

# **“The First Sunday in Advent” December 3, 2017**

**Our Savior’s Way  
Worshiping Sundays 8:00, 9:30, & 11:00 AM  
Pastor Justin Kumfer**

It’s coming. You can feel the anticipation in the air. People seem happier than usual. They’re more willing to smile or be courteous. At this time of year everyone seems to be gathering and celebrating around a common theme. Christmas. Have you heard the Christmas music on the radio? Seen the decorations go up in stores? It seems like everywhere people are looking ahead to Christmas.

In today’s world you kind of need at least a month to prepare. There’s decorations to put up. Gifts to buy. Food to plan. Cards to send. You have to find the perfect Christmas tree. Bake cookies. Attend your child’s program. The list of things to do goes on and on. All leading up to one day. Christmas.

Even saying it brings a small amount of joy, because you’re already looking ahead to what’s coming. And you’re spending a lot of time preparing for it. Even the church is preparing for Christmas. Did you know that here at OSW we actually begin preparing for Christmas in September? Yesterday, we had people decorating our church and sanctuary.

All the Christian churches around the world are getting ready for Christmas. We even have a specific season of the church year dedicated to preparation. Advent. Today, is our first Sunday in Advent. In fact it’s the first day in the church calendar. It’s the

season of preparation but I'd like to use a different word and say it's the season of watchfulness. The word advent comes from the Latin word meaning "coming." The Advent season reminds us that we are looking ahead to who is coming.

That "who" is the Son of God. Jesus Christ. Now you might be thinking, "Why are we looking for someone to come if Jesus already came?" We know who He is and what He came to do, we don't need to watch for it anymore. But we'll get to that in a minute.

For right now let's focus on one specific person in our reading from Mark 13 who is tasked with watching. Verse 34 speaks of a doorkeeper. This is the person who watches. This person is responsible for keeping people safe. He watches for any dangers or threats that may be coming. But he also watches for the return of his Lord to the house. This person is essential in the care and safety of the people inside. They are told to keep watch and stay awake by their Lord. You see, doorkeepers are expecting something. They're looking for something that is coming. Something that they expect but don't know exactly when it will arrive.

What may surprise you is that we are all the doorkeepers. We are looking out for something that is coming. And we have been looking for something for a very long time. Since the very beginning, when Adam and Eve sinned, mankind has been looking for something to come. Something we have been expecting.

We now know that person to be Jesus, the Son of God. The song says, "Come Thou long expected Jesus. Born to set Thy people free." His life, death, and resurrection has indeed done that. We are now free from sin and living in our new life through Christ. But, now that Jesus has come, do we stop looking and watching? Do we still need to prepare?

Our actions seem to say that we don't. Now that He has come we put Him on a shelf to admire or consider when we really need to or when it's convenient for us or during special holidays. But not much more.

You see, receiving the gift that God had been preparing us for doesn't mean the end. Now that we have received Christ, the work begins anew. Because Christ himself told us of a time that we are still looking for. A time that is still to come.

In our reading from Mark today, that time is revealed as the time Christ comes again. The day and hour of which no one knows except the Father. Just as the time of the first coming of His Son was known only to Him, so too is the return of His Son in glory. It's not a time for us to be enjoying the view and watching the world pass us by. It's the time for us to be alert and awake.

What I mean by this is, our responsibility as doorkeepers doesn't end because Christ has come. As a doorkeeper it is our job to look ahead. We're supposed to protect those who are inside. The ones who are inside are all those who belong to Christ. We don't always know who they are. But being the doorkeeper means we are supposed to watch out for threats against them and sound the call when we see them. And not only that, but bring people in to the safety of the walls.

If we are doing all of these things, we are truly preparing for Christ to come again. We are the "work of God's hands" like Isaiah taught. We are sharing the Good News that Jesus came to save people from their sins. He came to bring eternal life. And He is coming again to bring us into that life.

Isaiah also teaches us that "Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides You, who acts on behalf of those who wait for Him. You come to the help of those who gladly do right, who remember Your ways. But when

we continued to sin against them, You were angry. How then can we be saved?"

Isaiah speaks of what the doorkeepers see. They see the dangers ahead. They see the threats and read the signs to protect against coming dangers. They see the pain that following other gods brings. They see the lies that the religions teach about who God is. They see that there is no other God but ours!

Most importantly, the doorkeepers see God for who He really is. Not the God of destruction and punishment. But the God of love and sacrifice. The God who sent His only Son to die for our sins. The God who protects His people. He sets the doorkeepers at the gates and protects those who are inside. These watchmen are awake and watching for the Lord's return. It will be a glorious return met with much celebration and joy. We are those watchmen. The doorkeepers looking for the return of our God. For He is coming and we do not want to be caught sleeping.

In Jesus' name, Amen.