



Sermon Study Guide for November 26, 2023

Our Savior Lutheran Church and School

Theme: We are starting our Advent series: Christmas Confessions: We have confessions throughout the Advent and Christmas season. We don't like to wait, we focus too much on gifts, we can't find the joy for Christmas this year, and sometimes we want it to only be Christmas, and keep sweet baby Jesus in the manger. But we also confess much more. That Jesus is the true reason for the season, and is coming back to claim this earth as His own. May we confess Jesus this Advent season.

Our theme for week 1 is: Waiting can be difficult. But the people of Israel waited thousands of years for the Messiah. From the last prophet Malachi to Jesus, there were hundreds of years. We slow down, we wait, we don't skip over Advent to Christmas.

Getting Started: (sharing with each other)

1. What is the longest you've ever had to wait for something? Was it worth the wait?
2. What is your Christmas Confession? We pray that our hearts and mouths would confess our Lord and Savior as the reason for the season. But is there something this year about the Christmas season, that you want to confess? Maybe a struggle, or concern, or worry about this time of year?

In the Word: Micah 5:1-4

3. The people of God had many times of waiting. Years of slavery in Egypt, wandering in the wilderness, waiting for the Messiah, numerous times being conquered by other nations. How would the waiting and waiting that they'd been through affect their longing for the Messiah?
4. If you'd have had to wait like the Israelites, how would it affect your relationship with God? They often grumbled and struggled with God. Have you ever had to wait longer than you would have liked for God to answer you or your prayers?

5. In Micah 5:1, we hear that the ruler of Israel will be struck. But then in verse 2, we have the promise of the Messiah, the One who will be the Ruler over Israel. There are many times that the Israelites would have received words from prophets like this. How would these words continue to give them hope? How does it give us hope today?

6. Micah 5:4, is a beautiful showing of our Lord as ruler. "He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God." How does that show how Christ will rule, and how get to live with Him as our ruler and shepherd?

In the Word: Mark 1:1-3

7. The people of God had waited hundreds of years from hearing from Malachi to now hearing from John the Baptizer on the banks of the Jordan River. God chose John to be the one who would prepare the way for Jesus. How does John do that?

Putting it all Together (what do we believe or do as disciples?)

8. Waiting can be extremely difficult. But as people of God, we are called to wait. Waiting also builds anticipation. Think of how overjoyed the shepherds were when they heard Jesus was born! So 2 questions:
 - a. How do we slow down and wait during the Advent season? It can be difficult, but how do we wait?

 - b. In a world where we hate to wait for almost anything, how can we restore the anticipation and joy of the Advent season? Not just for Christmas Eve, or Christmas Day, but for the return of Jesus?

Prayer: Ask God that He would restore your patience this Advent season. Thank God for the hope that we have in the salvation won for us by Jesus. Pray that God would help all of us slow down this Advent season, and anticipate the celebration of Jesus' birth, and anticipate His return!

Next Week: During the season of Christmas, we often focus on the material things, the stuff. But during this Advent season, we strive to focus on the best Gift, given by the greatest Giver.