

SERMON MANUSCRIPT

Series: *King's Arrival*

Week 3: *The King Who Comes in Word and Sacrament*

Text: John 14:18–23

Introduction — “Where Is the King?”

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

One of the questions that Christians—especially during Advent—quietly ask is this: *Where is Jesus now? Where is the King?*

We look back to Bethlehem, to angels and shepherds and a star. We look forward to His return on the clouds with great glory. But what about the in-between? What about right now?

Many of us imagine that if Jesus would just show up visibly, everything would be easier. Our doubts would fade. Our anxieties would calm. Our faith would soar. If only we could see Him.

But Jesus says something surprising—something even better. The Lord wants His people to know that He is not absent. He has not left us to fend for ourselves. The King still arrives, still comes, still meets His people. And He does so in a way that is more constant and more certain than if He walked the streets of Mendon in the flesh.

Today the Gospel teaches us this Advent truth:

The King comes to us now—in His Word and in His Sacraments—with a presence as real as Bethlehem and as sure as His coming again.

I. The Promise of Presence

John 14:18–20 — “I will not leave you as orphans.”

The disciples in John 14 are troubled. Jesus has told them that He is going away. Their hearts sink: *Where are You going? Will we see You again? How will we know You're still with us?*

And Jesus answers with a promise full of tenderness:

“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”

Not: *“I will send someone else.”*

Not: *“I hope you remember Me.”*

But: **“I Myself will come to you.”**

Jesus is talking about more than His resurrection, though He includes it. He is talking about the way He will come to His people *continually* through the presence of the Holy Spirit...

the presence of His Word...

the presence of His gifts.

He says,

“In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.”

Through the Spirit's work, Jesus makes His home with His people. Every time the Scriptures are read, every time the Gospel is preached, every time the absolution is spoken—**Jesus Himself is present. The King arrives.**

Advent isn't just about preparing for a past event or a future event. Advent trains our eyes to recognize the King who comes *today*. The King who keeps His promise: *"I will come to you."*

II. The Miracles in Commonplace Things

1 Corinthians 11:23–26 — Christ gives Himself in bread and wine

Throughout Scripture, God delights in working through the ordinary.

- He chooses a small town and a manger for the birth of His Son.
- He speaks through simple fishermen.
- He uses water, plain water, for Baptism.
- And He gives Himself to His people through bread and wine.

St. Paul writes:

"For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you..."

These are not human traditions. They are Christ's own words, Christ's own institution. And in those words He says:

"This is My body... This is My blood."

The miracle is not that the elements are impressive. Bread is common. Wine is common.

The miracle is that **the King is present—truly, physically, graciously—giving Himself to His people.**

Every time the church gathers around the altar, the King is arriving.

Every celebration of the Supper is another Advent:

"As often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."

We proclaim His death—and He comes.

Think about that.

The shepherds in Bethlehem encountered the newborn King wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger. We encounter the same King wrapped in words and promises, given to us in bread and wine.

So we approach font and altar with the same awe those shepherds had.

Not fear in the sense of terror, but holy reverence, holy wonder—because the same Jesus meets us here.

III. The Light That Shines in Our Hearts

2 Corinthians 4:6 — God shines the light of Christ into our hearts

St. Paul says:

“God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

What an incredible statement.

The God who spoke light into existence at creation now speaks light into the hearts of His people.

Where does that light come from?

Paul tells us:

- from the **knowledge of Christ**,
- from the **glory of God**,
- in the **face of Jesus Christ**.

And where do we see His face?

- In the preaching of His Word.
- In the cleansing waters of Baptism.
- In the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper.
- In the Scriptures we read.
- In the promises we hold.

Every encounter with Word and Sacrament is a **face-to-face meeting with the King**.

Not symbolic.

Not merely emotional.

Real presence. Real grace. Real King.

This is the Advent presence of Christ: the King who arrives in glory hidden beneath means, yet fully present in mercy and power.

IV. Application — Living in the King’s Present Advent

So what does this mean for us as the people of God? How do we live in the reality that the King is present among us?

1. Christ’s Advent continues every Sunday.

Every Lord’s Day, Christ keeps His promise:

“Lo, I am with you always.” (Matthew 28:20)

Church is not merely a weekly obligation.

It is a weekly **arrival**.

A weekly **meeting with the King**.

2. Approach the font and altar with awe.

The shepherds glorified and praised God after kneeling before the Christ Child.
We kneel before the same Christ when we come to His altar.

Let that shape our hearts—
not rushing, not treating this as routine,
but coming with reverence, joy, and expectation.

3. Recognize what is happening in worship.

In worship the King speaks forgiveness.
The King feeds His people.
The King strengthens weary hearts.
The King reigns here and now among His people.

4. Let this transform our attitude toward the means of grace.

Sometimes we come to church distracted or tired.
Sometimes we forget the wonder of what God is doing.
Sometimes our excitement is muted.

But here is the truth we must preach to ourselves:

“Our excitement is often muted at font and altar, yet here Jesus meets us face to face—just as truly as in Bethlehem, just as surely as when He comes on the clouds.”

This is the King’s arrival for us today.

Conclusion — The King Is Here. And He Will Come Again.

The King who came in Bethlehem’s manger
is the King who comes now in Word and Sacrament,
and the King who will come again in glory.

Advent opens our eyes to all three.

His presence today prepares us for His presence on the Last Day.
His arrival now strengthens us for His arrival then.
His gifts now point us toward the great feast to come.

So lift up your hearts.
Your King has come.
Your King still comes.
And your King will come again.

In the holy name of Jesus. Amen.