

# SERMON NOTES Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2022

## sunnysidechurch

Theme: **Advent**

Passages: **Isaiah 2:1-5, Romans 13:11-14, Matthew 24:36-44**

**Some of the main themes from the sermon**

### **God's restoration project**

One way of understanding the grand sweep of all the stories in the bible is as God's restoration project. This began after the good universe he had made (Gen 1-2) was spoiled by human pride and disobedience (Gen 3). Everything that follows is the story of God reclaiming and restoring his broken creation. It is a project, running over many centuries with many twists and turns. It's not over yet and we ourselves are part of that project.

### **Two stories running in parallel...**

In the season of Advent, which is just beginning, we focus on two parallel episodes in that great story. They both have to do with waiting. This involves looking forward, preparing and hoping. The first story is about looking forward to God's great masterstroke in the restoration project when he himself entered the story by being born in a manger 'because there was no guest room available' (Luke 2:7). That was the decisive episode in human history. It changed everything. The second story is the one we're part of. Paul is writing to the Christians in Rome about it. What he's saying is quite important. He's looking forward to the final chapter of God's restoration project, when there will be 'a new heaven and a new earth' (Rev 21.1) and there will be 'no more death or mourning or crying or pain' (Rev 21.4).

### **Living as people of the light (Romans 13:11-14)**

What Paul is saying to the Christians in Rome in the first century AD and to us in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is that we are active characters in the story. As God's people, looking forward to the day when God's restoration project is complete we have two important roles to play:

1. To understand the present time (v11-12)
2. Clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ (v13-14), so that other people will see that real joy is to be found by following Jesus not in the false, dehumanising gods that they may choose instead.

### **Some questions for thought and discussion this week:**

1. Share your thoughts as a group about the build up to Christmas. Do you enjoy the buzz of the commercial Christmas or does it detract from the waiting that Advent talks about?
2. Read Matthew 24:36-44, which was Sunday's gospel reading. Where do you see God's hand in world events?
3. 'The night is nearly over; the day is almost here.' (Romans 13:13). What do you feel about the waiting that we are engaged in as 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians?
4. What does it mean for you to 'clothe yourself with the Lord Jesus' (Romans 13:14)?
5. Paul urges the Roman Christians (and us) 'not to think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.' (Romans 13:14). How do we go about doing this?
6. This hymn, which we sang on Sunday, merges the two chapters of God's restoration project. Please take the opportunity to reflect on it and discuss it.

*Come, Thou long expected Jesus  
Born to set Thy people free;  
From our fears and sins release us,  
Let us find our rest in Thee.  
Israel's strength and consolation,  
Hope of all the earth Thou art;  
Dear desire of every nation,  
Joy of every longing heart.*

*Born Thy people to deliver,  
Born a child and yet a King,  
Born to reign in us forever,  
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.  
By Thine own eternal Spirit  
Rule in all our hearts alone;  
By Thine all sufficient merit,  
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.*