

**Advent Week Two**  
**PEACE: Christ is Peace's Embodiment**  
**December 8-14, 2019**

Advent is a time to slow down and remember who you are. Frederick Buechner writes this about Advent: "In the silence of a midwinter dusk, there is a sound so faint that for all you can tell it may be only the sound of the silence itself. You hold your breath to listen. You are aware of the beating of your heart. The extraordinary thing that is about to happen is matched only by the extraordinary moment just before it happens. Advent is the name of that moment."

Jesus will say many things in his 33 years of life, but one of the most poignant phrases he leaves us with before he endures death on a Roman cross is this: "I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Creator will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. (John 14:25-27)

What troubles your heart? What keeps it afraid? How do you guard it against those things which would paralyze you and keep you trying to be invulnerable?

Jesus said you are the light of the world! Don't hide under a bushel basket! There are so many bushel baskets that we could hide under: I'm not worthy of love. I do not belong here. I am bad. I am wrong. I am a mistake. I am not worth being known. I do not matter. I am ugly. I am worthless. I am unlovable. I am the summation of all the pain I feel. I am just not good enough. I was born wrong. I did a thing that I can never receive forgiveness for because I am just a really bad person. Shame is a very effective and very terrible bushel basket.

Jesus says you are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Be no less than who you are. Don't hide. Don't dilute. Be who I created, which is to say, be you.

God first created light and said it was good. And then Jesus shared that with us and said, YOU, YOU, YOU are the light of the world. You are good too. Let your light so shine, that it brings glory to God. That means be you. Be your fabulous self... be your best self... be at peace.

**Scripture:**

Matthew 5:14-16: 14 You are the light of the world. A city on top of a hill can't be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a basket. Instead, they put it on top of a lampstand, and it shines on all who are in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before people, so they can see the good things you do and praise your Creator who is in heaven.

Luke 1:78-79 "By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us,  
79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

**Readings:**

“Peace is not the product of terror or fear.  
Peace is not the silence of cemeteries.  
Peace is not the silent result of violent repression.  
Peace is the generous,  
tranquil contribution of all  
to the good of all.  
Peace is dynamism.  
Peace is generosity.  
It is right and it is duty.”

Archbishop and now Saint Oscar A. Romero, *The Violence of Love*

**Prayer:** Center this thought in prayer this week,  
*O God the Light of the World,  
prepare our hearts, for Emmanuel is coming.  
Teach us peace in our waiting. Amen.*

**Questions to consider:** Is peace the absence or presence of something? What do hearts stayed and steadied in peace look like? What does it look like to be at peace with who we are?

**Spiritual Practices:** Let contemplation be your guide through this second week of Advent. Anglican systematic theologian, Sarah Coakley describes contemplation as an ascetic discipline and one which should be a serious endeavor in a Christian’s life. Coakley defines contemplation as particular kind of prayer, wherein one repeatedly waits on God in silence. This practice cultivates the work of the Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, who is often reduced to fluff, but who is actually a fierce subverter of powerful and evil institutions. Coakley writes: “Contemplation makes great ethical demands– to lose one’s life in order to gain it, to turn the other cheek, to love one’s enemies. It is not a form of disengagement, but of passionate reordered engagement.”<sup>1</sup>

Further, contemplation is a vulnerable act as one sits and receives the divine gifts that God gives, but in this process, the self is expanded. When one is quiet and open, one can see much more about oneself and the world than one could in the midst performing a series of tasks.

Sit. Be quiet. Be still. Let God come to you, come in you, come behind you, come before you. Let God bring you into a deeper knowledge of Godself. You may find that you get to know yourself better, because, after all, you are made in the image and likeness of God.

The practice of silent contemplation (along with the removal of activities which preclude one from contemplation), can be a dear companion through the journey of Advent. We want God. We want to be opened, filled, humbled, and challenged by the Creator who first prepared this journey for us. May it be so for us this Advent.

Catch the Sunday Advent sermon for December 8th (posted on Monday) [here](#).

1. Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self: An Essay ‘On the Trinity,’* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 340-344.