

Advent  
“Turning Toward Home”  
Luke 21:25-36

December 3, 2000  
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In a Tom Wilson Cartoon, Ziggy is standing in front of a large directional sign at a shopping mall. The familiar “you are here” arrow is pointing to a particular spot. Under the sign this question has been added. ISN'T IT ABOUT TIME YOU HEADED HOME.

Will you be home for Christmas? By home I do not mean chestnuts roasting on an open fire, nor some man from Tennessee headin' for Pennsylvania, and some home made pumpkin pie. Most of us will find our way to these places for the holidays. The question I pose is much different than family reunions. It has to do with peace of mind, satisfaction of the soul, a connectedness to God and God's people that warm the heart whatever the weather of life may be. So I extend to a spiritual invitation to come home for Christmas.

I. COME HOME TO A SELF YOU CAN LIVE WITH

A. The lectionary scripture reading for today has nothing to do with a virgin and child, shepherds and choirs. It speaks of earthquakes and heaven shakes that leaves the strongest of men fainting in terror as the Son of Man comes in a cloud of great power and glory. When this glad and awful day comes Dr. Luke gives this advice: BE CAREFUL, OR YOUR HEARTS WILL BE WEIGHED DOWN WITH DISSIPATION, DRUNKENNESS AND THE ANXIETIES OF LIFE AND THAT DAY WILL CLOSE ON YOU UNEXPECTEDLY LIKE A TRAP.

1. May I ask you a very personal question? WHY ARE YOU TRYING TO KILL YOURSELF? Why are you running here, racing there, abusing your body and numbing your soul? Who are you trying to impress? What do you hope to accomplish?

2. I know. We are just trying to make ends meet. Hold things together, keep the wolf away from the door and the creditors outside the gate.

a. Rabbi observed a man running here, rushing there. Why are you rushing so much? Inquired the Rabbi. “I'm rushing after my livelihood,”

replied the man. “And how do you know that your livelihood is running before you, so that you have to rush after it,” quizzed the Rabbi, “Maybe its behind you and all you need to do is stand still.

b. We build elaborate houses with every imaginable convenience then hardly spend any time there. Nouwen We have an address but are seldom home.

3. I know. We are just trying to do what is expected of us. Who wants to be odd, even for God?

a. Barrie Shepherd “I’m Dreaming”

I’m dreaming of a right Christmas,

When every item that I buy will be on sale and also the ideal gift for persons who have everything already.

I’m dreaming of a bright Christmas,

when the tree lights work first time and flash their brilliant message of success from every tasteful, decorated, artificial limb

I’m dreaming of a lite Christmas when

no matter how many goodies I consume

my weight will magically fall to just below the average.

I’m dreaming, but I’ll bet that what I get

will be the usual trite Christmas, tight Christmas, a bank will not underwrite Christmas.

b. Problem with loving our neighbors as we love ourselves is that we do. We expect from them the same perfections, compulsions, and addictions that we have come to fear in ourselves.

B. After chasing women, pursuing education, and planning a number of other not so productive pursuits, St. Augustine, in the 4<sup>th</sup> century came to this conclusion. MY SOUL IS RESTLESS UNTIL IT RESTS IN YOU, O GOD.

1. What if the bishop was right?

2. What if our rambling and roaming is a misdirected attempt to find the assurance and affirmation of God for which we so desperately long?

3. What if we stopped living to prove we are lovable and began rejoicing in the truth that we are loved--which is what Christmas is all about.

4. Love Amazing, Love Divine

Love came down at Christmas time. So let us hear God speaking in accents clear and still, above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self will. You are loved. I am loved. We can risk loving each other. Come home to self you can live with.

## II. COME HOME TO A GOD YOU CAN TALK WITH.

V.36 Be always on the watch and pray.

A. Children express it best. Last Sunday handed this note from a child in this church.

1. Please read this note next Sunday. The Lord is my best friend ever. I want to be a better disciple. P.s. Tell the Lord thanks for our life and love and glory. P.p.s.s. Don't call me on stage.

2. After all these years, is God still your best friend ever?

B. The greatest story ever told was about a father who had two sons. The younger one, sick of home asked and received his inheritance early, which he promptly wasted in riotous living. In the far country, hungry enough to eat the corn husks from the pig slop, he came to himself. When he came to himself he came home. Its here the story gets good. The father who had enough love to let him go had more than enough hope to wait for his return. While the prodigal is still a long way off, the father saw him, and was filled with compassion for him. He ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. Before the confession can hardly begin, the Father is giving orders--Quick, bring the best robe, put a ring on his finger, sandals on his feet--kill the prize heifer and let the party begin. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found. So they began to celebrate. What a story.

1. Real Prodigal here was the father. What extravagant, endless, extraordinary love---. With love like that, God welcomes us.

2. Coming home to a God like that is more than an idle dream. It is a present possibility.

## III. COME HOME TO A CHURCH YOU CAN CONNECT WITH

A. Harold Kushner in his famous creed for life, entitled Everything I need to Know I learned in Kindergarten, says that in addition to cleaning up our own messes, when we go out into the world, we ought to hold hands.

1. Mistake I made for most of my life is that I lived too much like a Lone Ranger. I didn't even have Tonto. I thought I could save the world on my own. I believed that if you wanted something done right you would be wise to do it yourself. I thought conferences and connections were a waste of time. I was wrong, dead wrong.

2. Barbara Striesand was right--People who need people are the luckiest people in all the world.

## B. COMMUNITY IS WRITTEN INTO THE CORE OF CREATION.

1. Me's and my's must always take into consideration the us and the ours. We are not alone. We are not free to do as we please, without regard for others.

2. God's best hope for community is the Church.

a. not perfect, Church a lot like Noah's ark, you couldn't stand the stink inside if it were not for the flood outside.

b. believe in principle what it takes in practice for community to come to pass. We have a common purpose. We believe in the forgiveness of sins. We have experienced reconciliation through Christ. Best of all God is with us in the person of the Holy Spirit. If we can't have community in the Church. Is community possible anywhere?

Come Home for Christmas  
Home to a self you can live with  
Home to a God you can talk with  
Home a to Church you can connect with.

No matter how far away you roam  
You can be home for Christmas.

Isn't it about time you headed home?