAVRE), by Philip P. Bliss

- I've Got Peace Like a River. Traditional Spiritual
- Crown Him with Many Crowns. Revelation 19:12; St. 1, 3–5 by Matthew Bridges and Godfrey Thring. Tune, (DIADEMATA, SMD), by George J. Elvey

B. Modern Song(s)

- Peace and Favor Rest on Us. By Kurt Carr
- Peace for My World. By Daniel Weatherspoon
- Praying for Peace. By Richard Smallwood

C. Gospel Song(s) for Choirs, Ensembles, or Praise Teams

- Peace Be Still. Traditional
- Why Should I Be Bound. By Rudolph Stanfield
- In The Presence of Jehovah. By Becky Davis and Geron Davis

D. Liturgical Dance or Mime Ministry Music

- Peace. Author Unknown
- I'm at Peace. By A. Lewis and Vicki Yoh'e
- Peace Be with Thee. By Kevin Bond

E. Offertory Song(s) or Instrumental(s)

- Peace on Earth. By Ludwig van Beethoven. Adapted by Babbie Mason
- Righteousness, Peace, and Joy. By Helena Barrington
- Come, Let Us Sing. African American Traditional. Tune by Walter Owens

F. Song(s) or Instrumental(s) for the Period of Prayer

- Abide with Me. By Henry F. Lyte. Tune, (EVENTIDE), by William Monk
- Near to the Heart of God. Text and Tune by Cleland B. MacAfee
- Silent Night, Holy Night. Text, Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht by Joseph Mohr. Tune, (STILLE NACHT), by Franz X. Gruber

G. Invitational Song(s)

- Since Jesus Came into My Heart. By Rufus H. McDaniel. Tune, (MCDANIEL), by Charles Gabriel
- Until I Found the Lord. Text and Tune by Clara Ward
- Confess and Believe. By Michael White

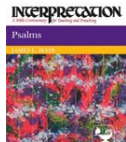
H. Song(s) of Benediction or Sending Forth

- Soon and Very Soon. Text and Tune, (SOON AND VERY SOON), by Andraé Crouch
- God Be with You. Text and Tune by Thomas A. Dorsey
- Let the Church Say Amen. By Andraé Crouch

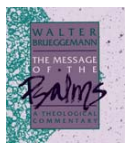
IX. Videos, Audio, and/or Interactive Media

Resource for hymns: http://www.carolynshymns.com/lect_menu.php

X. Books to Assist in Preparing Sermons or Bible Studies Related to Advent



Mays, James Luther. Psalms: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Preaching and Teaching. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011.



Bruggemann, Walter. The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1985.

XI. Links to Helpful Websites for Advent

- Resource for hymns: http://www.carolynshymns.com/lect_menu.php
- <http://www.hymns.me.uk/advent-hymns.htm>
- <http://www.cresourcei.org/cyadvent.html>
- <http://www.loyolapress.com/liturgical-year-advent.htm>
- <http://www.textweek.com/advent.htm>

XII. Notes for Select Songs

A. Hymn(s) and Congregational Song(s)

- It is Well with My Soul. By Horatio G. Spafford. Tune, (VILLE DU HAVRE), by Philip P. Bliss
Location:
The New National Baptist Hymnal 21st Century Edition. Nashville, TN: Triad Publications, 2001. #189
- I've Got Peace Like a River. Traditional Spiritual
Location:
Church of God in Christ. Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ Hymnal. Memphis, TN: Church of God in Christ Pub. Board in association with the Benson Co., 1982. #378
- Crown Him with Many Crowns. Revelation 19:12; St. 1, 3–5 by Matthew Bridges and Godfrey Thring. Tune, (DIADEMATA, SMD), by George J. Elvey
Location:
The United Methodist Hymnal. Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989. #327

B. Modern Song(s)

- Peace and Favor Rest on Us. By Kurt Carr
Location:
Just the Beginning. Inglewood, CA: Gospocentric Records, 2008.
- Peace for My World. By Daniel Weatherspoon
Location:
Shekinah Glory Ministry. Surrender. Oak Forest, IL: Kingdom Records, 2012.
- Praying for Peace. By Richard Smallwood
Location:
Smallwood, Richard with Vision. Promises. New York, NY: Verity/Verity Gospel Music Group, 2011.

