

Pastor Geoffrey R. Boyle
Midweek Advent II
12 December 2012
Grace-Trinity Lutheran Churches, Wichita
Christ's Advent in Glory

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit

Last week we spoke of Christ's first coming in the flesh.
It was Christmas talk—God becoming man *for you*.
Good Friday talk—God taking that flesh to the cross *for you*.
And Easter talk—God raising that flesh from the grave, *for you*.

But as our Creed goes on, we confess that:

He will come again with glory, to judge both the living and the dead.

That coming again, what we call “the second coming” is also a coming in the flesh.
Once the incarnation happened—again, in time and place, what we call Christmas—
God will never be found apart from that flesh taken from Mary.

There's no such thing as Jesus without flesh.
No such thing as God the Son apart from the hands with holes, and the side with a scar.
There's no such thing as God apart from the flesh of Jesus Christ.

That's how He has decided to be known:

As man and God together *for you*.

And what that means for the Second Coming is that you'll be able to recognize Him.
On that day, there will be no confusion, no second guessing, no wonderment:
Was that really Him?

There is no secret rapture, or mysterious disappearance, or anything like that.
Paul says it clearly:

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.” (1 Thess 4:16-17)

And Matthew records Jesus' own description:

“And they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send out His angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” (Mt 24:30-31)

A real trumpet sound ringing in real ears.
Real bodies being pulled up from the grassy ground out of real caskets and concrete vaults.
And most important of all, a real Lord—with His body—whom we'll meet and be with forever.
It's all real, it's all done in the flesh, and it's all *for you*.

But this day, this last day, is not good news for all.

Good news for all comes on Christmas—remember what the angels told those shepherds of old?:

“I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

(Lk 2:10-11)

Good news for all also comes at Holy Week,

where Jesus died for the sins of all

and rose for all

and has forgiven all the world by making atonement with His blood.

Remember John 3:16?

“For God loved *the world* in this way that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.” (Jn 3:16)

Even the Ascension of Christ was good for all, because that meant the sending of the Holy Spirit.

But this Second Coming—this is not *good news for all*.

This *coming again* is what the last day is all about.

And as the Prophet Micah puts it:

“It shall come to pass *in the latter days*...that He shall judge between many peoples, and shall decide for strong nations afar off.” (Micah 4:1, 3)

Christ will come again;

but not as the infant priest born in a manger,

not as the suffering servant who bore our sins on the cross,

not in weakness or humility—

but in *glory*.

But that begs the question:

What is glory?

We typically use glory to talk about popularity or prestige.

We say, “There he was in all his glory.”

It’s kinda like boasting, or relishing in the good thoughts others have of you, surrounded by fans and admirers.

But is that what it means for Jesus to come in glory?

Not quite.

In Hebrew the word for glory is *Cavod*.

It means a weightiness, something heavy.

And so it often describes the power, or the strength, the honor or the dignity of God.

And not God in general, but the weightiness of God dwelling among His people.

The *glory of the Lord* is never abstract.

You see it all throughout Exodus, they see the glory of the Lord in a pillar of fire by night and in a cloud by day.

Glory is a mark of God's presence—*real presence*.

So when we see Christ coming again *with glory*,
we will have the weightiness of His presence among us.

For some, this will be sheer delight—wonderful news!

As Micah says,

“In that day...I will assemble the lame and gather those who have been driven away and those whom I have afflicted; and the lame I will make the remnant, and those who were cast off, a strong nation.” (Micah 4:6-7)

But for others, a day of mourning, strict judgment, and eternal condemnation.

That's not *good news for all*.

So which will it be for you?

What will that day be like?

Will the *Coming of Christ in Glory* be for you Good news or bad—Law or Gospel?

Well, that judgment has already been settled.

There's no fear of that day if the glory of the Lord has already come among you.

Christ will surely come again in glory, with a real presence in judgment—
but His glory has already surrounded us with His promise of the Word.

He's already drawn us into His glory cloud,
bringing us into His presence in Holy Baptism,
and bringing His presence to us in Holy Communion.

He's already spoken His word:

Yours sins are forgiven, your debt paid for, your hell consumed.

Your enemy is defeated, your sentence waved, your judgment rendered.

Christ who came in the manger and died on the cross and rose from the grave has called you into His glory, His presence, His kingdom, His joy.

We who are in Christ are already partakers of His glory (1 Pet 5:1).

We already dwell with Him, in His presence, in Christ.

And so we pray for that Second Coming, His coming again in glory.

We join with all the saints of old, those in the grave as well as those with us here, praying:

“Amen! Come, Lord Jesus, come!” (Rev 22:20)

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit