

Mark 11:1-10 – Our Sins

We start again another Advent, another season of waiting, another rehearsal for the future, the main event, that is coming. And it all looks so familiar because it is. The blue of repentant hope, the greens of life anticipated, the candles of light that shine in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. It is familiar all right.

We are still sinners awaiting the completion of what God has begun. We are still mortals awaiting immortality. We are still the people of God waiting for what we shall be in eternity. We have been here before but we are not circling aimlessly as the lost who have no idea where we are going. But we are making headway. Even though it seems nothing has changed, everything is changing. Even though it often seems like we are not winning against our sinful desires or getting any closer to eternity, we are moving toward the day God has prepared.

We have been in our sins for a long time. How those words strike the truth none of us wants to admit. We have been in our sins too long. We deserve God's anger because we have not improved. We know the ways of sin like a drunk knows the familiar path home. We are a people of unclean hearts and unclean lips and unclean lives. Misery always feels slow and long but it bears fruit if this miserable feeling drives us to contrition and repentance.

We have been here a long time but we aim for a time without end, where clocks do not tick and calendars do not count down the days. We are the faithful who await the day when we shall cry out for the last time: **"Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord."** We are a waiting people but we wait upon the Lord as the hopeful who look forward to what God has prepared for those who love Him.

We honor the past. Christ came once to the manger long ago and He will not return as a baby to that stable. He has already entered the old Jerusalem that killed the prophets and papered over sin with fake righteousness. Christ has already borne the weight of sin upon the cross and died our death so that we might live. We do not wait for a rerun but for a whole new future. Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord.

Yet while we wait, Christ comes to us. He comes to us as the Lord who is incarnate in bread that is His body given for us to eat with faith and in the cup that is His blood shed for us to drink with faith. We wait as the people who have met Christ in the waters of baptism as we have seen this morning. And we wait as the people who harken to the sound of His voice in His Word read and preached.

Christ came once to the manger. He comes over and over again to us and for us in the means of grace, the Word and the Sacraments. But He will come again in glory. He will no more be hidden but will be obvious. He will come not to save but to judge. He will come in glory to finish His new creation – you and me – and open to us the places He has prepared for us.

Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord. Every Sunday we sing these words in the Sanctus. We do not sing them to an absent Lord but the present Redeemer. We do not sing in melancholy longing for the past but in the hopeful address of the future. We do not sing them because we are alone but because He is still with us, still comes to us, feeding us and giving us to eat and drink of His flesh and blood for the life of the world.

We have become the blessed who wear His name by baptism and faith. We are the blessed who wear His righteousness by baptism. We are the blessed in whom He works, in whose voices He speaks and in whose hands He works. We are a waiting people, moving through the familiar steps of the church year even as we ascend day by day toward the future He has prepared. But in Advent we sing this anew and with even greater conviction: Rend the heavens! Come down, Lord!

We are too long in our sins, too long in the days of repentance, and we are ready to receive You and the day of redemption which will complete what You began in us and in this world. We are ready for the finish, the outcome, the end. Come, Lord Jesus.