

## SERMON

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It's advent, a season of waiting as we go into the time awaiting for Christmas. I'm not really very good at waiting I don't know about you, but this time, this season of advent, I feel like we're all waiting and it's because of the pandemic. It's like our lives have been pushed on pause, everything has had to stop. So much of what we called normal, normal life has been put on hold. And it helps me in a way resonate with this whole idea of advent and waiting. And I'm waiting for normal, what is normal? We ask if we'll ever go back to normal, will normal be like normal was before? Or will the pandemic have changed everything so much that we won't even be able to recognise normal when we get back to it?

And in this season of waiting, we're a bit like the two passages that we've read from the Bible. There's that passage from Isaiah. Isaiah was waiting. He was waiting not just for a short time not just for a season of months, but for centuries. He was talking about something that was going to happen centuries in advance. He was with the people of God and things weren't going very well at that time. And in his writings, he predicted things going really, really wrong but then he predicted an answer. He predicted Christmas; he predicted the coming of Jesus.

And we see in that amazing passage that when he talks about the coming of Jesus he talks about incredible peace on earth of a lion and a lamb lying down together, of reconciliation and of peace on a massive worldwide scale. That's also in a way what we long for and hope for. We hope for wellbeing across our whole world based in our lives and the lives of everybody else.

You see normal is supposed to be good because God created the world and he created it 'good'. It says so right at the beginning of the Bible. That's actually what he created a good normal world that he wants us all to enjoy and to be a part of. It's just that we chose to go our own way and in choosing to go our own way we've really messed things up, we messed up normal.

And even what we're experiencing now is part of that abnormal. We know it's not right, we'd know that we don't want to be in a pandemic and so we wait just how Isaiah waited for the real normal, which is good, which comes with Jesus. John, our second passage (it's in Mark it's John who's speaking) he talks about the coming of Jesus. He's not centuries away, he's almost moments away, days away from the coming of Jesus.

And he talks about the gift of God's very spirit coming with Jesus. That's actually the gift of God himself. God was bringing back normal, which is good, which is a complete and utter relationship with God. That is what good and normal looks like. And that means that when we have God in the middle of our lives even when we wait in a pandemic, we're actually waiting in a good place because we've got God with us. And in this season of advent as we wait for Christmas we remember another period of waiting.

A period where we wait for Jesus to come back right at the end of time where he will make every fear disappear in love, every darkness will be gone to light, every moment of despair that we've ever had will go into wellbeing. He will eradicate all disease, all pandemics, all of these things when Jesus comes again and we wait right now at this moment for that moment too. And if you've never known what it is like to actually know Jesus for yourself and walk with him why don't you make this Advent and this Christmas really special?

You could actually ask him in, especially at this time of pandemic, he wants to give you as it says in that passage, the greatest gift of all, the gift of God's spirit to be with you at this time. So that as we wait it out to go back to normal God can wait it out with you by the gift of his very spirit.

I'd love you to invite you to actually make that decision today. You don't have to wait, it's one thing you don't have to wait for is actually to invite Jesus into your life and to know the gift of God's spirit. So why don't you stop right where you are and stop waiting and invite Jesus in.