

120323 "Advent: Active Waiting" 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

We spend a lot of time waiting. Waiting in line. Waiting for a response. Waiting for a phone call from loved ones. Waiting for news. Waiting for a promotion. Waiting for the next season of life.

Dorothy Dow wrote a poem called "Waiting."

If you should walk in the park and not find me,
Or go in the market-place and not see me,
Would you not search further?
Does not your heart tell you I am somewhere?
Go out on the long roads—I may be at the end of one.
The sea to the ship,
The river to the little boat,
The cloud to the swallow—
One for the other, always.
And I, for you, forever.

Let's assume you are sitting in a store and waiting for your loved one. The door opened. You looked at the person entering the store and wondered if the person you were waiting for had entered, but no. The door opened again and you looked to see if it was the one, but it wasn't. But then you may realize that, 'It seems like you're passively waiting like this, but while you're waiting, you're getting closer to that person in your heart.'

While you are waiting for that person, your heart goes to that person first. So we could call it "active waiting." Waiting appears to be passive, but I'll say in a sense the waiting of Christians is active waiting. What is active waiting? You think well of that person who will come. As you think about that beautiful one,

that one you miss, your heart is filled with that beautiful one you miss. Advent is about active waiting. We are desperately waiting for Jesus Christ. Then, we who are waiting will resemble the Lord who will come. That is the important meaning of Advent: Active waiting to resemble Jesus Christ.

Today is the first Sunday of Advent. Advent is a feast of four weeks of waiting, remembering and giving thanks to the true meaning of Christmas and waiting for Jesus to come again. The word Advent comes from the Latin word 'adventus', which means 'coming' and 'to arrive'. It is a season to prepare for the coming of Christ in various meanings: the coming of Jesus being born in Bethlehem, the promised return of the risen Christ in final victory, and the continual coming of Christ into your life and your heart today.

At the end of the year, our minds are always busy. [It's only natural that stressed-out people eat more desserts, because "stressed" spelled backwards is "desserts."](#) [If that's true, there's a lot of stress between Thanksgiving and New Year.](#) Amidst this busyness and stress, the most important thing that we should never forget is in the Advent!

If you look at Paul's letter today recorded in 1 Corinthians 1:3, Paul declares God's blessing first on the Corinthian church. "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." May you also have grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ here and now!

In today's Bible text, chapter 1 of 1 Corinthians, the Apostle Paul said: "I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus... so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul told them about a life of waiting for the Lord and a life of gratitude.

The apostle Paul also said in verse 5, "for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind." In other words, he was grateful for the abundance of all the words and knowledge of the Corinthian church. If you translate this sentence directly from the original Greek Bible, it reads like this: 'I am thankful for you who have become rich in Logos and Gnosis.' In other words, 'I thank God for you who are rich in His Word and the wisdom to apply it to your lives.' My hope is that this Advent season, you will be rich in God's Word and it will touch your heart.

The important thing is in verse 6, "just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you." In other words, the evidence that you experienced the presence of God should strengthen your faith!

Grace Davidson took her four-year-old granddaughter to "big church" for the first time. She sat quietly taking in every aspect of the service and her attentive curiosity stayed in check until the pastoral prayer. The pastor said, "We thank You, Lord, for Your presence." The little girl's eyes flew open and she whispered to her grandmother, "Granny, we're gonna get presents!"

God's presence is sure to exist for those who want to dwell in Jesus even in difficult times. Do not lose that evidence, and I hope you will build up your faith even in the midst of harsh weather or situation while actively waiting.

Through this kind of thanksgiving, hope, and active waiting, as the Apostle Paul said in verse 8, "He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." Verse 9 continues, "God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." Here, "fellowship" means [koinonia] in Greek, meaning to participate. If so, fellowship with Jesus Christ is to share in all of Him. Christians are said

to be a part of Christ's death by faith, now part of His life through the Holy Spirit, and finally part of His glory to come.

In her book, *No Greater Love*, Mother Teresa called her to readers to a kind of faithfulness that in some ways more closely imitated Christ's than the Corinthians'. She wrote: "Always be faithful in little things, for in them our strength lies. To God nothing is little ... Practice fidelity in the least things, not for their own sake, but for the sake of the great thing that is the will of God ..."

"Do not pursue spectacular deeds. We must deliberately renounce all desires to see the fruit of our labor, doing all we can as best we can, leaving the rest in the hands of God. What matters is the gift of your self, the degree of love that you put into each one of your actions.

Dear beloved sisters and brothers in Christ, we have reached the first Sunday of Advent. The reason we can still hope is because there is God's grace to experience in Jesus Christ. Our lives today are still busy, but let's actively wait for the coming of the Lord and always be faithful in little things. Fairfield Grace, may God's grace, peace, goodness, and mercy be with you, your family, your business, your studies, and with the lives of your children. To Christ be thanks and praise. Amen.