

**Isaiah 2:1-5  
December 2, '18  
Advent 1**

**“SOMEDAY AT CHRISTMAS”**

**LAST WEEK, WE TALKED ABOUT THE CHURCH CALENDAR & THE FACT THAT LAST SUNDAY – CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY – WAS THE LAST SUNDAY OF THE YEAR.**

**TODAY – THE FIRST SUNDAY OF THE CHRISTIAN YEAR – IS THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT.**

**NOTE THAT.**

**IT’S THE FIRST SUNDAY OF *ADVENT* – NOT, AS OUR SECULAR, CONSUMER-DRIVEN SOCIETY WOULD TELL US, THE FIRST SUNDAY OF *CHRISTMAS*.**

**I KNOW – THERE CAN BE A DANGER IN GETTING TOO CAUGHT UP IN THE TERMINOLOGY WE OFFICIALLY USE WITHIN THE CHURCH.**

**I AGREE WITH THAT SENTIMENT.**

**BUT I THINK THERE CAN ALSO BE A DANGER IN GETTING TOO CAUGHT UP IN OUR CULTURAL UNDERSTANDINGS.**

**WE NEED ADVENT.**

**WE NEED A TIME TO PAUSE BEFORE SOMETHING BIG TAKES PLACE.**

**WE NEED A TIME TO PREPARE.**

**WE NEED A TIME TO REFLECT.**

**THAT’S REALLY WHAT ADVENT IS ALL ABOUT.**

**IT’S A TIME FOR US TO THINK – NOT ONLY ABOUT THE COMING OF CHRIST AT CHRISTMAS, BUT ALSO A TIME TO THINK ABOUT HIS COMING A SECOND TIME.**

**CHRIST ENTERED OUR WORLD AS AN INFANT.**

**HE GREW TO BE A MAN.**

**HE PROCLAIMED THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD  
WHEREVER HE WENT.**

**HE PERFORMED MIGHTY DEEDS & MIRACLES THROUGHOUT  
THE LAND OF ISRAEL.**

**HE SUFFERED & DIED ON A CROSS.**

**HE WAS RAISED FROM DEATH & CONTINUED TO PREACH &  
TEACH FOR ANOTHER 40 DAYS UNTIL HE DEPARTED.**

**BUT HE PROMISED HE'D RETURN AGAIN.**

**THAT'S WHAT WE CONTEMPLATE DURING ADVENT.**

**WE WAIT & WE PREPARE TO CELEBRATE HIS SECOND COMING  
AS MUCH AS WE WAIT & PREPARE TO CELEBRATE HIS BIRTH AT  
CHRISTMAS.**

**AS WE READ THESE WORDS FROM ISAIAH, THEY ARE WORDS  
THAT HELP US IN OUR WAITING & IN OUR PREPARATION.**

**IT'S INTERESTING THAT IN THE FIRST CHAPTER OF ISAIAH, THE  
PROPHET SPOKE HARSH WORDS OF CONDEMNATION & JUDGMENT  
UPON THE PEOPLE.**

**BUT HERE – AT THE VERY BEGINNING OF THE SECOND CHAPTER,  
HE SPEAKS WORDS THAT ARE FILLED WITH HOPE – HOPE FOR A  
BETTER WORLD, HOPE FOR THINGS THAT ARE YET TO BE.**

**THAT'S WHY WE PREPARE.**

**THAT'S WHY WE WAIT.**

**DR. SEUSS TALKS ABOUT WAITING IN “OH, THE PLACES YOU’LL  
GO!”**

**HE SAYS, “*THE WAITING PLACE...FOR PEOPLE JUST WAITING  
WAITING FOR A TRAIN TO GO***

***OR A BUS TO COME, OR A PLANE TO GO***

***OR THE MAIL TO COME,***

***OR THE RAIN TO GO***

***OR THE PHONE TO RING, OR THE SNOW TO SNOW***

***OR WAITING AROUND FOR A YES OR NO.”***

**IN ADVENT, WE WAIT.**

**BUT AS WE READ THESE WORDS, THEY SOUND TOTALLY  
ABSURD.**

**THEY MAKE NO SENSE AT ALL – UNLESS WE PASS THEM OFF AS  
PIE-IN-THE-SKY POLLYANNA PROMISES THAT WILL NEVER TURN  
INTO REALITY.**

