

AN ADVENT WALK THROUGH THE KERYGMA

A note of thanks.

Many people will start writing thank you notes for gifts, visits, and the joy of the Christmas celebrations next week. Erin sometimes teases me because I am terrible at writing thank-you notes. It's not that I write bad notes, but I take forever to do it. First, I try to write longhand, and it's been many years since penmanship at Simond's elementary school. Secondly, I try to write each note individually. Lastly, while I'm writing, I really do try to picture the person I'm writing it to and hold them in my heart. It's a very personal thing.

How do you write a thank you note to Jesus Christ? Jesus, who gives his very body to rescue us from The Enemy. Jesus, whose body becomes the doorway out of the doorless room in which we were trapped. Jesus literally jumps in the hole with us and says come along, friend, for I am the way out. It's a gift of impossible value because a price cannot be affixed to it. It could only be paid for by God's very life itself. How can words be enough to say thanks?

The simple fact is that we cannot write it in a note, and we can't only speak it with words. Most certainly, we can pray many prayers of thanksgiving for such an incredible gift. But this gift we received Was paid for with a life. Our thank you must really be written with the same cost, but this time, it is paid for with our life. We are invited not to die but rather to die to self in place of something better.

Jesus rescues us from The Enemy and offers us a better way. He showed it to us by the way he lived his own life. It comes down to 7 simple things: Love God, Love neighbor, Serve others, Forgive, Prayer, Eucharist, and Share the Gospel. This is what Jesus did throughout his life, and before the final act, his prayer to the Father was not about what he wanted but about surrender. *"My Father, if it is not possible that this cup pass without my drinking it, your will be done!"* Mt 26:42 We have to surrender ourselves to the will of God.

“Will I deliver the good news for God?”

Those seven simple things become a lot easier once we have surrendered to God's will. And that's the rub: This world tells us to do it on our own, but the God who loves us, the God who created us, the God who wants only what is truly good for us, like a loving parent, guides us along the right path.

So, can we keep this extraordinary gift at the forefront of our minds daily? Can we avoid becoming complacent? Can we acknowledge that this gift has happened and has consequences for our daily life? If we can truly be aware that the gift we have received is the most valuable thing in the world, then it also requires an additional response from us.

Imagine, if you will, you were driving along the road almost out of fuel, and you passed the gas station. You look up at the price at the sign for the fuel. Every price is the same: regular, premium, and diesel, all at \$0.01. You are shocked! Indeed, this must be a mistake, but you pull into the gas station just in case. You activate the gas pump and start pumping away. Fifteen gallons later, you look at the total charge, and it is \$0.15. Shocked, you go inside to pay to expect a gotcha, and sure enough, it's only 15 cents. You ask if it's a mistake, and the attendant says no, that is always our price, forever. Curious how they can make money at that price, they state that the fuel is there for all, at a tiny cost compared to its value, because all should have access. Every person who comes for fuel gets what they need at a very tiny cost.

Would you keep this a secret? Of course not! You would certainly call your family members and your close friends. And weeks later, when the price still hadn't changed, you'd probably tell more and more people. It's something so incredible you couldn't keep it a secret.

The gift we have received from Jesus is worth so much more than gasoline at a penny a gallon. It is the best return on investment in the entire world, the whole universe, and all that there is, things visible and invisible. Because the payoff is eternal life. Are we willing to share that good news? We don't have to spend time convincing people. We deliver the good news for God. We must share the Gospel in a way people can relate to and let the Holy Spirit do the rest.

The gift of our **RESCUE** requires a response. Will you **RESPOND**?

Dear Friends, it has been a very special time walking with you. May your Advent prayer bring you to Christmas joy. In Christ's Love, Deacon Todd