

Anticipation, Eagerness, and Excitement

An Advent Meditation

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With Christmas now “nigh upon us,” we find ourselves filled afresh with the familiar feelings of anticipation, eagerness, and excitement. As we continue on our journey to Christmas Day, we do so buoyed by the paradox of memories, hopes, and feelings from years past dwelling deeply within us while also looking ahead and carrying that past forward with us into the future. This is our tradition, which means, simply, *this is what we do*. There can be little surprise, then, to learn that the color of Advent, bluish-purple, has for many centuries represented Advent’s own twin interlocking themes of *hope* and *waiting*.

Now that we have been journeying toward Advent and a lonely feeding trough in Bethlehem for close to one month, the anticipation we feel is near its annual zenith. Our anticipation is for the arrival of Jesus, a reminder that the end of one journey surely means that another is about to begin (Rev. 22:6-21).

As our anticipation intensifies, so too does our eagerness to greet the Messiah afresh. We are eager to encounter God’s gracious good news for us that, although we are all broken (Psalm 53), in Jesus’ coming God heals our brokenness. God provides for us (Psalm 147), hears us, rules over all things, and claims us as his own (Psalm 17).

Like little children awaiting Santa Claus, our excitement is almost uncontainable at the very thought of the arrival of Jesus, the gift-giving God (Psalm 50) made flesh for us. Yet we cannot arrive at the birth of Jesus without first witnessing the birth of his cousin, John the Baptist (Luke 1:57-66). John’s birth reminds us that the whole of John’s life and ministry were dedicated to bearing witness to the good news that our Lord Jesus—the Christ-child, *Emmanuel*, the God who is for us and indeed is God-with-us (Isa. 33:21)—embodies God’s great love for us.

Therefore, when our Advent journey ends for this year and we gather afresh this Christmas morning to welcome anew our Lord Jesus at his birth, let us do so knowing that when we look into the face of Jesus Christ the newborn, we see the grace of God shining before our eyes. We see the King of Heaven robed in the epitome of his Creation’s beauty (Isa. 33:17). We see where God has chosen to make his dwelling place among us in his Creation (Isa. 33:21). Hence, in seeing the shining grace of God’s Word made flesh for us asleep in an animal’s feeding trough, do we find our paradise, our true dwelling place, where our soul’s place of utter fulfilment, completion, and comfort lie; for in that paradise, and wherever Jesus is, there is where we have our true treasure, honor, and joy, now and forevermore.

Our Father and our God, we who have so much to anticipate, who have so much to be eager about, and who are so excited to celebrate the arrival of Jesus, your dear Son, by your Spirit secure us in the joy that is your grace. This we ask for the sake of Jesus’ name. Amen.