**THE CLOSING WORDS OF THIS PASSAGE ARE WORDS THAT WE  
READ ELSEWHERE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.**

**WE FIND THEM IN MICAH.**

***“THEY SHALL BEAT THEIR SWORDS INTO PLOWSHARES & THEIR  
SPEARS INTO PRUNING HOOKS; NATION SHALL NOT LIFT UP SWORD  
AGAINST NATION, NEITHER SHALL THEY LEARN WAR ANY MORE.”***

**MICAH & ISAIAH WERE CONTEMPORARIES, BOTH OF THEM  
PROPHETS IN THE 8<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY B.C. – BOTH CONCERNED WITH  
ISSUES OF JUSTICE & INTEGRITY BEFORE GOD IN A TIME OF SOCIAL  
INEQUALITY & HYPOCRITICAL WORSHIP.**

**THESE VERY SAME WORDS ARE FOUND ON THE WALL ACROSS  
FROM THE UNITED NATIONS BUILDING & IF WE THINK OF THEM AS  
ABSURD WHEN WE HEAR THEM IN WORSHIP, HOW MUCH MORE  
ABSURD ARE THEY THERE!?**

**BUT HERE’S THE THING – JUST BECAUSE THOSE WORDS SOUND  
ABSURD IN THE WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE – JUST BECAUSE THOSE  
WORDS HAVE BEEN ABSURD SINCE ISAIAH & MICAH FIRST  
PROCLAIMED THEM MORE THAN 2,800 YEARS AGO – JUST BECAUSE  
THOSE WORDS HAVE SOUNDED ABSURD IN EVERY PERIOD OF TIME**

**SINCE THEN – DOESN'T MEAN WE DON'T HOPE, WAIT & PREPARE FOR THEM TO BECOME REALITY.**

**AND, EVEN MORE, IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT, IN OUR OWN LIVES, WE DON'T DO EVERYTHING IN OUR POWER TO MAKE THEM COME ABOUT.**

**YOU MAY REMEMBER HEARING THE STORY OF RUBY BRIDGES. WHEN SHE WAS JUST SIX YEARS OLD SHE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHILDREN TO INTEGRATE THE NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC SCHOOLS.**

**THE TENSION WENT ON FOR WEEKS, AND THEN MONTHS, AS EVERY MORNING FEDERAL MARSHALS WOULD ESCORT RUBY THROUGH THE LINES OF ANGRY PARENTS HURLING INSULTS, RACIAL SLURS, AND VIOLENT WORDS.**

**AND THEN THE SAME EVERY AFTERNOON WHEN SCHOOL LET OUT, UNTIL VIRTUALLY EVERY WHITE FAMILY HAD WITHDRAWN THEIR CHILDREN FROM THE SCHOOL.**

**SO RUBY WENT TO SCHOOL ALL BY HERSELF FOR THE BETTER PART OF THE TERM.**

**THE SITUATION CAUGHT THE ATTENTION OF ROBERT COLES, A CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST AT HARVARD.**

