

ADVENT LOVE 2006 SEASON OF LOVE
Revelation 1:4–8

On this Second Sunday in Advent
 Our Advent candle is LOVE
 We need to look at this today because
 We live in a world that is so full of hate.
 It is so competitive and combative
 That it seems were all out to get one another.

Just this past week, the Pope visited Turkey
 with the greatest security measure ever instituted for any dignitary.
 Snipers, riot police, soldiers, and strict measures were in place.
 With 20,000 Muslims chanting: "Pope Don't come" they carried signs
 That said: "Ignorant and sneaky pope, don't come" and
 "Jesus is not the son of God, he is a prophet of Islam."

President Bush also traveling was facing tight security,
 Hate chants, and protestors, crude banners, with rude gestures, and
 That was just in the US.
 People who are supposed to be respectable moral citizens.
 Some who even call themselves Christians.
 Spew their hate language for our leaders in side our country and we wonder
 Why should the people Estonia, Latvia, Iraq, or Ammon Jordan do any different?

This past weekend two men who were friends.
 Made a friendly \$20. bet over a Football game
 Then proceeded to drink beer all day,
 They got into an argument and one friend got his rifle and shot the other friend.
 Without Christ this world is going to get you.

But the Advent season says to you:

God is out to get you too,

not to put us down, or out.

Not to harm us, but to love us, and save us.

(((Ephesians 5:8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.

Live as children of light and find out what pleases the Lord. Ephesians 5:8)))

We were a people who walked in darkness,

But now the light of the lord shines upon us.

We are going to discover in this Season of Love

1. That God's love is eternal. He loves us with an everlasting love.
2. That God's love is personal
3. That God's love will set you free.

I. GOD'S LOVE IS ETERNAL—God's love never lets us go.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, ⁶and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power forever and ever! Revelation 1: 5b-6

We are looking at the Character of God.

Gods choose you in him before the foundation of the earth.
And arranged to love you forever and ever.

It was foreknown that a Virgin would conceive and bring for a child.
In 701 BC God wrote it thru Isaiah to the house of David.:

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

The Love of God planned the coming of the savior for us.

Because God is like a parent to us.
Not like earthly parents whose children are a surprise birth to them,
Or a burden to them.
Jesus was no surprise birth,
Neither was yours.

The psalmist 139:15-16 He knew you before you were created in your mother's womb. All the days ordained for me wee written in your book before one of them came to be.

Before you were conceived
God wrote you in the heavens,
Then he published you on earth.

For he choose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his children through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will...to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. Ephesians 1:4-6

And unlike many earthly parents,
Who abort or abandon their children,
God takes responsibility for every child.
No matter what we are always God's children.
We are always welcomed at His table.

I used to drive home from college late at night.
I wouldn't' always tell mom or dad.
Get there sometimes at 12:30, 1:00 in the morning.
But whenever I came into the house
They always welcomed me.
The bed was always ready.
My chair at the table was always open.
My room was still available.

Even the old dog didn't growl or bite me.
Because I was a part of the beloved family

Not like a family I heard about who when their child went off to college.
The very next week they turned their child's room into a den.
When she came home her bed was gone.
Her clothes were packed away.
Her desk was move and her things were all in a box.
It was like she hadn't been in that family
Friend you are never removed from Gods mind
When you trust him for your salvation.
He cares about you eternally.

**You will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior
Jesus Christ. II Peter 1:11**

Advent is the time that God reach down
from the heavens and put his arms around you.

A few years ago a man had a son who caused all kinds of trouble.

The boy had been in 10 or 12 schools... and he wasn't into high school yet.
No matter what he was given to do, he fouled it up.
He never followed directions; he didn't do what was asked.
He was cut up. Nothing went right with him.
One day his teacher told him how to do a project.
The boy did it right.
The teacher was so overwhelmed that he reached out to hug the boy in
An affectionate gesture.
The little boy pulled back. He wouldn't let him hug him.
The teacher said: "I just wanted you to know I'm proud of you,"
The little boy said: "If MY DAD had done that... it would have saved him a lot of
money." He never explained what he meant by that remark.

But we know what was meant.
We were created to respond to love.
God loved us and there is nothing in heaven or earth
that can keep you from his love.

God's love never lets us go.
You can't out sin the love of God.
You can't out-sin your purchased price on the cross.
You can only reject it.
But God keeps on loving you,
God keeps on being faithful,
Because he cannot betray himself.

II Timothy 2:13 If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

Sometime God allows love in our world to go to an extraordinary means.
Just to show us a glimpse of his love for us.

An 18 year old teenager, Art Hinkley, and his friend Lloyd were out working together when Lloyd had an accident occurred that pinned Lloyd under a 3000 pound tractor. Now Art wasn't a weight lifter but hearing Lloyd's scream, ran over and lifted that 3,000-pound tractor with his bare hands, so his friend Lloyd had enough room to wiggle out from under. Love is mountain moving motivator. (Calvin Miller, Leadership, 1988, p.68)

God loves us so much he reached down and sent his son born of a virgin.
To life the mountain of sin and death.
And give us the wiggle room to get out from under.

