

Rev. Thomas Emery
“Advent – Making Ready” Mark 1:1-8
Salem Presbyterian Church
Sunday, December 7, 2014

One cannot help but think that if God were really going to act at that particular time in history, He would have acted through the officials, the kings and rulers of the day, or perhaps through the high priest at the Temple. Certainly one would think that God would act through the important people of the day and not one who came out of the desert wearing camel hair clothing and eating locusts and honey. You would act through people who you thought would have the greatest impact on the greatest number of people. God often works behind the scenes through ordinary people at times and in places where you would least expect it.

TEACHING POINTS

Teaching Point One: *Gospel - Advent means "coming."* Two thousand years ago, in a place called Bethlehem, lying in a manger, God came to us in the weakness of a baby. God entered our world, lived, breathed, and walked among us. Jesus taught, loved, cried, died on a cross, and rose again. God came to us; Advent. He said that He will be coming again soon.

Teaching Point Two: *Repent - Repentance means we do an "about-face."* We make a 180-degree change in direction. John is calling out to all who will hear, "The Lord is coming. Make ready. He's coming in the fullness of His salvation."

Teaching Point Three: *Believe - Jesus is coming. Are we ready?* John announced that God Himself had come to this world. But there is a second facet to John's announcement. John also announced that another baptism was coming, a baptism of the Holy Spirit. Have you invited the Holy Spirit into your life; if you have, your life will be more prepared with the Holy Spirit's leading.

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE

“I baptize you with water, but he (Jesus) will baptize you with the Holy Spirit” (Mark 1:8 NLT)!

ACTION POINT

To rediscover the joy of Christmas, we need to make an effort to change our selfish, worldly ways. This Advent, we should find more time for prayer, more time for worship, more time for reading our Bibles, more time to lovingly share our faith, and more time for doing the things we should be doing as Christians. If we are able to make these changes, we will discover a new sense of joy in our lives. No matter what situations we might find ourselves in, we can still experience the joy that comes from knowing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The urgency is that the Messiah is about to come. Let us make ready!