

December 20, 2009

# Longing for God

LUKE 1:39-45; 1 PETER 1:3-12

Rev. Darryl C. Evans

Our excitement grows each day as we come closer to the birth of Jesus. After all, what in life do we prepare and have more excitement for than the birth of a baby? But the irony of Christmas is that when Jesus is born we are the ones who truly become alive.

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As we come to our first reading, Mary has just learned that she is pregnant through the Holy Spirit. She learns her relative Elizabeth is also miraculously pregnant, so rushes to get ready. She hurries to take a trip and go out of town to visit family.

We can picture the scene of this first Christmas so well because some things about Advent never change. Even today during this Season we may very well have a sense of excitement, or a sense of anxiety. We too rush about and take trips and visit family. We too

s always a long and excited time of preparation with a hint of anxiety. As an expectant father, I have been wondering about Advent anew. I know during this Advent Season I have been preparing for the birth of a waiting all week to say that.)

The one comment that I have heard more than any other during this time of pregnancy Many people like to give advice the type of things you heard b Or,

Yes, it will. This is why God gives parents nine months to prepare. Nine months for it to begin to register that life is about to change, that they are about to have new responsibility, that they are about to receive a gift, that they are about to pour their lives out to make sure that their new baby will be taken care of.

The arrival of a baby means that we busily prepare and we wait at the same time for a great gift, which is really what Advent is all about. Waiting never comes easy. It is not something that people do well.

So we can see some similarities as we picture the Virgin Mary getting ready for the birth of Jesus as she rushed around at the First Advent. But imagine how different it was for her: No one would have had a busier and potentially anxious time waiting than Mary did with Jesus. For us, we have been counting down nine months for the big change, but the nine months that we wait is dwarfed by the wait that preceded the birth of Jesus because believers had been waiting for the Messiah to come for thousands and thousands of years. A nine-month wait for us, or waiting for millennia for Jesus. The contrast of the length of the period of waiting underscores the importance of who is about to be born. The excitement for baby Evans is absolutely nothing compared to the excitement of the coming of the baby Jesus.

As Peter wrote in our second reading, the prophets and people of God strained, trying to figure out the time and circumstances when the Messiah was to come. They focused wit9ome(cc)46 )JTJETBT1

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, but rather through  
the Coming of the Messiah, through the Birth of Jesus, with His birth we become Alive. We  
experience a New Birth. We have a New Life. We ate just because God gave us a  
gift, but we celebrate God with joy because we have been changed. We celebrate with joy  
b  
the season.

\* \* \*

During this Christmas Season, we may feel anxious. We see lights, and gifts and money  
and people hustling all around us. But this Christmas, may our anxiousness come not from all  
the materialism of the season, but may it be rooted in excitement knowing that God is doing a  
miraculous thing. May we be excited as we look for the activity of God. May we be excited that  
we received new life from God.

The world would do anything it can to have us miss the calling of Advent. For the call of  
this season of Advent is to wait and be still. The waiting focuses us. We focus our hearts and  
minds on Jesus trying to grasp a little more of the significance of what is going on right before  
us.

We realize that when a baby is born, like baby Evans, it is a gift. It is demanding, there is  
give and take, and the parents pour out their lives for concerned of the welfare of the life of  
that baby. But in contrast, with Jesus, the Virgin Mary did not take care of a baby, because the  
Baby came to take care of Mary. But through His Birth, we do not give life; we receive it.

The prophets of old longed for the coming of the Messiah. Mary waited for her child to  
be born. When it comes to the saving work of Jesus, even angels long to look into these things.  
So what are we longing for? Do we simply want safety? Or comfort for ourselves and hope  
nothing bad befalls us? Do we just want to be with our families and make sure that we are taken  
care of?

Or do we long for God? Do we long for the brokenness of the world that is all around us  
to  
people around us, poverty down the street, people in abusive relationships and long for them to  
be refreshed and renewed by God too? Do we long for them to experience the Good News?

What do you yearn for? Those types of yearnings for God to work are good signs that  
yourself, what do you really believe about Jesus? What has God been doing in your life in the  
past couple years? If your life has not been changed by God, then you do not know Him.

Have you ever felt how all- Do you

angels do. If you are hungry for God, then you are on the right track. If you long for God, then  
you know the true meaning of Advent. Because Jesus is here. And if you ever encounter the  
Christ Child, your li Amen.

First Presbyterian Church  
211 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street / Washington, NC 27889 / 252-946-4616  
www.fpcwashington.org  
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