

“Awaken to Christmas - It’s a New Day”

Scripture: Luke 2:41-52

Graphics: bedroom, large alarm clock, time, light only on clock, new day/light

Big Truth: Advent is a coming, and appearing. For Christians, this is the season during which we prepare our hearts to once again celebrate the incarnation of Jesus on earth. In many ways, we’ve felt like we’ve been sleeping - not knowing how to be awake right now - amidst all the political, social, medical, and financial struggles. Yet, while the world is in darkness, God IS light. Advent gives the people of the Panama UMC the opportunity to awaken to the advent of Jesus and prepare for His second coming.

Focus Phrase: Newness comes when I surrender my life to God’s will.

1. Introduction

- A. This morning, I have for us a post-Christmas, brain-stimulating memory test... ready? A man wakes up and gets out of bed in the morning and does five things: he makes coffee, he eats breakfast, he takes a shower, he brushes his teeth, and he gets dressed. What’s the first thing he did? If you said “Makes coffee” you’d be WRONG. (The first thing he does is wakes up)
- B. What’s the ONE THING that every single one of US here today and watching online DID this morning? We Woke Up!
- C. Each one of us awakened this morning, praise God! And TODAY is a new day. It’s not like Friday, which was Christmas Eve. It’s not like yesterday, which was Christmas Day!
- D. Today is a NEW DAY...and in some ways, it’s just like the other days that have come before it. But in other ways, it’s a day like no other day...it’s today.
- E. In the grand scheme of the Christian year, today is the first Sunday of Christmas. We’ve crossed over the line between Advent and Christmas, and we’re now into a new season.
- F. If we zoom out all the way to the history of the universe, the birth of Jesus Christ is the PIVOT point to all of history. Before the first Christmas is the first half of history. AFTER the first Christmas is the second half of history. Our calendar even testifies to that.
- G. Now, for us today, we celebrate this rhythm of Christmas every year, as we wait patiently for Jesus to return. But, that gives us the opportunity to celebrate the NEWNESS of this day, the first Sunday of Christmas, each year as well!
- H. And in the midst of all that’s familiar and old and “as usual,” God also calls us to Awaken. We’ve been Awakening to Advent. But today, we Awaken to Christmas! It’s a New Day!

- I. And the New Day that came when Jesus was born is the New Day that is present with us now!
- J. And if we're following Jesus - if we're connected with Jesus - then every new day is an opportunity to renew our identities in Christ...who we are in Christ, the one who was born and who was the pivot point of history.
- K. Our scripture text this morning comes again from the gospel of Luke. There's a unique story to Luke that tells us about a time when Jesus was 12 years old. At this point, Jesus is beginning to understand who HE is in God's plan of salvation. And he finds himself in a new place...much to his parent's dismay.
- L. Yet, Jesus knew something new about his identity that others didn't yet know. As we spend time with Jesus and his parents this morning, WE TOO will learn something about this NEW identity.
- M. Let's pray to orient our hearts before God and then we'll open our bibles to read together...
- N. **PRAY!!!**
- O. Luke...chapter 2...starting in verse 41... Ready? READY??

2. Scripture

A. **READ Luke 2:41-45**

- i. I'm sure you've heard the phrase, "...the same as it ever was..." I think we all fall somewhere on the spectrum between liking things to always be the same, and wanting things to be different or NEW.
- ii. Stacy and I don't like to vacation in the same spot twice, because there's so much to see everywhere. Other people I know vacation in the same house in the same place every year because it's comforting and familiar.
- iii. Christmas tends to bring out traditions for us and we find ourselves doing the same things with family and friends and church every year.
- iv. In the first part of our story today, Jesus and his parents were doing what they did every year. Every year, they went to Jerusalem, just like was required by the Jewish Law. They went to the same place...they probably stayed in the same Inn...ate the same food...sat in the same pew.
- v. In verse 42, Luke tells us that they went "as usual" to the festival.
- vi. And when the party was over and it was time to go home, Mary and Joseph packed up and began to walk the 4-5 days back home to Nazareth AS USUAL.
- vii. They'd done this before. Jesus had done this before. It was familiar. It was comfortable. He was 12...he knew the routine: "stay with the other kids, walk with us back home, don't get in trouble, be at our wagon for

dinner, and on and on.” Just like usual. There was nothing NEW about this...we’ve done this before.

- viii. YET...THIS time was different, according to Luke. THIS time, Jesus was not with them when they started for home like every other time.
- ix. This time, at age 12, when he was on the verge of becoming a man at age 13, Jesus found himself drawn to something very NEW...something that he’d not done before.
- x. THIS TIME, Jesus was not with Mary and Joseph when they were walking home like that always did. In fact, when he didn’t show up for dinner, they started looking for him. At first it was concerning: “Where’s Jesus? He ALWAYS comes home to eat. Have you seen him? This is NOT typical. We always make it back home together.”
- xi. Then, it was more of a panic. When they couldn’t find him...they did something else for the first time - something new: they walked all the way BACK to Jerusalem to try to find him...like any parent would do. (I’m not sure why they didn’t just text him...)
- xii. Let’s pick up the story in verse 46...

