

There is so much going on in our world today that it is easy to suffer from sensory overload. There is so much to see, hear and do that it can become overwhelming. We have been using the weekends in December to focus on the most important things. The last two weeks we've talked about Advent as a time to listen to the voice of God and to prepare for the Lord's coming. Today we're reminded that Advent is a time to see.

So what do you see? Do you see all of the decorations, the Christmas lights and Christmas trees? Or do you see all of the things that you have to get done and don't have a clue how you will get to them. When we have too many things in front of us, it is hard to see. We all know that it is hard to see in the dark. But sometimes darkness is not just the lack of light. It can also be hard to see in times of personal darkness. That darkness may be called depression, doubt or fear. Darkness may overcome us when we have nothing to look forward to, feel like we have no contribution to make, or there is no one in our lives to love.

When that happens, we have to remember that Jesus is the Light of the World and that Jesus gives us light. Simeon was an old man who had lived through some tough times in Israel. But God gave him the promise that he would not die before he had seen the Promised Savior. When the baby Jesus was only 40 days old, Mary and Joseph took Him to the temple in Jerusalem. After Simeon saw Jesus, he said, "**Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.**" (Luke 2:29-32) Not only did Simeon get to see the Savior, but he realized that Jesus would become the light of the nations.

So what do you see when we look to Jesus? The Prophet Isaiah told us what to look for in the coming Messiah when he wrote, "**For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**" (Isaiah 9:6)

So what do you see when you look at Jesus? Do you see the Wonderful Counselor? A counselor helps us see the world from a different perspective. A counselor can help lead and guide us down a better path. Jesus gives us a different perspective on our world. The person with the most toys doesn't win. The person with the most Christmas present doesn't win either. The person who follows the Lord is the real winner. The people who are filled with God's love so that they can love others are the real winners. The people who respond to evil with good follow the advice of the Wonderful Counselor.

What do you see when you look at Jesus? Do you see the Might God? Or is your God too small? Do you see the God who can help you face anything and everything that life throws at you, or do you see a God who is weak and ineffective? The angel Gabriel told Mary that “**nothing is impossible with God.**” (Luke 1:37) The “impossible baby” born to Mary grew up to be the Son of the Almighty God who defeated sin and death. Whatever battles you are facing in life, whether they are temptations, rejection, disappointment or loss, remember to look at Jesus and see the Almighty God who is on your side. Then take the words of 1 Corinthians 15:57 to heart, “**But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**”

When you look at Jesus, what do you see? Do you see the Everlasting Father? Jesus said that He and the Father are one. Sometimes people struggle with the idea of God as a loving Father because our human fathers can let us down. But God is not an absentee Father. Jesus entered our world to be with us. He is not an abusive Father. God loves us. He is a close, caring and attentive Father, the one who can and will meet all of our needs. Jesus said, “**Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren’t you far more valuable to him than they are?**” (Matthew 6:26 NLT)

Finally, when Jesus flashes before your eyes, do you see the Prince of Peace? Peace is such a rare thing in our world today. Peace and quiet is hard to find in a world filled with doubt, uncertainty and confusion. But Jesus can give us peace. He told His disciples, “**I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.**” (John 14:27 NLT) Jesus can give us this kind of peace because He gives us peace with God, the peace that comes from knowing that God loves us, that our sins are forgiven, and that we have nothing to be afraid of. Jesus gives us peace because he turns darkness into light. He is the light of the world. Jesus turns fear into joy because His perfect love overcomes fear.

Advent is a time to see the manger, the cross and the empty tomb. Advent is time to see the Wonderful Counselor, the Might God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Advent is the time to see God’s gift of Salvation in His Son Jesus Christ. And when we see Him, we have light and life and hope and peace. So keep your eyes on Jesus and He will keep close to you. Amen.