

Advent Conspiracy 1 – Conspiring to Change the Future!
Romans 13:11-14

- I. I want to invite you to join me in a conspiracy.
 - a. Over the next 4 weeks – Advent Conspiracy.
 - i. A conspiracy to re-claim Christmas.
 - ii. A conspiracy to change the perception of Christmas.
 1. Among Christians.
 2. In our culture.
 - b. Supreme Court – Christmas.
 - i. A number of years ago – sued for giving off at Christmas.
 - ii. Government won – Christmas is not a religious holiday.
 - c. If you look around you – you’ll understand why.
 - i. So much activity; so many things to do; how many of them have anything to do with the real meaning of this season?
 - ii. Not a Grinch – I like Christmas.
 - iii. It’s just that in so many ways we’ve lost any real sense of the true impact of that 1st Christmas.
 - d. The way back begins with Advent.
 - i. Advent is anticipation.
 1. Not just a countdown.
 2. An expectation.
 - ii. Advent is preparation.
 1. Doing advent well requires introspection.
 2. Doing advent well requires work.
 - a. Stuff to do.
 - b. That requires something different from you.
 - e. Advent is the first season of the church year.
 - i. The church year is an ancient way of telling time.
 - ii. Instead of focusing on the changing of the seasons, the church year is centered on the life of Jesus and follows the events of his life.
 - f. The Advent season is a time to prepare ourselves for the coming of the King.
 - i. It commemorates his birth (his first coming) at Christmas.
 - ii. And it anticipates his Second Coming.
 - iii. It remembers the work of God in the past and looks toward the future.
- II. Which brings us directly to Advent – beginning today.
 - a. A call to live a holy Advent.
 - i. A call to reclaim the drama and impact of Christ’s birth.
 - ii. A align yourself with the kingdom of God and not the kingdom of this world.
 - iii. A chance to show true love and compassion to the “least of these” that were so close to Jesus’ hearts.
- III. That’s where the conspiracy starts – Advent Conspiracy.
 - a. I want to invite you to join that conspiracy. Here’s what it looks like:
 - i. The first part: a commitment to worship (In worship we align ourselves w/ Christ).
 - ii. Second: Resisting the Empire (aligning ourselves with Christ’s Kingdom).
 - iii. Third: Relational Giving (gifts that matter to people that matter – things that last).
 - iv. Fourth: Sharing the Bounty (redistributing what we have to those who have nothing).
 - b. Today, we begin to conspire together to change the future.

- IV. Advent reminds us that the future is linked to His [Jesus] past.
 - a. In Romans 13, Paul calls upon us to “wake up.”
 - i. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. – Romans 13:12.
 - 1. Don’t miss it.
 - 2. Christ came, Christ will come – and we need to understand the present time.
 - ii. We need to be ready – clothed with the Lord Jesus Christ. – Romans 13:14.
 - b. I believe that Paul is right, “the hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber.” – Romans 13:11.
- V. Advent is a reminder that the birth of Jesus started a revolution.
 - a. When he was born, Kings were frightened enough to commit genocide.
 - i. When he was born, Angels announced his birth to shepherds in the field, not at the Temple.
 - ii. When he was born, God turned the world on its head.
 - b. It wasn’t a revolution that would be fought with weapons and armies.
 - i. It was a revolution that would be fought in the minds and hearts of humanity.
 - ii. It was a revolution that would leave no part of life untouched.
 - c. Jesus was a threat – there were very few who weren’t threatened by him.
 - i. Pharisees – Saducees – Romans – all threatened.
 - ii. Jesus stirred up the pot – constantly.
- VI. Advent is also a reminder that the return of Jesus will start a revolution.
 - a. In Matthew, we see that the seeds for that revolution have already been sown.
 - i. God’s been planning all this out and now...
 - ii. We get caught by surprise.
 - 1. “they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away.” – Matthew 24:40.
 - 2. “Therefore keep watch.” – Matthew 24:42.
 - b. When Jesus comes he comes with the surprise of the thief in the night.
 - i. This isn’t just some flight of fancy – Jesus is coming back.
 - ii. And when he does, the revolution will be completed.
 - c. Advent has us looking forward ...
 - i. Not to December 25th.
 - ii. But to the return of Christ – his 2nd coming.
- VII. Advent is also a reminder that the revolution – it begins now.
 - a. It’s time to pledge our allegiance.
 - i. Jesus wants us looking to the future.
 - 1. He wants us fixed on our destination.
 - 2. It’s time for us to align ourselves with that plan.
 - ii. The pledge of our allegiance is worship.
 - 1. In worship, we proclaim whose side of the revolution we’re on.
 - 2. In worship, we reclaim the scandal and the shock of Advent.
 - 3. God’s Son had come – and God’s Son will come again.
- VIII. It’s so appropriate to celebrate communion together today.
 - a. It’s an act of worship that brings our community together.
 - i. It’s a pledge of allegiance (of sorts) and aligns us with Jesus.
 - ii. But it is also Jesus’ recognition that we are conspiring together to change the future.
 - b. At the Lord’s Supper Jesus says something very interesting.
 - i. Luke 22:15-18 – “And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God." After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said,

"Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

- c. While we usually think of communion as a time of remembrance – echoing Jesus own words – “this do in remembrance of me.”
 - i. It’s also appropriate to think of communion as a glimpse of the future.
 - ii. It’s a snapshot of the heavenly banquet, when all of God’s people celebrate together.
- IX. We are conspiring together to change the future.
 - a. To change the future for as many people as possible – so that they can eat at that heavenly feast.
 - b. To change to future – to continue the revolution that Jesus himself began –
 - i. It begins now.
 - ii. It begins with our worship.
 - iii. It begins with us.
- X. Conspire together.
 - a. Be at worship this month.
 - b. Advent Devotional – worship each day.
 - c. Pray w/o ceasing – attitude of worship.