



ADVENT

— Hope. Love. Joy. Peace. —

Key points

Think back through the message.
What stuck out?

THE NOW AND NOT YET

Isaiah 35:1-10; Psalm 146:5-10; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11

ISAIAH 35

- Creation and humankind lean toward wholeness
- We imagine an age of Shalom, despite the realities of war and the polarizations that exist in our world today
- Romans 8:22-23

JAMES 5

- Patience
- Look at the example of the Prophets
- “strengthen your heart”

MATTHEW 11

- v. 3
- Matthew 16:13-14
- For the last two thousand years many have asked the same question

Isaiah 35:5-6

Psalm 146:7-8

Matthew 11:5-6

Advent calls us to step off the footpath, and onto the main street, leaping into the parade of life itself

- Isaiah 35:10
- Matthew 11:11

“When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?’”

(Matthew 11.2-3)

As a young Christian I remember hearing the aphorism, “God always answers prayer, sometimes ‘yes’, sometimes ‘no’, and sometimes ‘wait’.” I learnt that ‘wait’ was not just about time and timing, but also about space, openness and hope.

As we approach Christmas, the season of Advent is full of hope and expectation, as was John the Baptist in prison and many of his contemporary Jews, who were expecting a messiah to replace the Roman authority with a divinely instituted monarchy. Even the smallest child in the lead up to Christmas can empathise with the question, “Are you the one?” For me Advent has always been about expectation and hope. As a child the hope was centred on the tradition of gift receiving, as an adolescent on gift giving, but of late I have been asking the question, “For what should I hope?”

There is a sense in which all three answers from the aphorism are true. ‘Yes’, Jesus is the answer to God’s promise. ‘No’, this is not the answer you were expecting - a different person at the top of the same authority structure. But, ‘Wait’, God has a better plan - the old will pass away, and new life will emerge.

The story of God and his people is one that is full of surprises, and I hope to be surprised by God many times over. What are you hopeful for today?