There is no place too dark that God cannot see.
There is no pit too deep that God cannot go.
There is no despair too heavy that God cannot lift.
You can't walk off the landscape of God's love in this world.
Our feelings may betray us.
But the fact of God's love will always save us.

Psalms 130:1 Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord; O Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy...O Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love. And with him is full redemption. Psalms 130:1-2,7

Human love is imperfect, but God is always trustworthy.

I. GOD'S LOVE IS ETERNAL

II. GOD'S LOVE IS PERSONAL.

Advent message to us is a personal one.
The angel came personally to the Shepherds.

Angels said: Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:11

You --- means you..

Personal Pronoun.

God sent Jesus for you.

One day a family had a birthday party for their mother. After all of the expensive gifts had been unwrapped and appropriately admired the littlest grand-child who had been virtually ignored because she was too young to choose a gift and too old to be a 'baby' climbed into her grand- mother's lap, gave her a big hug and said, "Grammie, for your burfday, I give you me!"

God in Christ climbed up on the lap of this world.
And said: For my Birthday—I give you me.
Every person in the world can say with assurance,

“For God so loved the World that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

God gave Jesus for me.

Because God loves me personally!

His love is not fickle or twisted like the worlds.

In the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin reign was full of mind numbing brutality. But his propaganda machine did its job well. Many Russians hailed him as a hero and a savior, including a young school girl who was chosen to greet Stalin. Years later, this woman recalled Stalin taking her onto his lap, smiling like a loving father. She was starry-eyed, and she cherished the moment for many years. Only later did she learn that during this period, Stalin had her parents arrested and sent to the labor camps, never to be seen again. (Today in the Word, October, 1997, p. 36.)

Which lap will you want to be sitting on?

Gods or the lap of the world?

God’s love is without boundary and any hint of indiscretion.

But for us to even comprehend this wonderful love we need help..

That why the Apostle Paul prays for the church at Ephesians.

And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,¹⁸ may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Ephesians 3:16-19

Friends God love for you is personal.

He will do all in his power to give you an opportunity to meet him

And to invite him into your heart and life.

Pastor Paul Rader had a heart for a New York State banker.

He urged the man to receive Christ, but the man would not make the decision.

One day the Pastor was moved by God to go immediately and speak to him again. So he took a train, hurried to the bank, and found his friend standing in the doorway. The banker said:

"Pastor Rader, I'm glad to see you! I wrote a telegram begging you to come, but later changed my mind and didn't send it."

That's all right," the pastor said, "your message came through by way of heaven."

Under deep conviction of sin, the banker bowed his knee and accepted the Lord into his heart as his savior.

In his newfound joy he exclaimed, "Did you ever see the sky so blue or the grass so green!" Pastor Raders response was : "Well Hallelujah, you're truly converted!"

"It's just like the song says, '**Heaven above is softer blue, earth around is sweeter green, something lives in every hue Christ less eyes have never seen.**'"

Suddenly the banker gave a strange gasp and fell over dead!

A massive heart attack!

But he had been saved at the very brink of eternity.
 What if the Pastor Rader had delayed or failed to go?
 Then that banker would be in a Godless eternity.

God's love in Christ was given personally for you.

I. GOD'S LOVE IS ETERNAL

II. GOD'S LOVE IS PERSONAL

III. GOD'S LOVE IS COMPLETELY FREEING

You may think you are free outside of Christ.
 You may even believe that you are in control of your life.
 But we are slaves to sin and this world.
 That why John wrote in Revelation 1:5-6

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, ⁶and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power forever and ever! Amen.

Anyone who has ever been white-water rafting knows what John was talking about.

When you start out on the river you seem to be in control of the raft,
 but when you come to the first rapids and the big waves threatened to engulf you.
 You know who is in control. The water swirls, pushes and pulls and twist and turns and
 no matter how hard you paddle or what direction you attempt to go, you will have no
 choice but to go through the rapids and down the river. In the boat or out of the boat.
 Because from this point o the river is in control, not the raft.

When we live outside of Christ
 we find ourselves in the rapids of sin,
 And we are rushing into a godless eternity
 Out of control into the abyss of ruin and destruction.

This verse says:

We have been freed from our sins by his blood.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, Amen. Rev 1:5

No wonder the Angels sang:
 Glory to God in the highest
 Glory to God in the highest
 Glory to God in the highest.

Christ came to set us free.
 He gave his life a ransom for me.

Jesus is our victory.
 But our salvation came at a great price.
 He came to love us.
 He came to die for us,

The question this morning is:

Should we take this love in a general way as a great historic wonder that we admire from a distance? Or do we take this personally
Accepting that Gods loved each of us individually.

Revelations 3:20 Jesus says: I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

You don't have to feel estranged from God

Your heart doesn't need to remain empty.

Jesus died for you at the cross.

Tell him your needs, confess your sin,

And Let him fill your life with his love and discover that

ADVENT – IT IS THE SEASON OF LOVE.