B. READ Luke 2:46-52

- i. They found him, alright! After having searched for Jesus frantically, they found him in the Temple, sitting with the rabbis and scribes. They found him, safe and sound, and in utter resolve for what he was doing.
- ii. Mary and Joseph couldn’t believe what they were seeing and hearing...and they were pretty hot about it.
- iii. Any parent knows this conversation, “Where have you been? Why weren’t you with us? We’ve been searching for you for days and we’ve been worried sick about it. You’re in big trouble, mister!”
- iv. Mary and Joseph were in parenting mode, just like they always were. They were worried about Jesus’ well-being and their own anxiety level.
- v. What they didn’t understand was that this was a New Day. In fact, the day that Jesus was born, God’s NEW DAY started...and on THIS day, in THIS Temple, God’s plan began to be revealed. It was GO TIME!
- vi. Now, you might be thinking, “Didn’t Mary and Joseph get visited by angels that told them that Jesus would be something special...the Messiah...the One who would save us from our sins?”
- vii. Indeed...but I suspect that they didn’t have a good understanding of what that meant. And the birth events of Jesus were certainly overshadowed by the mundane, routine, and often difficult life of a parent...raising a boy, even if that angel promised something more for Jesus.

- viii. Jesus' reply is the climax of this story and the whole point of the New Day.
- ix. He said, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" Other translations say, "Did you not know I must be about my Father's business?"
- x. "Did you not know that I am the New Day dawning?" "Do you not understand WHO I AM?"
- xi. Jesus understood that His mission was to do the Father's will...to show the world the Father...and show the world how to be human...truly human. For Jesus, this was all about his identity as fully human and fully divine... that He would show the world the Father and the Father's love.
- xii. As Mary and Joseph heard the words come out of his mouth, they were a bit stunned. What did he mean?
- xiii. The narrative takes a turn back to the normal, as Jesus returns home with them.
- xiv. And as the years go by...and Jesus grew to be a man...his identity as Messiah and Savior also grew. He grew in wisdom and stature. He grew in favor from both God and humans. For 18 years, he prepared for the time when the New Day would be in full swing...plain as day.
- xv. The New Day that dawned when Jesus was born was the moment of sunrise. The Son (S-O-N) began to shine in the world...and by the time he was 12, the world could feel the heat and see the light beginning to radiate on the horizon.
- xvi. Soon, Jesus would bring the New Day fully into the light...so that you and I could be part of it.

3. Application

- A. When the alarm clock went off this morning, what was the first thought that came to your mind? You may not even remember it.
- B. You may have had a moment of calm just prior to the worries of the day flooding in. You may have had a moment to think, "It's SUNDAY! Yes!"
- C. No matter what you thought or experienced, it WAS a new day. What happened yesterday is in the past. What will happen tomorrow is yet to be realized. All we have is today.
- D. (bedroom) During Advent, we've been connecting with God in the darkness of our lives. We've been getting up to clean up as we offer confession of sin for God's forgiveness. We've agreed that saying YES to the new day was exactly what God was asking of us.

- E. TODAY is a NEW day...in the church, it's the first day after Christmas. And there's something significant about having just come through that season and that DAY!
- F. Today IS a New day! And with that New Day comes the true gift of Christmas.
- G. It's not a new toy or a diamond necklace. **The true gift of Christmas is that every New Day you get to give your life to God again.** It's your opportunity to give you life once again to the One who made the day and made YOU.
- H. The true gift of each New Day is that you and I get to, once again, take on the identity as a follower of Jesus.
- I. Newness comes when you surrender your life's work, ambitions, tasks, and calling to God's will...to God's business...
- J. And newness comes every morning when you surrender your identity to Christ and His identity in the Father.
- K. As followers of Jesus, we don't take our identity from the world. We aren't who the world says we must be or even what the world wants us to be. If we look like the world, then there are some things missing in our discipleship.
- L. The title Christian is a counter-cultural declaration that WE MUST BE ABOUT THE FATHER'S BUSINESS...to be IN the Father's House.
- M. Here's the pathway to that identity:
 - i. First, when you wake up, simply **give thanks to God for the New Day.**
 - a. Isaiah 12:4-5 says, "And on that day you will say, "Give thanks to the LORD, call on His name. Make known His deeds among the peoples; make them remember that His name is exalted." Praise the LORD in song, for He has done glorious things; let this be known throughout the earth."
 - b. Giving thanks to God for the New Day is a simple orientation of your life to the life of Jesus. God gives you breath...give Him thanks. Give Him thanks for heat and lights and shelter and a warm bed.
 - c. God has given you another day...give Him thanks.
 - ii. Second, for that new day, **be about the Father's business...**and in the Father's house.
 - a. Colossians 3:23-24 says, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."

- b. Jesus said He **MUST** be about his Father's business. Church, this is not optional for followers of Jesus. Our lives, our families, our work, our play, our money, our sport, must **ALWAYS** be done as unto the Lord.
- c. The New Day is the calling to do that.
- iii. Finally, **keep growing in wisdom, stature, and divine and human favor.**
 - a. This isn't the first time and won't be the last time you hear me encourage you, invite you, and anticipate that you **WILL** be reading the Bible consistently, praying and learning with others faithfully, and growing in your faith. This is what followers of Jesus are commanded to do by Jesus himself.
 - b. If you find that you're not more loving and faithful and forgiving and gracious today than you were a year ago, it's time again to take stock in your discipleship pathway.
 - c. Be growing in worship, community, openness, obeying, serving, and sharing...the milestone of our Intentional Discipleship Process.
 - d. 2 Peter 3:18 reminds us of this: "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."

4. Conclusion

- A. Are you willing to give every New Day to God for His purposes and not your own? Maybe Christmas and New Years are good times to reflect on that...
- B. What is the **ONE THING** that's holding you back from fully surrendering to Him? Is it doubt? Is it fear? Is it busyness or pride? Is it that the old ways are comfortable and familiar and the New Day brings something unknown?
- C. Lay those things down...and humbly take on the new identity of God in Christ.
- D. As the alarm continues to sound for the Church and for each of us, may we awaken to Christmas each new day ready to follow Jesus wherever He leads.
- E. Let's Pray...
- F. **PRAY!**