

Second Sunday of Advent – C – 2021-2022
Bar. 5.1-9 // Phil. 1.4-6 // Luke 3.1-6

→ *“take off your robe of mourning and misery and put on the splendor of God...stand upon the heights...look to the east....for God is leading you in joy....*

→increase ever more... in knowledge and perception...discern what is of value...to that you may be pure and blameless.

→prepare the way of the Lord...Make straight his paths.

→three verses from our scripture readings today with a common theme.

→there seems to be a sense of urgency...a sense of anxiousness...running through all our readings today....

→which is rather appropriate for us today in the midst of the circumstances we find ourselves in...the season it is...the time of year were in....

→for better or worse...I would venture to say that most of us these days are maybe experiencing feelings of anxiousness and curiosity, urgency and uncertainty...

→and sadly, these feelings are quickly becoming a very real part of our everyday life.

→however from a positive standpoint could it be that this season of Advent is also providing us an opportunity to ask if this sense of urgency...anxiousness is present...when it comes to our relationship with God and our faith.

PAUSE

→I am reminded of story told about all the devils of the world...who recently gathered at their national convention...Satan was there with all the other evil spirits along with some young apprentices.

→[and]..the convention's purpose was for the young apprentices to learn how to detour people away from God and win them over to their side...

→so Satan asked the group, "what do you think is the best way to win people over..."

→well very quickly one apprentice raised and said... ***"if we want to win people over to our side.....we need to tell them there is no God"***

→Satan thought for a moment and said... "we've tried that before and have had some success.....but when something tragic or drastic happens people usually turn to God for comfort....so that's not the answer....too many people already believe in God."

→[so] a second apprentice raised his hand and said, "how about if we tell them there is no hell...if they think there is no place of punishment...some will surely come over to our side"

→and again Satan said.... "...we've tried that...and have had some success...but too many people today still believe in hell these days....they believe that there has to be some place that separates the bad from the good and they call the bad place "hell"...so that's not going to work either..."

→.....there has got to be a way to get more people to come over to our side...Satan thought...

→finally after a period of silence... a third apprentice raised his hand and said...how about if we tell them....."THERE IS NO HURRY"

→suddenly Satan's horns began to wiggle....his tail began to twitch **and** a big smile came to face...because he realized that ...that might just work...

→tell them....“THERE IS NO HURRY”

→because Satan thought that even though most people want to avoid hell and be close to God....he also realized that many people are in “no hurry” to get close to God...often putting God on the back burner....so maybe...just maybe....[he thought]

→that might be the answer...

→people never seem to be in any hurry to put God first...they never seem to be in hurry to get close to God...

PAUSE

→[and so] perhaps that is why today’s readings present us with a sense of urgency....telling us that someone is coming....and that now is time to get ready....

→that there is work to be done...paths need to be straightened...valleys need to be filled and mountains and hills need to be laid low, rough ways need to be smoothed out

→i.o.w.....to make sure we have our priorities straight...one being.....our urgency to be close to God...

→and that is what this season of Advent is all about....

PAUSE

→today, we are urged to prepare our hearts....to prepare ourselves

→to make sure the pathway between us and God is straight and smooth and that the mountains and hills, the winding ways and rough roads that we have created are gotten rid of

→now is the time....we are being told....to straighten out our lives and rid ourselves of that which keeps us from God and one another....as we ready for the coming of the Lord

PAUSE

→today is December 4/5...that means there are roughly 20 more days left to straighten out our paths

→so now is the time for our repentance...to make amends in our lives

→to change the things we don't like about ourselves so that we might make ourselves better

→now is the time to wait together for the coming of the great light into our world

→to put God first in our lives....and to make God and our faith a priority....

→because....sadly...you see.....there are still a good number of us who will continue to live life as if there is "no hurry" especially when it comes to God...when it comes to the church...when it comes to their faith

→ that there is no rush...no urgency...no **need**....to get close to God.....there's plenty of time left...plenty of time to eventually get God into my life...

→but now's not the time...I;m to busy...to occupied....I've got other things...more important things to do first...

→there is "no hurry" when it comes to God and me, God and my life...God and my family...God and my faith....

→but you see....may be **THAT** is exactly what Satan wants us to think...