

The First Sunday of Advent
28-11-2021
St Cuthbert's Anglican Church – Tweed Heads

- Jeremiah 33: 14-16 Prophecy – David's Branch will come
 "the Lord is our Righteousness"
- Psalms 25:1-10 God, in You I trust, Teach me your ways
- 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13 Paul prays for the Thessalonians to be
 Strengthened in Faith
- Luke 21: 25-38 Jesus teaches in the Temple about the end times
 He will return and we need to be watchful

Introduction

Today we begin the season of Advent in our church calendar. Advent is a time to prepare, both for the celebration of Christmas, and also, for when Jesus will come again.

Advent is a time when we look at the significance of being prepared and waiting with hope in our lives.

As I was thinking about waiting and being prepared, I thought about Smoke Detectors, because they also wait, and are ready.

Now as human beings we are clearly very different to Smoke Detectors, but I would like to look at the example of Smoke Detectors as we think about waiting and being prepared this Advent. In particular, I would like to look at smoke detectors, as they:-

- Need to have a battery to allow them to be ready.
- Need to ensure the battery is charged so they will continue be ready.

Becoming a Christian

Becoming a Christian is like putting the battery in the Smoke Detector.

Accepting what Jesus has done for us, in his life death and resurrection, and knowing that we are able to enter into a relationship with God through Jesus is the beginning of our Christian Journey.

From the prophet Jeremiah today we hear these words:-

¹⁴ The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ¹⁵ In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

As Christians we believe Jesus is the righteous branch who has come.

And as we accept Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes and lives within us. Accepting Jesus, and beginning our Christian journey, means we will be ready for when Jesus returns.

Having a relationship with God through Jesus allows us to be ready for the life God has planned for us. As human beings we are designed to live in a relationship with God.

So just like putting a battery in a smoke detector allows it to begin to do what it is supposed to do, accepting Jesus is the beginning of us living the lives we are supposed to live.

Advent – A Time to Prepare

Continuing on with the analogy, we know that Smoke detectors will not continue to be ready, unless the batteries in them are kept charged.

I would like to look at the reading from Paul's letter to the Thessalonians today to see some of the ways we might keep our batteries charged so that we will be ready for when Jesus returns.

Firstly from verses 9 and 10:-

⁹ How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? ¹⁰ Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

Paul wanted to be there to guide the Thessalonians in their faith. Paul's letters are mostly about helping struggling churches, to better live into the lives of faith, God had planned for them.

We are all at different stages in our Christian journey. Sometimes we may need the guidance of more mature Christians in our lives. Sometimes we may be called upon to be the ones helping to give guidance and advice. As Christians we live in community and are called to nurture and support one another.

And now let's look at verse 12:-

¹² And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you.

As Christians we are called to love one another. This is sometimes not very evident. When we look at the bigger picture, we only need to look at the splitting up of the church into the various denominations to see that love was somehow missing. When we look at the smaller picture we can see disagreements within our own parish where love may not be evident. Sometimes to increase and abound in love for one another is very challenging. But showing God's love is what we are called as Christians to do.

Showing God's love to others is something that does not always come easily, but it is something we need to work on continually as Christians.

And finally verse 13:-

¹³And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

Just like a battery needs to be kept charged, we need to nurture and ensure God's Holy Spirit is at work within us. There are many ways we do this, through prayer, through continually reading the Bible, by worshipping together, and by sharing in fellowship together. We need to continually engage with God and one another if we are to remain ready for when Jesus will return.

Difference

With smoke detector's there may never be a fire. But we know that Jesus will come again. Today in Luke's Gospel (21:36) we hear:-

³⁶Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

Conclusion

Ultimately all analogies break down.

Human beings are not the same as a smoke detectors, and a battery doesn't work in exactly the same way as our faith or the Holy Spirit in our lives, but I hope you can see that, just like a Smoke Detector needs a battery that is continually recharged, we need to accept Jesus and work on our relationship with God, and with one another, if we are to live the lives we're designed to live. And if we are to be ready when Jesus returns. Amen.