

**Sermon – 12-03-2017**  
**First Sunday of Advent – Mark 13**  
**By**  
**Pastor Christopher Miller**

**Advent is the season of waiting. The secular version of the Christmas season has us waiting for the day itself with anticipation. There are countdowns in store windows, plans are constantly made, and we love the eagerness of kids waiting with baited breath for the coming of the grand day. Of course, for the secular world, it's one day, and it's over. For us, we're waiting for something more important than presents and parties. We're waiting for the coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to this world.**

**But no matter what we're waiting for, waiting is hard. We have been trained by our culture and our society to get what we want right now. This usually shows up in economic terms: Just borrow the money, and you'll be able to get the stuff. Worry about how to pay for it later, enjoy it now. But think about even the smallest waits, and how we react to them. What about doctor's offices? There's an entire room for waiting. And it is one of the most dreaded rooms in existence, especially if you have wiggly toddlers or preschoolers involved. Think about having to get your car fixed, and you can't go off and do anything else, so you**

have to sit and wait. The longer it goes, the more your ire rises. We just want to get this *done*.

Even waiting for important things is difficult. We wait for healing. We wait for hope. And we wait for deliverance. And that was what the Israelites were waiting for in our Old Testament reading from Isaiah. They were waiting for deliverance from the punishment that God had put them under: exile in Babylon. They knew the power of God, and the deliverance of God, but they had to wait for it to come. I love that first line, "Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down." That is the core of our human ability to wait. We want God to tear things apart and come here *now*. When it doesn't happen this way, we get angry, frustrated, sad, and worst of all, convince ourselves that he's not actually going to do anything about it.

But just because the day has not come yet does not mean that the day is not coming. Our calendars will eventually reach December 25, so we know that day is coming, but the coming of our Savior Jesus Christ is just as guaranteed. How is it guaranteed? God has told us so. He has told us that Jesus is coming. He has told us that Jesus is coming soon. We will probably nitpick on God's definition of the word "soon," but he gets to set the definitions, not us. And that's part of our trouble with waiting: we want to set the terms, and we want the terms to be right now. But we do not know when the day will come. In fact, *Jesus* says he

**does not know the day or the hour. But he knows the day and hour are coming, so he tells us to watch.**

**This isn't just watching like you watch TV for background noise, though. The watching we do while waiting is a much more active thing. We are looking for Christ to come. We are watching for the fig leaves to bud. We are watching for the things that God told us about. Now, there is such a thing as being too watchful, where every little thing becomes a sign that the end times are near. But we do need to pay attention. We can't just lazily waste time while waiting. We have to be watching for the coming of our Savior. Why? Because we want to be a part of it. We want to be a part of his glorious appearing. We are already participating, by being here right now. As the word of his guaranteed arrival comes to you, he comes with it. He gives you the eyes to see. He gives you the eyes to watch for his arrival.**

**He has done this through the end of his first arrival. He came that you may have life through his death. He came that you may have hope through the darkest time of his life. He came that your waiting would not be for nothing. He came that you would be waiting for him, and he will come. AMEN.**