

CHRIST WAITING AT MY DOOR

Adapted from Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Christmas Sermons*. Zondervan, 2005; p.p. 18 – 27
Barcelona, Spain / December 2, 1928

Text: Revelation 3.20 - 22 (in pew Bible p. 1218 / in large print Bible p. 1890)

Intro:

- **illust.** Pine-zilla

- **illust.** The Scent Of Christmas

-celebrating Advent means learning how to wait.

- our impatient age has abandoned the art of waiting.
- we want to pick fruit before it ripens.
 - cannot function without instant gratification.
 - **illust.** Amish

-failing to wait will disappoint us.

- we will discard the spoiled fruit.
- never receive the fulfillment of God's promise.

Take Home Point:

-wait for God to come to you and open your life to his call.

1. A TIME FOR WAITING

-during the time of waiting for God, gentle growth may occur.

- like a germinating seed.

-celebration of Advent is only possible for the one who is not satisfied with her / his life.

- the one who is “poor in spirit” will wait in humility until Jesus comes and knocks.
- it is only then that one can rejoice.

-the cry of joy is still in the distance.

- when we sing the carols and hear the Christmas Scriptures, we begin to experience the warmth of his coming.
- our hearts are softened toward Jesus.
 - we are faced with a feeling of being homesick and we long to be in the safe arms of God.

-sin and sorrow burden our hearts and we wait helplessly but hopefully for our Saviour.

- as with John at the end of the New Testament, we cry, “come Lord quickly” (Revelation 22.20).
 - dwell with me Lord Jesus and overcome what overwhelms me.
 - come close to my unfaithfulness and touch my sin.

2. A TIME OF CHRIST'S COMING

-in our text Jesus announces that he comes to stand at the door.

- listen carefully - he is knocking.
- quiet the distractions and open the door.

-his first coming was in humility and quietness at Bethlehem.

- his second coming is in victory and salvation:
so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him (Hebrews 9.28).

-there is blessing in the face of such challenge.

- while he judges us, he loves us, he purifies us, he saves us, and he brings to us gifts of love & grace.
- he makes us joyful – we are never alone in this world.
Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me (Revelation 3.20).

3. A TIME OF HEARING & OPENING

-there is great blessing in Advent as Christ's coming draws near.

- his arrival is often in the form of people around us.
- cf. Matthew 25.31 – 46: hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked / sheep & goats.
 - will you leave the door safely locked for your protection, preservation, and comfort or will you open the door for him?

-illust. native Girl coming to door following prayer Time.

-whoever has not learned from the Advent message that we are all God's creatures has not understood the meaning of Jesus' coming.

-Christ is knocking at our doors:

- yet is it not yet Christmas, nor is it the final Second Coming.
- through all the Advents of our lives, we wait and look forward to his coming.

-we long for that day when God says "I am making everything new" (Revelation 21.5).

- we spend our lives waiting for the new heavens & new earth.
- we spend our lives living for all people to be brothers & sisters.

Conclusion:

-Jesus is alive and his presence is real:

For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. He received honour and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain (2 Peter 1.16 – 18).

-wait for God to come to you.

- wait for what he has promised to come ...
 - To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne: He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches (Revelation 3.21, 22).

-open your life to his call.

- quiet the distractions *and open the door.*

-learn the Advent message that we are all God's creatures.

- spend your live living for all people to be brothers & sisters.

-call to him – yes come quickly, Lord Jesus.

O come, Desire of nations bind,
All peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease,
Fill all the world with heaven's peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

-Dietrich Bonhoeffer's life:

- United States / underground Seminary / hanged on Nazi gallows shortly before the end of W.W. 2.

-Closing Hymn: #123 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (all verses).

Pine-zilla

Rhonda D., from Colorado relates how her husband wanted their two kids to experience the excitement of picking out a real Christmas tree, so they packed the kids in the car and drove to a tree farm.

The first 6-foot pine Rhonda saw looked fine. Her husband passed it. Their 9-year-old pointed out a Charlie Brown Christmas tree, but her husband ignored the sapling. The slope grew steeper and their car looked small in the distance.

Finally, Rhonda's husband revved his chainsaw to cut down Pine-zilla, a tree whose trunk was the size of her ottoman. Everyone was excited. Within moments, Pine-zilla gently fell to the earth – then quickly started to slide downhill. Her husband sprinted after it as the kids and Rhonda watched Pine-zilla glide steadily toward the car.

The tree reached the car before her husband did and slid beneath it, causing the car to dangerously tilt to one side. The tree-farm owner had to hook a winch to the tree and pull it out.

That night after the tree was set up, the whole family had a warm feeling ... warm, itchy feeling. Rhonda and her son discovered that they were allergic to pine (Focus On the Family's *Thriving Family*. November / December 2010, p. 7).

The Scent Of Christmas

David M. from California relates another great Christmas tree story. "Our freshly cut Christmas tree was beautiful, but my wife, Dale, sniffed the air and then looked accusingly at our two boys. 'It wasn't us!' Mark and Brad replied in unison.

"Dale said, 'I'll bet a mountain lion was marking its territory.' Mark and Brad thought that was cool.

"I took the tree, with its scent of hygienic imprudence, outside and blasted it with the hose, which only invigorated the reekification process. So I used an ammonia-based cleanser that claimed to smell like 'a fresh pine forest.' It caused the tree to smell like an industrial accident.

"From there, I hit it with everything in my arsenal: Lysol, Formula 409, Clorox, Tide laundry detergent and even my deodorant.

"After four days, the scent was diminished. Because Dale kept mulled cider brewing, the tree was tolerable – and hinted of orange blossom air freshener and Old Spice" (Focus On the Family's *Thriving Family*. November / December 2010, p. 6).

Amish

Four years ago this October, gunman Charles Carl Roberts IV entered the West Nickel Mines School, a one-room Amish school house near Lancaster, Pennsylvania, took hostages, and eventually shot ten girls ages 6 to 13, killing five of them before committing suicide in the school house. The forgiveness offered by the Amish community was widely admired, and curiosity about the Amish way of life skyrocketed. Evangelical Christians have a heightened interest in Amish spirituality, hoping its insights can deepen their own faith.

All followers of Christ can learn patience from the Amish way. We live in an instant society, and many Christians approach their spiritual lives that way. Many Christians look for quick, easy, painless ways to grow spiritually, and they often end up being disappointed with the growth they see. The Amish point us to the importance of patient practice. They remind us that engaging in everyday – sometimes tedious – practices over long periods of time is the most trustworthy way to foster spiritual depth (Randall Frame in *Christianity Today* - “Spirituality for the Long haul” November 2010, p. 69).