

Talking Points “**A Dwelling Place for God’s Love**”
by Pastor Anita delivered 12/20/20

2 Samuel 7:1-11,16; Psalm 89:1-4,19-26;
1 John 4:7-21; **Luke 1:26-38 (Sermon)**

Beloved of God, we have been journeying through this Advent season together.

In this strange season of 2020 it is good to hear the scriptures that bring comfort that Christ is Immanuel, God With Us.

This is a season that calls us to fall to our knees in worship of the awesome God who loved us so.

Loved us so much that He didn’t create an earth and walk away from it.

Instead He chose to come down and live among his creation.

What a loving thing to do.

In this season of 2020 when so much has changed, Advent is still the season where we remember that God chose to put on flesh and dwell among us.

God reached down from the very heights of heaven, in the expression of incomprehensible love for us came down to touch the life we live.

And God willingly chose to be born in the humblest of ways.

The Creator God Almighty lay in the manger, a place where animals were fed, that He may be served up for our sakes.

Advent comes to remind us to expect the unexpected.

The only response at such a great love is worship.

Especially since Advent itself, with all its familiar scriptures, insists that we look at God with new eyes and that we search for meaning of the Christ child anew.

That is what we mean when we say “may Christ be born anew in you this Christmas.”

God who is the same yesterday, today and always, knows that we do not remain the same.

God knows that small things and big things like all that has gone on in this year that is coming to a close, those things have the power to draw our hearts closer to Him as we seek to find our way.

As we seek God, who wants to be found, is still waiting for us to come closer to him.

Each experience has the potential to change us and our circumstances.

Each thing that we have experienced this year, in this Advent time, allows us a chance to hear a young couple, wife heavily pregnant with child, knock on the door of our heart and ask earnestly, “is there room?”

Can you make room in your heart for the one the world has waited for? The one we all need?

Because after all, Advent is also a reminder to us that Christ is returning to claim His bride as promised.

Love, in our world full of hate, seeks to be known.

The birth of Christ is the ultimate expression of God's love and His desire to be with and to be known by those He loves.

God desires to be close to us.

In our 2nd Samuel reading we find a profound dilemma.

King David, who has had many successes with his people realizing that He wants to do something for God, because all of his blessings have come from God and God alone.

David wants to build God a place at this moment for God.

And at this point in the journey with God's people, God responds with vs 6 "I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle"

.God has been cast here as one who cannot be 'contained', but seems to be content to move with the people.

Now of course God is omnipotent, and existing outside of everything that he has created

And now in the person of Mary, God is willing for His only son to be contained in the form of a human being.

To grow in the tight confines of the womb.

To literally be 'enfleshed' in the world.

God didn't create humanity and then just walk away.

God remembers His promise and is faithful.

Psalm 89:3-4, he has made a covenant with his chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations.

This is a faithful God.

A loving Father.

He does what He says He will do, even if we don't understand the big picture.

This is the God of love.

1 John 4:8: "He who does not love does not know God, for God is love."

God does not just show and have love, He is LOVE.

And in the Christmas story, we see this love announcing a place to dwell for the miracle to take place.

Luke 1 finds God sending the angel Gabriel to "Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David." Luke 1:26-27

And in verse 28 the angel greets her with the words “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

Mary, afraid “greatly troubled” as the scripture puts it.

But the angel responds to her ‘be not afraid’.

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

Be not afraid.

She has found favor.

And love has found a place to dwell, in the womb of the highly favored young woman.

In the familiar Christmas stories, God’s love appears to always looking for a place to dwell.

We are familiar with the gospel telling of the holy family going back to be counted, and they find no place for Mary to birth Jesus.

And each advent that we read that or sing it, or see it depicted in a play, we too experience God knocking at the door of our heart and asking “is there room for my love?”
“Is there room for me in your heart?”

And because Advent looks back to what was while looking forward to what will be, we are reminded that God still seeks to that His love dwell in us anew.

And it is 1st John who says to us pointedly “we have to love one another, because love comes from God”

This year the message seems to be particularly starkly true.

The world needs the love of God

The world needs the people of God to demonstrate that love.

Scripture tells us “love your neighbor as yourself” and in this moment of time, we’ve realized that “loving your neighbor can be as simple as wearing a mask”.

That in wearing a mask we can love neighbor and ourselves.

1st John says “friends, dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.”

Do you know God’s love today?

Are you aware how much God loves you?

The God of the universe loves and cares for you.

How do we know? John 3:16 “Because God sent his only son.”

Sent him knowing that the baby Mary cradled would grow to become the offering to pay for our sins and to restore each of us into a right relationship with our God.

Because “when we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”

1 John 4:14 “this is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.”

It is a very simple message of a very complex God.

We may not know everything about anything.

We may not know anything about everything.

But of this we can be sure and know.

God is love and He loves us.

And in this Advent season of 2020 how should we respond to God’s love?

1 John 4 says, by loving one another

By Accepting Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

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See the message of Jesus and God’s love for us can become drowned out amidst all the packaging and the gift giving.

The real gift of Christmas is that God loves you and He wants you to unwrap the babe in the manger and accept him and his gift of eternal life for yourself.

1 John 4:10 “This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”

And when we have done that God is allowed to dwell in our hearts this year, we are to demonstrate that in the people we meet, in our families, and in the people around us.

That is how God’s love is spread.

Where people are isolated. In love reach out.

When people are scared. In love reach out.

When there is illness and contagion in the air, in love please wear a mask.

We have to become like Mary who declared “my soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior” and proclaim His mercy is available.

Once we accept love into our hearts, we not to keep it.

In God’s mathematical formulation, the more of His love we share with others, the more of his love he puts back in us.

God’s love is made complete in us (vs 17) This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have

confidence on the day of judgement: in this world we are like Jesus.”

In this world, we are like Jesus,

If we don't share God's love with those in need, if we don't bring comfort, that's a little less Jesus in the world.

1 JOHN 4:12 No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

Show God's love.

Share God's love.

I close this morning with three simple words in John's passage.

God is love.

Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.

God wishes for the Christ Child to be born anew in you this year.

His love is looking for a place to dwell and it is in you

God wants to dwell in you.

Accept Christ into your heart.

Be filled with the Spirit.

Take God's love into the world of those around you.

Demonstrate Christ's love in all you do.

We love because he first loved us.

CHALLENGE

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