C. Gospel Song(s) for Choirs, Ensembles, or Praise Teams

- Peace Be Still. Traditional
Location:
Bell Armstrong, Vanessa. Peace Be Still. Jackson, MS: Malaco Records, 1984.
- Why Should I Be Bound. By Rudolph Stanfield
Location:

Evans, David G. Bishop David G. Evans Presents Automatic Praise: Live. Lindenwold, NJ: Abundant Harvest, 2008.

- In the Presence of Jehovah. By Becky Davis and Geron Davis
Location:
Yoh'e, Vickie. He's Been Faithful. Nashville, TN: CMD Music Group, 2005.

D. Liturgical Dance or Mime Ministry Music

- Peace. Author Unknown
Location:
New Direction. Send the Praise. Inglewood, CA: Gospocentric Records, 2006.
- I'm at Peace. By A. Lewis and Vicki Yoh'e
Location:
Yoh'e, Vicki. I'm at Peace: A Praise and Worship Experience. Newton, NJ: Shanachie Records, 2011.
- Peace Be with Thee. By Kevin Bond
Location:
Hawkins, Walter and The Hawkins Family. Take Courage. Hollywood, CA: Bellmark Records, 2000.

E. Offertory Song(s) or Instrumental(s)

- Peace on Earth. By Ludwig van Beethoven. Adapted by Babbie Mason
Location:
The Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir. Light of the World. Brentwood, TN: INO Records, 2001.
- Righteousness, Peace, and Joy. By Helena Barrington
Location:
Kenoly, Ron. Lift Him Up. Colorado Springs, CO: Hosanna! Music, 1995.
- Come, Let Us Sing. African-American Traditional. Tune by Walter Owens
Location:
African American Heritage Hymnal. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2001. #502

F. Song(s) or Instrumental(s) for the Period of Prayer

- Abide with Me. By Henry F. Lyte. Tune, (EVENTIDE), by William Monk
Location:
The New National Baptist Hymnal 21st Century Edition. #50
- Near to the Heart of God. Text and Tune by Cleland B. MacAfee
Location:

The United Methodist Hymnal. #472

- Silent Night, Holy Night. Text, Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht by Joseph Mohr.
Tune, (STILLE NACHT), by Franz X. Gruber
Location:
African American Heritage Hymnal. #211

G. Invitational Song(s)

- Since Jesus Came into My Heart. By Rufus H. McDaniel. Tune, (MCDANIEL),
by Charles Gabriel
Location:
The New National Baptist Hymnal 21st Century Edition. #301
- Until I Found the Lord. Text and Tune by Clara Ward
Location:
African American Heritage Hymnal. #454
- Confess and Believe. By Michael White
Location:
Conqueror. Unknown Location: Michael White, 2006.

H. Song(s) of Benediction or Sending Forth

- Soon and Very Soon. Text and Tune, (SOON AND VERY SOON), by Andraé
Crouch
Location:
Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ Hymnal. #168
- God Be with You. Text and Tune by Thomas A. Dorsey
Location:
African American Heritage Hymnal. #639
- Let the Church Say Amen. By Andraé Crouch
Location:
The Journey. Sherman Oaks, CA: Riverphlo Entertainment, 2011.

Notes

1. Wood, D. R. W., and Marshall, I. H. New Bible Dictionary (3rd ed.) (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 1046–1047.
2. Milne, B. A. “Righteousness.” In D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer, and D. J. Wiseman (eds.), New Bible Dictionary (3rd ed.) (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 1020.

3. <http://www.sermoncentral.com/illustrations/sermon-illustration-mark-brunner-stories-20757.asp> (accessed 10 April 2013).