

## 29/12/2020 First Sunday of Advent

I do enjoy taking my dog Tilly for a walk, especially as I wasn't allowed to in the first lockdown. I have a look what the weather is doing and might be likely to do before the end of the walk and if it looks like it's going to rain, I have a see-through mac, for Tilly. It's great, keeps her dry, especially at the moment as she looks like a ball of fluff as she needs a visit to the groomers!! But if I'm in a rush, sometimes I ignore the clouds and forget the mac and we get caught in a deluge and Tilly ends up looking like a drowned rat!!

That's just a little example, but many a time we've done, or rather, not done something and said afterwards 'I should have seen that coming.' There are signs everywhere, we just need to be aware of them and that we're looking in the right place.

Jesus' message was the vital preparation for his return – as we read last week, the 'Coming of the Son of Man.' No one knows when that time will be and Jesus brought together all he taught, and the importance of being prepared. He warned of persecution, false messiahs, and a time of suffering, when 'the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from heaven and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.'

This is apocalyptic stuff which I'm sure would have freaked the disciples out, it can freak us out!! But Jesus always expressed hope to those who listened to his words and through faith would be saved when the time came. Jesus used the illustration of the fig tree, which was a sign that summer was near as the fig tree was the first to get its leaves.

There's been much speculation about when the end will come as many have tried to work it out by looking at the alignment of the stars and various other methods. But Jesus pronounces, "But about that day or hour, no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." Therefore no one knows when it will be, not even him.

So as we begin this time of Advent, we prepare ourselves and remember how the Son of man came to us in the beginning of his earthly life, in a way which enabled God to walk alongside us, becoming human as a tiny baby who was powerless and silent, then going on to live an amazing life which would change hearts and minds forever and would be the light to bring hope to a world in darkness.

Advent also points us to the time when Jesus will return and a time of judgement so this time before Christmas should be a time of quiet, a time of penitence and renewal and a time to be still.

Our minds may be on Christmas preparations, especially when this lockdown ends but each day of our life should be lived in preparation as Jesus could return at any moment. Will we be ready to meet him face to face?

Today, on this first Sunday of Advent, we wait for the arrival of God incarnate and also further ahead to God's promise of eternity as we wait faithfully and expectantly for Jesus who "Will be coming in clouds with great power and glory," just as we wait for the silent arrival of the babe in a manger.

Amen

With love and prayers

Rev Tracey xx