

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
NOVEMBER 29, 2020

Isaiah 64.1-9

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—
as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil—
to make your name known to your adversaries,
so that nations might tremble at your presence!
When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.
From ages past no one has heard,
no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who works for those who wait for him.
You meet those who gladly do right,
those who remember you in your ways.
But you were angry, and we sinned;
because you hid yourself we transgressed.
We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
There is no one who calls on your name,
or attempts to take hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us,
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.
Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;
we are the clay,
and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD,
and do not remember iniquity forever.

Now consider, we are all your people.

While we are waiting, come; while we are waiting, come.

Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting come.

v 1, "While We Are Waiting, Come", (Hymn # 92. Glory To God Hymnal)

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Thirsty...you gave me something to drink
Isaiah 64.1-9

Thirst can have multiple meanings. To physically thirst is to desire liquid of some kind to quench one's thirst. Metaphorically, to thirst means to dearly desire something, such as "I thirst for a good book". The text from Isaiah illustrates the latter more than the former, as there is no mention of liquid or a physical thirst of any kind. The thirst referred to in this text is also more than simply metaphorical, it is metaphysical: the prophet wants God to manifest a presence that will be awesome and transformative. Knowing that the people cannot approach God, the prophet implores God to come to the people.

The author cries out:

*O that you would tear open the heavens and come down
so the mountains would quake,
brush wood would be kindled and cause water to boil
to make your name known to your adversaries
so that nations might tremble at your presence...*

The irony is that the "adversaries" in the poem are not simply the enemies of God, they are the people of God themselves. The prophet appeals on behalf of all the people, confessing their sin and their hopelessness while also holding out great hope for this gift.

The season of Advent is about waiting on God once again, and the again is equally important. God has appeared in the person of Jesus 2000 or so years ago according to the storytellers who noticed and noted and promoted the event. Amongst the first storytellers were the shepherds, followed within a month by a woman prophet and a male prophet according to Luke. And, we as modern day disciples of Jesus await not only the remembrance of that promise, but the potential for the new adventure that is possible because we do remember and we thirst for God's presence and presents once again.

The prophet confesses the sins of the people in bold terms as a way of petitioning the LORD, admitting that the people have ceased to call on God's name. The prophet chooses to do so, to express the thirst for God in terms that hearken God's response. And so, on this first Sunday of Advent, we too, begin the season in which we beseech God to once again disclose God's self. May we have the courage to call on God's name, to not be shamed by our sin, to not be consumed by our anger, and to ask God not to be angry with us, as we join in with the prophet reminding ourselves and each other with this affirmation: "O LORD, you are our Father...we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand...now consider, we are all your people"! May we deepen our thirst for God!

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Thirsty...you gave me something to drink

www.thewaterproject.org

Clean, safe drinking water is scarce:

today, nearly 1 billion people in the developing world do not have access to it

Water is the foundation of life

Today many people around the world spend their entire day searching for it

Time lost gathering water and suffering from water-borne disease limits potential

Education is lost, economic potential is lost, women and children lose more

World-wide, 1 of every 5 deaths of children under 5 due to a water-related disease

www.nature.org

Fresh water is essential for life

2.5%-3% of the earth's water resources are fresh

Less than 1% of this is easily accessible

2/3rds of it is found in frozen glaciers or other inaccessible places

Fresh water challenges in US

More than 1/2 of continental US has regularly experienced drought over past 2 decades

Because of climate change, scientists predict precipitation will decline by 20-25% in much of the western US by 2100

In 2014 40 of 50 state water managers

predicted water shortages over next 10 years

44% of US population depends upon ground water for drinking water

www.nationalgeographic.com

Why Is America Running Out Of Water?

On average, each American uses 80-100 gallons of water each day

www.commondreams.org

Millions of Americans drink unsafe tap water, including those in Flint, MI

US groundwater faces increasing depletion with more wells being dug

www.awwa.org (American Water Works Association: nonprofit org for clean/safe water)

massive investments in water infrastructure systems required, many 100 yrs old
cost would be \$1 trillion dollars over 25 years

What is the Spirit inviting us to consider when it comes to opportunities regarding water?