

Proper 27 Year B

11/7/2021

Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17; Psalm 127; Hebrews 9:24-28; Mark 12:38-44

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Anticipation can be described as an emotion we can feel and a character trait that is good to have.

As an emotion... the feelings of anticipation can well up within us as we consider a big promotion,
an exciting vacation,
or going to bed on Christmas Eve anticipating what will take place in the morning.

As a character trait anticipation is important to have in all sorts of ways.
An athlete anticipating the defense,
a stock trader anticipating the market,
an attorney anticipating the viewpoint of a judge,
a salesperson anticipating the response from a potential buyer.

Someone with the skill of anticipating is a good quality to have.

Anticipation is a part of our lives both in emotion and in action.

It can change the way we talk with people.

It can impact the daily decisions we make.

And so, it is a fair question to ask...

What are you anticipating in life?

What actions do you do now because of what you anticipate will happen in the future?

A five-year-old boy kept telling his kindergarten teacher about the baby brother or sister that was expected at his house.

He was filled with anticipation of who this child would be.

One day the mother allowed the boy to feel the movements of the unborn child inside of her stomach.

The five-year-old was obviously impressed but made no comment.

Furthermore, he stopped telling his teacher about the impending event.

And the teacher became curious and finally approached the boy and said, "Tommy, whatever has become of that baby brother or sister you were expecting at home?"

Tommy burst into tears and confessed, "I think Mommy ate it!"

I'm not sure what the kindergarten teacher said that day.

But the expectation and the anticipation that day was too much for little Tommy in the midst of his confusion.

Our reading from the book of Hebrews helps with our anticipation with the future.

All along in this book, the author has repeatedly expressed the power and majesty of Jesus Christ.

In the first chapter, the author declares the supremacy of Christ...

Greater than all the angels.

In the third chapter, the author writes that Jesus is greater than Moses...

In the fourth chapter, Jesus is the great high priest...

In the seventh chapter, Jesus is greater than the ancient priest

Melchizedek.

In the eighth chapter, Jesus has installed a better covenant.

And in our reading today, Jesus Christ has made the perfect sacrifice...

Not a sacrifice that needs to happen again and again as was done in the Old Testament...

But Christ died *to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

A final sacrifice.

To deal with sin... forever.

There is no need for a new sacrifice.

Because Christ Jesus has finished the task.

His sacrifice on the cross completed the work necessary to make a way for us to be in right relationship with God.

And when we confess our sins...

And believe in the death and resurrection of Christ...

Our sins are forgiven...

And we walk in righteousness...

Because of Jesus Christ.

We call this grace.

The goodness of God bestowed upon us because of the death of Jesus Christ.

And although we as Christians die just as non-believers die...

We live with a greater anticipation of what is to come.

In our reading from Hebrews, it was said:

And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that the judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

The original readers of Hebrews would have thought nothing of it to think of judgment when they die.

This was a common message...

And still is in many religions.

Plato preached it.

Plutarch preached it.

Many today accept it.

Often said like this:

Everybody dies, and then you meet your Maker.

But there is something different for the believer in Jesus Christ.

We do not fear judgment.

In fact, we understand the last judgment as a time of justice.

A time when finally, our salvation is fully consummated.

Our life is changed forever.

And God's justice is fully engaged.

He is coming to set the world at rights.

So that we will be with Christ Jesus forever...

A new heaven and a new earth.

Our Book of Common Prayer speaks of our theology on this...

Listen to the words of the preface for our Burial liturgy:

Through Jesus Christ our Lord; who rose victorious from the dead, and comforts us with the blessed hope of everlasting life.

For to your faithful people, O Lord, life is changed, not ended; and when our mortal body lies in death, there is prepared for us a dwelling place eternal in the heavens. (BCP, 382)

You see Jesus has dealt with sin.

It was on the cross...

He is not coming again to deal with sin.

What he accomplished on the cross is once and for all...

It is final.

Now is the time to confess and believe in Jesus Christ.

Because when he comes the second time...

As Hebrews says it...

When he appears a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

He is coming to save those who are faithful to him.

His people.

He is coming to save the people of God.

To bring his love and justice... fully realized.

And that my friends...

Is the great anticipation that we have.

Listen again to the way Hebrews describes the people waiting for the second coming of Jesus Christ.

When he *appears a second time, ... to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.*

Eagerly waiting.

That's anticipation.

That's the kind of anticipation that changes the way you go about life.

It changes one's actions, one's thoughts, one's motivations.

So, let's go back to those first two questions we had.

What are you anticipating in life?

What actions do you do now because of what you anticipate will happen in the future?

As Christians...

As believers in Jesus Christ our biggest anticipation should be that day, we are eagerly waiting for...

That day that we are with Christ forever...

The day our salvation in Jesus is fully known.

And it puts the things of this world in perspective.

James the brother of Jesus writes in his letter:

What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. (James 4.14)

Life is short...

And yet this world wants all of our focus...

Our attention...

Our hard work, our money, our lives...

But there is something so much more worthy than the things of this world...

Jesus said:

So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

Listen close... Jesus says:

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

(Matthew 6.31-34).

Our lesson today is to build up your anticipation.

To build up your eager waiting.

To live your life in full anticipation of the second coming of Jesus.

Because it is on that day...

Whether we are alive...

Or whether our body is awaiting in the grave...

Jesus comes to save his own.

Be encouraged today.

Jesus is coming again to set the world at rights...

And that is our anticipation.

Amen.