

**Resilient Faith
An Advent
Spirituality for
Today**

Reading Mark in Advent:

**Wakefulness in Winter as
We Attend to the Gift.**



The Plan

- **Session One**

Mark in his Time and ours
– Why Paying Attention Matters

- **Session Two**

Mark's Good News of the Kingdom
– The World on its Head!





“Christian” Reading of Covid 19

- This is a sign of the end – so get ready for heaven before Armageddon!
- This is an opportunity to turn people to Jesus because they are thinking about death!
- God has done this to manifest the divine wrath at the world’s sin

(Courtesy of Tom Wright: “God and the Pandemic” SPCK 2020)

Advent

New Church Year – The Year of Mark

A Different Notion of Time

Kairos v's Chronos

(Not so much a matter of counting the days
as making the days count!)



Reading the Scriptures in Advent

‘We should rest in Scripture as the beloved disciple rested his head on Jesus’ heart since “what is meant by the heart of Christ is Sacred Scripture, which reveals Christ’s heart.”

Let us remember that the Bible is *historical*, *theological* and *liturgical* at the same time:

it witnesses to historical events that are theologically interpreted in the light of faith and that take on new life in the liturgical celebration.’

Enzo Bianchi “Lectio Divina – From God’s Word to Our Lives”





The Gospel of Mark

- First Gospel (consensus)
- Associated with Peter (tradition)
- Dominant Themes:
 - Jesus as Crucified Messiah
 - Incomprehension of the Disciples
- Context:
Persecution of Roman church and the Jewish war.

Mark 13 – The Little Apocalypse!

- The Genre of Apocalyptic belongs to the literature of resistance
- Receives vivid expression in the Book of Daniel 7-12
- In the context of oppression and persecution this writing gives expression to a profound belief in the justice and faithfulness of God
- Present in the NT notably in Revelation but also in the Gospels (Mark 13, Matt 24:1-31, Luke 21:5-28) and in Paul (1Thess 4:13-5:11)
- Backdrop - Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70AD, Mark perhaps also influenced by experience of the church in Rome under Nero.
- Characterised by symbolism of warfare and cosmic struggle.
- Linked to Mark 4 – the only other long passage of teaching from Jesus

Mark Calling us into Advent...

³³ Beware, **keep alert**; for you do not know when the time (**KAIROS**) will come.

³⁴ It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch.

³⁵ Therefore, **keep awake**-- for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn,

³⁶ or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly.

³⁷ And what I say to you I say to all: **Keep awake.**"
(Mk. 13:33-37)

- Beware “watch out” 8x in the Gospel (4x in this chapter) - the verb to see in the imperative
- Keep awake 4x (twice here and in Gethsemane 14:34,38 where Jesus finds the disciples asleep!)



What's the warning...then and now?

- Don't be deceived into thinking that things are God's work that are not God's work at all.
- As followers of Christ We are not called to predict the future, but to respond to the signs of the times.
- Trust in the faithfulness of God understanding it through the lens of the Good News of the Kingdom.
- "See, (watch out) I have already told you everything" Mk 13:23

First Sunday: Tear Open the Heavens

For you are our father, though Abraham does not know us and Israel does not acknowledge us; you, O LORD, are our father; our Redeemer from of old is your name. Why, O LORD, do you make us stray from your ways and harden our heart, so that we do not fear you? Turn back for the sake of your servants, for the sake of the tribes that are your heritage. ***O that you would tear open the heavens and come down***, so that the mountains would quake at your presence-- When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. ... We have all withered like leaves, for you hid your face from us; And yet Lord, You are our Father; we the clay, you the potter, we are all the work of your hand.



An Advent Spirituality

- Begins with “attention” to what is...now
- Is open to the encounter with God in the Word
- Trusts in the Potter, who is willing to reveal himself in the Clay.



This time is God's time! KAIROS

Only they who stand with both feet on the earth,
who are and remain totally children of the earth,
who undertake no hopeless attempts at flight to unreachable heights, who are content with what they have and hold on to it thankfully - only they have the full power that serves the opportune time and thus eternity.

Let us await the Lord as a promise already fulfilled!

