

Tending Ancient Paths

The Paradigms, Posture, and Practices of Jesus

Anticipation

*We can never know about the days to come
But we think about them anyway
And I wonder if I'm really with you now
Or just chasin' after some finer day*

*Anticipation, anticipation
Is makin' me late
Is keepin' me waitin'*



Yes I am quoting the lyrics of a Carly Simon song recorded over 50 years ago - yet the words are incredibly fitting. **What are you anticipating the most in these days?**

The stuff that needs to get done – the things that are done – the dreams hoped for — the dreams lost? Today, in this season between Thanksgiving and Christmas that many of us recognize as Advent, is the biggest frenzy of retail spending. More than half of it, hundreds of billions of dollars a year, is spent as we celebrate the birth of the homeless Son of God – and this year, we are already literally up by 10%. If we are honest, it can be a challenge to choose connection and compassion over endless consumption of resource that is us *chasin' after some finer day*....always anticipating but never present.

The Church Father Irenaeus has been quoted as first saying *'the glory of God is the heart of man fully alive'* which implies a couple things. First, that it is actually possible to have a heart that is fully alive (I think I have several Bible verses that make that point) and second, that many do not live fully alive.

The coming of Jesus – Advent -- is such a profound story that bears not just repetition but deep thought. Into a world ruled and dominated by dictators, unjust systems of poverty, oppressive slavery, racial bigotry and hatred, God comes – not as a military deliverer, not as a wealthy philanthropist, not as an earthly prince, but as a child born into poverty, in a race that was despised, to a disgraced teenage mother who was giving birth in a cave! This is NOT how we would write the story of deliverance and freedom...big and impressive - we could anticipate that now couldn't we? But to anticipate this King –Jesus– causes us to deal with the empire that has captivated our hearts. **It really does matter what kind of anticipation captures us!**

As we enter this advent season the fair question is what kind of anticipation has captured me the most? The empty promises of consumption or the real compassion of a God who entered the mess of fractured creation, (which according to Paul has been groaning in hope since Eden! Romans 8) to bring it all back home to Himself. The anticipation that creation has felt since the fall was revealed in Jesus Christ - Peace on earth and goodwill to man.

Beloved, Advent is an invitation to Good News - to Anticipation. An invitation to be present to the God who is with us! Today, in this season, we proclaim Christ has come and continues to come to man and is the One who is making this world a home again!

The Gospel of Mark begins with these words 1:3

*"Prepare your hearts for the coming of the Lord Yahweh,
and clear a straight path inside your hearts for him!" TPT*

That kind of posture requires choice - and that is what Anticipation is about.

What does that mean? For most of us it means a choice to live differently than we normally do.

5907 W Wallen Rd, Fort Wayne, IN 46818

Phone: 260-403-4948 www.tapfw.com Email: ben@bouwersfam.com

And the secret is simply this: **Christ in you!**

Yes, Christ in you bringing with him the hope of all glorious things to come. Col 1:27b, JB Phillips

The trouble with busy seasons is that how we spend our time and resources are too often left to the demands of others. The posture of right Anticipation is about choosing to give our attention to rhythm's and routines that keep our heart alive – this is good religion! For most of us this will mean a choice to simplify...walk slower, drive slower, listen longer, linger in moments of beauty...

*And tomorrow we might not be together, I'm no prophet and I don't know nature's ways
So I'll try and see into your eyes right now, And stay right here 'cause these are the good old days'.
(Carly Simon)*

The Glory of God? The heart of man fully alive - to the God who is present- who has come and comes.

Is it possible to proclaim these are the good old days? To live surrendered to an Anticipation that the greatest need in my life and the lives that I touch today is the Love of God revealed in Christ. The power and presence of the One who is making this world a home - again! These are, in fact, the good old days! Even so come Lord Jesus! Selah!

**Prayer School with Pastor Brian Zahnd
January 8-10, 2024**

Following several years of reading and studying the rich and well written prayers of the church I decided to attend a Prayer School in St Joseph, Missouri two years ago. Attending a prayer school after leading in prayer ministry for over 20 years on one level seemed a little odd. Yet, what I learned was a practice of prayer that is primarily about formation. It was then that I began using a Prayer Liturgy that is a collection of biblical and historical prayers gathered together by Brian Zahnd.

The liturgy, while a bit difficult in the beginning, has remained central to my prayer life. Prayer that is centered around being formed daily into the image of Jesus.

A year ago Denise took the school online as well. We want to invite you to join us as we participate in this years school online. It is covered over 3—1.5 hour sessions over three days, either in the afternoon or evening. You can register for any amount of donation online @ wolc.com/prayer-school. I can honestly say nothing has been as foundational and formative for us as embracing this daily practice of prayer—we invite you to join us!

El Salvador Outreach—2024

- We will again be sending a team to El Salvador in March of 2024!
- Over the last several years we have partnered with Pastor Louis Alvarado to minister to some of the poorest and most needy of El Salvador.
- Our annual offering has helped to rebuild homes, pay medical expenses, pay funeral expenses, purchase wheel chairs, provide seed, fertilizer, and food and more. All funds given go to minister to the people of this community.
- As a result there are regular monthly gatherings naming the name of Jesus in San Pablo Taco Chico that have reached hundreds. The Good News is Preached to the Poor...
- Last year we were able to help over 55 families and continue our on-going monthly work.
- Please pray about participating in El Salvador this year as we send a team—this offering is a combined effort of Praise International, TAP Fort Wayne, and Pastor Luis Alvarado.
- Thank you for your prayerful consideration.

With gratitude and integrity we steward your gifts. Thank you for partnering with the mission the Lord has given us in this hour as we partner with Him for His kingdom to expand.

Please make your **tax deductible** contribution to:

**TAP Fort Wayne
5907 West Wallen Road,
Fort Wayne, IN 46818**

Ben and Denise, Please agree with us over these prayer needs for the next month...

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