



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

December 8, 2013

Advent 2

Sermon Text: [Isaiah 11:1-10](#)

Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Isaiah 11:1-10](#)

Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 14](#)

Second Lesson: [Romans 15:4-13](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Matthew 3:1-12](#)

### **Promises Made: *God's Kingdom is Worth Waiting For***

In Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

Of all the strengths and blessings we enjoy in American society, I would have to say patience is probably not one of them. We don't like waiting for much stuff ever really. I used to think it was weird when you would go to stores before Thanksgiving and see Christmas stuff out to purchase and what not. Now it's out before Halloween. It won't be too long and you'll be handing out to trick or treaters those little Christmas trees covered in chocolate, covering peanut butter, as your Halloween treats since they'll already be on clearance because they've been sitting out for so long. That just seems to be the way it is at this time of the year.

We have no patience for waiting to celebrate Christmas. We start celebrating it real early. And kind of by the time Christmas gets here, we're sick of Christmas music and Christmas songs because we've been listening to them on the radio and everywhere else for so long that celebrating Christmas is all over before Christmas gets here.

Patience might not be a trait we are really good at, but patience is something that is stressed again and again by God in his Word. Just look in a Concordance once or do a search on your Bible on your phone or something for "wait for the Lord." It's in there over and over and over. "Wait for the Lord." "Be patient and wait for the Lord." "Put your hope in the Lord for with him is full redemption." "Wait for the Lord." Again and again God encourages us to be patient. I suppose it's a part of our being a "little Christ" (which is what it means to call ourselves Christians) because of the incredible patience of our God with us.

He reminds us to be patient, but as we look at this promise that God makes to us during this Advent season, we see the promises, and we see your patience is worth it. God's kingdom is worth waiting for. As God's people, it's something we need to focus on. It's going to come in an unexpected way, as he tells us in Isaiah from what I read to you a little while ago. He's going to come and do the unexpected. And the result of all that will be an unexpected and an unimaginable peace that our Messiah would win for us.

In Isaiah 10, Isaiah talked about how God was going to punish the kingdom of Judah, the Southern Tribes, because they had disobeyed the Lord and turned their back on the Lord. They didn't wait for the Lord. They continually and constantly, instead of trusting in God to deliver them, took matters into their own hands because God wasn't working

on their time frame. They took it into their own hands by doing things like making alliances with other kings that God had told them not to do to defend them against whenever an enemy would threaten. Instead of being patient and waiting for the Lord and saying, "The Lord will deliver us," they'd say, "We better deliver us. Let's go make an alliance with this king or that king. It doesn't matter if it is going to be the exact opposite of what God said. He doesn't seem to be doing anything about it." Because they had done that again and again and again, God told them his judgment was coming.

Chapter 10 is pretty bleak, pretty dismal, which is what makes Chapter 11 so amazing. It's this beautiful promise that even though the line of David would come to an end (because that's what he was saying was going to happen in Chapter 10) he says, "From that stump of Jesse," not David but of Jesse, to take it back to the humble roots of the line of David as king, "a shoot will come up."

Do you remember the story of Jesse? Saul was the king and God was going to take the throne away from Saul because he had disobeyed the Lord and it was going to come from the line of Jesse. So Samuel goes to Jesse and they go through all the sons. They look at all the sons. Samuel is thinking, "Look at this guy. He looks like a king. This must be the one who will be king." The Lord would say, "No. Not this guy. Not this guy. Not this guy. Not this guy." Until finally they have to go out and get the runt of the litter from the sheep. They bring David in from tending the sheep, and the Lord says, "This is the man who is going to be my king."

The stump of Jesse I think is specifically mentioned to take it back to the humble roots that God had acted to make someone who you wouldn't have expected to be king the king, and God is the One who had blessed them greatly. But in Chapter 10 he told them that the line of David was going to become a stump because God was going to discipline his people.

That happened in 586 B.C., like the introduction in your service folder said. This shoot that comes out of the line of Jesse didn't come for almost 600 years. Six hundred years they had to wait for this prophecy to be fulfilled. None of the people that originally heard it got to see it fulfilled. Isn't it kind of cool though that you and I got to see it fulfilled? Some of the things he talks about in this reading we don't see yet today, but God is telling us to be patient and wait for the Lord because it's worth waiting for.

The Babylonians had carried off the Israelites into captivity. Out of that stump that was there for 500 years, a shoot came up. It was a shoot that was going to be different than any other king God had given to his people. The other kings went and did things that their eyes and their ears said would make sense. "Let's make an alliance with these people. It doesn't matter if God said don't, it's going to help us, so we should do it." He would be a King that would always begin by going to the Lord and the Lord's will and the Lord's way, and not as an afterthought or a last resort. That's what God's people did time and time again, didn't they?

The enemy would come. They would make their alliances. The alliances would fall apart and they would cry out, "Lord! Deliver us!" So often in their history, God did deliver the Israelites. But in 586 B.C., he let the tree be cut down. And out of that stump, he sent a King that would always look to the Lord and his will first, a King that would be unlike any other king because he would not judge on what his eyes see and what his ears heard. That's a good thing.