**COLES WENT TO NEW ORLEANS, INTERVIEWED AND SPENT TIME WITH RUBY AND HER PARENTS.**

**HE INTERVIEWED HER TEACHER, AND ASKED HOW SHE THOUGHT RUBY COULD TOLERATE SUCH ONGOING ADVERSITY AND ABUSE.**

**LISTEN TO EXACTLY WHAT THE TEACHER SAID: *"I WAS STANDING IN THE CLASSROOM LOOKING OUT THE WINDOW.***

***I SAW RUBY COMING DOWN THE STREET WITH THE FEDERAL MARSHALS ON BOTH SIDES OF HER.***

***THE CROWD WAS THERE SHOUTING AS USUAL.***

***A WOMAN SPAT AT RUBY, BUT MISSED.***

***RUBY SMILED AT HER.***

***A MAN SHOOK HIS FIST AT HER. RUBY SMILED.***

***AND THEN SHE WALKED UP THE STEPS, AND SHE STOPPED AND TURNED AROUND AND SMILED ONE MORE TIME.***

***DO YOU KNOW WHAT SHE TOLD ONE OF THOSE MARSHALS? SHE TOLD HIM SHE PRAYS FOR THOSE PEOPLE, THE ONES IN THAT MOB.***

***SHE PRAYS FOR HIM EVERY NIGHT BEFORE GOING TO SLEEP.”***

***THAT INTERVIEW PROMPTED COLES TO SPEAK DIRECTLY TO RUBY ABOUT HER PRAYERS.***

***“YES,” RUBY SAID. “I DO PRAY FOR THEM.”***

***COLES ASKED, “WHY? WHY WOULD YOU PRAY FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE SO MEAN TO YOU AND SAY SUCH BAD THINGS ABOUT YOU?”***

***“BECAUSE MAMA SAID I SHOULD.”***

***COLES PRESSED HER ON THAT.***

***RUBY SAID, “I GO TO CHURCH. I GO TO CHURCH EVERY SUNDAY, AND WE’RE TOLD TO PRAY FOR PEOPLE, EVEN BAD PEOPLE.***

***MAMA SAYS IT’S TRUE. MY MINISTER SAYS THE SAME THING. ‘WE DON’T HAVE TO WORRY,’ HE SAYS.***

***HE CAME TO OUR HOUSE, AND HE SAY, ‘GOD IS WATCHING OVER US.’***

***HE SAID, IF I FORGIVE THE PEOPLE AND SMILE AT THEM AND PRAY FOR THEM, GOD WILL KEEP A GOOD EYE ON EVERYTHING AND HE’LL PROTECT US.”***

**COLES ASKED IF SHE THOUGHT THE MINISTER WAS RIGHT.**

***“OH, YES,” RUBY SAID, “I’M SURE GOD KNOWS WHAT IS HAPPENING. GOD’S GOT A LOT TO WORRY ABOUT, BUT THERE’S BAD TROUBLE HERE. GOD CAN’T HELP BUT NOTICE. HE MAY NOT DO ANYTHING RIGHT NOW, BUT THERE WILL COME A DAY.***

***LIKE THEY SAY IN CHURCH, THERE WILL COME A DAY. YOU CAN COUNT ON IT. THAT’S WHAT THEY SAY IN CHURCH.”***

***“THERE WILL COME A DAY.”***

**SOMEDAY THINGS WILL BE DIFFERENT.**

**AS WE LOOK BACK NOW – MORE THAN 50 YEARS LATER – THE WORDS OF RUBY BRIDGES SOUND PROPHETIC IN MANY WAYS.**

**CLEARLY THINGS AREN’T YET WHAT WE WISH THEY WERE, BUT BECAUSE OF THE HOPE & THE FAITH OF THOSE LIKE RUBY, WE SEE THE VISION OF ISAIAH IN THIS PASSAGE BECOMING REALITY.**

**WE HOPE, WE PREPARE, WE WAIT – AND WE ACT.**

**WE DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO ENABLE THOSE VISIONS TO BECOME REALITY.**

**WE ACT SO THAT “SOMEDAY” BECOMES “NOW.”**

**THERE’S A SIMILAR STORY TO RUBY’S.**

**NEARLY A DECADE AFTER HER EXPERIENCE, A YOUNG MAN NAMED RON LEFT THE MARINES AFTER SERVING OUR COUNTRY FOR SEVERAL YEARS.**

**HE MADE A LIVING DOING ODD JOBS & SELLING REFRIGERATORS.**

**HE ALSO PLAYED PIANO, WROTE SONGS & MADE A LITTLE EXTRA MONEY PLAYING IN A BAR IN CHICAGO.**

**ONE NIGHT, WHILE HE WAS PLAYING, A MAN CAME IN & KEPT DROPPING FIVE DOLLARS IN HIS TIP JAR FOR EVERY SONG RON PLAYED.**

**FINALLY, THE MAN SAID, *“I’M STARTING A RECORD COMPANY & I’VE GOT LOTS OF FOLKS WHO COULD SING YOUR SONGS. WHY DON’T YOU COME TO DETROIT & BE ONE OF MY SONGWRITERS?”***

