

In the name of the Father and of the ✠Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Last Sunday ([Isaiah 2:1-5](#), [Psalm 122](#), [Romans 13:11-14](#), [Matthew 24:36-44](#)), we heard the call to live daily as children of the light, being ready at all times for the return of Christ as King of kings. This week ([Isaiah 11:1-10](#), [Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19](#), [Romans 15:4-13](#), [Matthew 3:1-12](#)), we hear God's messengers bring the world a call to repentance, justice and peace. It's as if the call to live constantly as God's children wasn't heard by everyone last week, so we are told this week that we have the opportunity to repent for our shortcomings, receive justice at the hand of God, and then have the opportunity to live in peace with all the nations as children of God, reconciled with him by his mighty hand of grace.

From the prophet Isaiah we hear some very familiar words of prophesy. When the Messiah comes to the people, Isaiah foretells, the "spirit of the lord shall rest upon him," ([Isaiah 11:2a](#)). The Messiah will have the gifts of the spirit that previous leaders of the Chosen People didn't have: wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge and fear of the Lord. Their leaders had some of these traits, but none had them all. More importantly, not one king after Saul and David, not even Solomon, was anointed king by the power of the spirit. Solomon and his successors were named king based on their birthright.

When the Messiah, God's anointed one, comes into the world, he will bring with him peace and justice as well as righteousness and faithfulness. The peace and justice will come to all nations and all peoples. Jesus proclaimed a message of peace, not conflict, to his followers, and we are called upon to be a part of the message today as well. Listen to the prophet tell us about the way things will be: Wolf lies with the lamb, calf with the lion, a child as their leader. The lion will become a vegetarian, eating grass with the ox, instead of eating the ox itself. Even the poisonous snakes of God's own creation will not attack the hand of the curious little child.

If things like this will happen when the Lord returns, what can we expect in the meantime? Is there anything we can do to help show the world a *little bit* of what is to come? Are we able to be the "teaser" before the main event?

Last Sunday, we heard the call to live as children of the light. Now, we get some suggestions as to what that means. To live as children of the light is to live as that "teaser" to the main

event. That is, we are called to show the world, through our own actions and behavior, what the world will look like when our Master, Jesus Christ, comes as Lord of all. We're imperfect, sinful beings, doomed to a life separated from God, except by God's grace we have been forgiven our sins and redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ, on the cross at Calvary. But as children of the light, sinners of God's own redeeming, we are called to live as exemplars.

The community of Christ is not a closed community. We don't post a sign on our doors and say, "No non-Jews or non-Christians allowed." We don't broadcast a message that "English only is spoken here." We don't hang banners saying, "Sinners go away!" Rather, we proclaim that this is a place, by the grace and love of God, for all people. We declare to all who have ears that we are bringing a message of hope and promise, a call to repent from the sins the world places upon us and we place upon ourselves. Like Paul told the Romans, we declare to all in our midst that Jew and Gentile alike are called into harmony with one another through Christ Jesus. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who is also the God of the Gentiles!

Our message is one of peace, welcome, and inclusion. Our message is, perhaps, a bit calmer and easier on the ears than that of John the Baptist, but it is the same message. We call upon those in the world who have not heard that Jesus Christ is coming to not only hear that message, but to repent from their sins, come to know the grace that God has for them, and be baptized, not just in the water of repentance, as John the Baptist provided, but with the fire of the Holy Spirit for their redemption and forgiveness in the name of Jesus. Our message of peace and justice calls on all to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd and heed the call of his prophets and be reconciled with God and with one another.

Isaiah proclaimed the kingdom of God and the promise of the Messiah to the Chosen People. John the Baptist proclaimed the coming of the Son of Man to the Jews. Paul proclaimed the Good News of Christ crucified and resurrected to the Gentiles. The message of peace, justice, reconciliation and forgiveness comes to all nations through all who walk in the light of Christ, all who are children of God and children of the light.

We continue to wait on the coming of the birth of the Christ Child even as we await the coming of Christ the King. Having been called, gathered, and sent into the world for the

sake of the world, we wait patiently, yet we are impatient. We carry out of this place a message for the world as old as the world itself. God loves us, and wants to be in a right relationship with us. In order to show us that love, and to ensure that we will spend all of eternity with God and in the presence of God, Jesus, the Son of God, was sent into the world to live and die and rise from the dead in victory of sin, death and the devil so that we might not perish, but have everlasting and abundant life.

This is the message, the Good News, we are called to carry into the world. We are called to share it with friend and stranger alike. We are expected to shout it from the mountaintop and whisper it on our pillows. We post it on the doors of the Cathedral Church and on the expanse of the Internet. The Messiah comes, just as God has promised through the prophets. Peace among peoples awaits us at his feet.