I don't know if when I read that to you earlier your heart kind of thrilled to hear that the Branch that grows out of the stump of Jesse doesn't rule by what he sees or hears, but that should thrill you to pieces. What does God see when he looks at you? What does Jesus see when he looks at you? Does he see people just like the Israelites that often go to God as an afterthought, as a last resort when things haven't worked out the way you had hoped? Do we then go to the Lord and say, "Lord, help us. Lord, deliver us." And when things are going well, do we tend to forget about God? I think we are all prone to that, aren't we? We are sinners. That's why God calls us to repent, because we are sinners.

If Jesus came to judge, the coming Messiah, that Branch that comes out of that stump, if he came and judged us on the basis of what he saw and what he heard, you and I would go to hell, no ifs, ands or buts, because you and I are sinners and the wages of sin is death. But when it says here that he's not going to judge on the basis of what he hears or what he sees, but with righteousness he will judge the peoples, with righteousness as his belt, he judges the needy and gives decisions for the poor of the earth (the poor and needy are you and me; we have nothing to offer God), it's not just physical poorness. It's spiritual.

This is the other thing we learn about God... he talks about spiritual things and our eyes never really at times get lifted above the physical things. But he says the most important thing in his kingdom are these spiritual things. The Messiah that came, Jesus Christ, judges us on the basis of his righteousness, not on the basis of our failed righteousness. He doesn't treat us as our sins deserve. Instead he forgives our sins and remembers them no more. As far as the east is from the west, he has removed them from us. Then he gives us the spirit to believe that what he has done for the world is ours personally.

Unexpectedly, out of a stump comes this Branch. Unexpectedly, not the natural course of things. He does not treat us as our sins deserve. Instead, in grace he forgives us and gives us eternal life. This is the nature of our King. That is why it's worth waiting for. Because it's unexpected, because it comes out of a stump, something you wouldn't expect, we always need to be on guard because his second return is going to be the same way... unexpected. Day after day you and I need to be ready, if Christ were to come back that day, that we are ready to meet him. When we consider what awaits us, we want to be ready to meet him.

That last section, starting with verse 6, verses 6-9, we aren't talking about a zoo here where *"The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf*

*and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them.*” We aren’t talking about that. It’s a picture of the peace that we will enjoy in the perfection that will be ours as Isaiah looks beyond the time of the Messiah coming. He looks to the time when the Messiah takes his people to be with God forever in heaven. What he has as a picture is peace, no threats, no danger. When it says a little child will lead the calf and the lion and the yearling together, it’s this picture that there are no threats. You aren’t going to send a little child to go tend the lions in the zoo, are you? They’d become lion chow, right?

Yet God tells us when the kingdom has been established by the Messiah, when God takes us into that kingdom on the Last Day, there are no more threats. There’s no more danger. You can stick your hand into the viper’s nest because there is no threat to you because all of the things that threaten us and cause difficulty for us, sin, it’s all been removed. That’s why this kingdom is worth waiting for.

I know that at times as you and I wait for it as we go through life, we go through so many hurts, so many pains, and we want to throw up our hands and say, “God, where are you? You’re not keeping your promise. You’re not making all these things peaceful. And there are all these things that hurt. Why aren’t you here taking them away?” That’s not a promise God has made to you and me.

He has never made that promise that on this side of heaven everything will go well and we’ll never have problems. He has made the promise that he’ll be with us through it all. He’s made the promise that “I have something better waiting for you, so lift your eyes above the here and now and wait for this and put your trust in me because of how I have saved you.” You and I can’t call on God to keep a promise he hasn’t made. When we do, we sin because we really show that we have neglected his Word. We can’t call on him to keep a promise he hasn’t made.

But you can see all the promises he has made. You can be ready at all times for his return by focusing on his Word and making faithful use of his Sacrament. Think of how often you and I don’t have time for that. If God were to judge you on how faithful you were to his Word, you’d fail. And if God were to judge you on the basis of how faithful you were to being in his Word, you would fail. That’s why it should thrill you to no end that God doesn’t judge you by what he sees. He judges you by what he did for you.

That last verse of the text tells us that the Root of Jesse is not just for God’s people Israel, but it’s for all nations (as we heard in our Second Lesson). As we saw in our Gospel, God sent John to call all people to repentance. When he said “Don’t say to yourself, ‘We’re Abraham’s descendants so we don’t need to repent because we’re already right with God,’” he says, “Out of these stones I can bring up children for Abraham.” Those stones he’s talking about would be you and me, we who are not descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but we who are part of God’s kingdom because of what the King has done for us, because the Branch of Jesse came for you and me as well. His love extends to us and brought us into his kingdom.

If that's not a reason for us to be patient, to wait for the Lord and to grow in our knowledge of the Lord, then we just really misunderstood the message of John about repent. Then we're probably a little closer to the pharisees and Sadducees that came out to see John just to see something strange and weird and different, but who didn't think they really needed his message of repentance because they were doing alright on their own. If you don't have time for God, you've probably bought into, on some level, the lie that you're doing alright on your own and you don't need Jesus. But the One who came to be that King, to judge us in righteousness, also says *"He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked."*

The message of John to repent and be right and be connected to Jesus or else you're going to hell is the same message of today. God is loving and forgiving. He is the Savior of the world, yet he will also judge the world. Those not connected by faith to him will spend eternity in hell. The only time that you and I have as God's representatives to get others ready for Christ's return is now. Proclaim the Word of Christ. Grow in the Word of Christ. Share that Word of Christ with others so that God may bring other people into his kingdom. That's the privilege our God gives us. Amen.