**HAVING NOTHING HOLDING HIM BACK, THE VERY NEXT MORNING, RON PACKED UP EVERYTHING HE OWNED & MOVED TO DETROIT.**

**THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT THE SONGS THAT RON WROTE THAT INTRIGUED THAT MAN STARTING A RECORD COMPANY.**

**SOMEONE WRITING ABOUT HIM YEARS LATER SAID, *“RON MILLER REALLY CARED ABOUT PEOPLE. HE WROTE OF PEACE & HOPE FOR A BETTER TOMORROW DURING A TIME OF WAR & THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT. BUT HE DIDN’T JUST WRITE ABOUT IT. HE LIVED IT IN EVERYTHING HE DID.”***

**THAT MAN WHO WAS INTRIGUED BY RON MILLER’S SONGS WAS BERRY GORDY & THAT START-UP RECORD COMPANY WAS MOTOWN.**

**FOR YEARS, RON MILLER WAS REFERRED TO AS *“THE ONLY WHITE GUY AT MOTOWN.”***

**ONE OF HIS SONGS, WRITTEN FOR YOUNG TEEN-AGED STEVIE WONDER, BECAME ONE OF THE MOST RECORDED SONGS IN HISTORY WITH MORE 270 ARTISTS SINGING *“FOR ONCE IN MY LIFE.”***

**RON MILLER HAD A VISION OF ISAIAH’S *“SOMEDAY”* & RUBY BRIDGES’ *“THERE WILL COME A DAY.”***

**HE KNEW THAT *“SOMEDAY”* MIGHT BE IN THE DISTANT FUTURE BUT HE ALSO KNEW THAT IF HE WANTED IT TO COME TO PASS, HE’D HAVE TO DO HIS PART TO SEE THAT IT DID.**

**HE HAD A HOPE & A VISION FOR WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN  
“SOMEDAY AT CHRISTMAS.”**

**"Someday At Christmas"**

**Someday at Christmas men won't be boys  
Playing with bombs like kids play with toys  
One warm December our hearts will see  
A world where men are free**

**Someday at Christmas there'll be no wars  
When we have learned what Christmas is for  
When we have found what life's really worth  
There'll be peace on earth**

**Someday all our dreams will come to be  
Someday in a world where men are free  
Maybe not in time for you and me  
But someday at Christmas time**

**Someday at Christmas we'll see a land  
With no hungry children, no empty hand  
One happy morning people will share  
Our world where people care**

**Someday at Christmas there'll be no tears  
All men are equal and no men have fears  
One shining moment, one prayer away  
From our world today**

**Someday all our dreams will come to be  
Someday in a world where men are free  
Maybe not in time for you and me  
But someday at Christmas time**

**Someday at Christmas man will not fail  
Hate will be gone and love will prevail  
Someday a new world that we can start  
With hope in every heart**

**Someday all our dreams will come to be  
Someday in a world where men are free  
Maybe not in time for you and me  
But someday at Christmas time  
Someday at Christmas time**

*(Composed by Ron Miller and Ryan Wells and recorded by Stevie Wonder)*

***“MAYBE NOT IN TIME FOR YOU & ME.”***

**BUT WITH THE VISION OF ISAIAH BEFORE US, WE MUST ALWAYS  
DO EVERYTHING IN OUR POWER IN OUR OWN LIVES & IN OUR OWN  
TIME, TO MAKE THAT VISION BECOME REALITY.**

**AS WE ENTER THE ADVENT SEASON, WE ALWAYS KNOW THAT  
WE CAN NEVER SEPARATE THE CRADLE FROM THE CROSS.**

**WE COME NOW TO THAT WHICH REMINDS US OF ONE WHO  
GAVE HIS LIFE THAT THE VISION OF A BETTER & BRIGHTER WORLD  
MIGHT BE OURS.**

**WE COME TO THE TABLE OF OUR LORD TO BE STRENGTHENED  
TO DO OUR PART TO SEE THE VISION OF THAT WORLD COME TO  
PASS. AMEN.**

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