



Advent 2

The Spirit Forms Us and Gifts Us

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Advent = *arrival* or *coming*. We are celebrating the arrival/coming of Jesus. Last week Mark said Advent is remembering that Jesus came while actively waiting for his return.

Earlier in my life, I didn't have a device to locate my family. When my parents went to Price Club (Costco), I would passively wait for them (and get everything ready at the last second when they drove in the driveway) or actively wait and get the counters clear and ready

for the food to arrive. This is the choice we have today when waiting for Jesus. Advent invites us to stop and reflect on how this all began: how God became a human.

ADVENT: Luke 1:35 (NIV)

The angel answered, 'The **Holy Spirit** will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.'

This year, we are focusing on the Holy Spirit in Advent. This starts with Mary in Luke 1. When Mary asks how she could become the mother of the Messiah, the angel answers in vs. 35. We don't know the details of exactly how this happened, we just know that it happened. It also happened to her cousin Elizabeth and this encouraged Mary.

ADVENT

Jesus enters the world **by the Spirit**.

He begins His ministry **by the Spirit**.

(Luke 4:14)

He is raised from the dead **by the Spirit**.

(Romans 8:11)

As Jesus came out of the desert into his ministry, he was directed by the Spirit. We also are to actively wait by the Spirit.

Advent reminds us that the same Spirit who brought Jesus into the world is the One who **brings** His life into us, **walks** with us, and **clothes** us to continue His work until He returns.

To actively wait, we must wait with and by the Spirit: we must understand how to engage the third person of the Trinity.



ADVENT:

1. The Spirit **Brings** Us Life
2. The Spirit **Walks** Alongside Us
3. The Spirit **Clothes** Us to Continue Jesus' Work

BRING, WALK, CLOTHE: hold onto these!

The Spirit Brings us Life

Gen 2:7 Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the **breath** of life, and the man became a living being.

At the beginning of Genesis 1, things began by word and spirit. In Gen 2:7, you will find the word for “breath” is also *wind* or *Spirit*. It’s not a mouth-to-mouth mud thing: it’s animation.

The Spirit Brings us Life

Ezekiel 37:4 Then he said to me, “Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. 5 Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will cause **breath** to enter you, and you shall **live**. 6 And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord.”

Centuries later, Ezekiel writes about the dry bones: The Israelites hold onto the hope that God would revive them and bring life to them. It’s the idea of the Spirit bringing life.

The Spirit Brings us Life

Rom 8:11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also **give life** to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

This is also reflected in Romans 8. The one who puts the sinews back together, the one who raises Jesus back to life will do the same for you. Without him, you are a walking zombie. The one who gives life is in you wherever you go, whatever you do. When you speak to others, you speak with the Spirit in you. Advent causes us to stop and think about this...and it should FLOOR you that in our ordinary lives, the Spirit lives in us and gives us life. The God that created all dwells in you! This is life changing: Advent is a time to ponder this. This should also humble us. This is actively waiting.

Let’s review some verses from last week:

The Spirit Walks Alongside Us

John 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another **advocate** to help you and be with you forever.

John 14:17 ...the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for **he lives with you** and will be in you.

John 16:13 But when he, the **Spirit of truth**, comes, he will **guide** you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will **speak** only what he **hears**, and he will **tell** you what is yet to come.

An advocate is a tug boat: picture being in the middle of the ocean in a storm and needing help. The tugboat comes alongside and attaches itself to the boat and guides it. This is what the Holy Spirit does for us. The Spirit never speaks independently of the Father and Son: the guidance that the Spirit gives us is from God. He guides us out of chaos and restructures reality for. He tells us what Jesus wants: Where should I go? What should I do?

The Spirit Clothes Us To Continue . . .

Luke 24:49 I am going to send you what my Alo..., Slide 61 of 144 promised; but stay in the city until you have been **clothed** with power from on high.

Advent invites us to look for the places that the Spirit has and will guide us.

Part of Advent is to stop and reflect on how the Holy Spirit clothes us. This empowers me to go out in two ways:

The Spirit Clothes Us To Continue . . .

Galatians 5:22–23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

The Spirit Clothes Us To Continue . . .

1 Corinthians 12:4–7 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”

The Spirit Clothes Us To Continue . . .

Romans 12:4 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; 7 if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; 8 if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

The Spirit Clothes Us To Continue . . .

Jesus taught - gift of teaching

Jesus healed - gift of healing

Jesus discerned hearts – gift of discerning of spirits

Jesus performed miracles – gift of miracles and faith

Jesus spoke God's truth – gift of prophecy

Jesus served and encouraged – gift of serving, encouragement

Jesus showed mercy – gift of mercy

Jesus led His disciples – gift of leadership

Jesus gave freely – gift of generosity

1. The first way is to bring his character onto us and into us. Actively waiting is figuring out what it looks like to cooperate with God in me. (Parenting does this, too, for children)

When I offer love, peace, etc. I am joining the spirit in his work. Remember Ron Layman's sermon on Community as a Crime Scene? He was digging a ditch and Izan, his young son, came out and joined him with a toy shovel. I am cooperating with God in his character development but it looks a lot like the image Ron gave us.

2. This continues in Romans 12. It's not just that we have God's character, he also gives us gifts to do his work for the common good. It's a picture of a bunch of kids learning to work out Jesus in the world. These are all reflections of Jesus: Advent invites me to review how I am lining up my life to what Jesus calls me to.

As I reflect on these things, the Holy Spirit pulls me out of things, guides me, invites me to imitate him.

Thoughts on Formation and Gifting

Matthew 18:20 For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.

1 Thess 5:19 Do not quench the Spirit. **20** Do not treat prophecies with contempt **21** but test them all; hold on to what is good, **22** reject every kind of evil. **23** May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **24** The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

I want to reflect on practical ways to practice following the Holy Spirit. It best happens in Community: the Spirit resonates with the Spirit in you and me together. I began to have a deeper appreciation of what he is doing in me.

I Thessalonians talks about quenching the spirit: We can all become referees very easily. The prophetic word is about telling the truth: what is and what will be if a certain path is continued.

This is not a lot of work, however. The reality is that we are to be humble vessels who dig the ditch like Izan working with his father. ***This requires a willingness to cooperate.*** My children all made it to bed on a daily basis but sometimes it involved more peace than others. God's work **will** be done in you!

Thoughts on Formation and Gifting

2 Tim 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

1. *The Bible Recap podcast. For adults and Kids*
2. *The Paradise King by Blaine Eldridge*

The Holy Spirit is both a reality and an experience. The problem is that my experience reflects two character truths: hyper-memorization of Scripture like it's a rule book. Truth is prescriptive. But you could lose the mud and dirt of the story because hearing from God is dry and rule-based. I would advise you to hang on to the truth and step into the story. Others go the other way: you are in the story but you shrink away from Scripture.

Two practical ways to engage with both of these extremes are the Bible Recap (daily podcast) and to read the Paradise King to engage deeply in the story. Both of these will help you wait for the return of the king!

Thoughts on Formation and Gifting

Ways to Listen

Words, Images, Knowing, Feelings

I personally hear from the Holy Spirit because I expect the Holy Spirit to speak to me. When I sit down to speak with people, for example, he speaks through others to me. I am always looking for

- direct **words** from God
- **Images** that come to my mind; I'm not afraid to offer these.
- Sometimes I just **know** what's right and I wrestle with this
- It's just **feelings**: a room feels sad or scary or happy. Maybe it's the Holy Spirit? Maybe ask what is going on with someone?

