

Every Perfect Gift



The Gift of Light

“Keep awake!” Jesus tells us, as if we could possibly let ourselves sleep right now. This year, full of plot twists has not given us a chance to rest. Staying vigilant has been standard operating procedure since the first cases of COVID-19 started making news. This was followed quickly by economic unrest and work disruptions, changes of our routines. Suddenly our living rooms were classrooms and our kitchens stocked snacks for quick meals between web conferencing. Our summer was marked by political upheaval, demonstrations for justice, natural disasters of every kind – more sleepless nights. Thank you for the words of advice, Jesus, but keeping awake has not been a problem this year.

But I don’t think Jesus was worried about our sleep cycles; rather, his words were a caution to stay focused, to pay attention. Further, I believe Jesus was not asking us to merely pay attention to the news cycle, to the obvious events that shape the big moments in the world around us, but to notice the subtleties, the patterns of behavior, the nuances.

Advent is a subtle season. Its quiet refrain offers us hope and patience in equal measure. Around us it is characterized by a frenzy of shopping and planning; but deep into the darkening evenings and cooler days of the Northern Hemisphere, or fully into the languid heat and brightening skies of the south of our globe, there is a silent stirring of movement and of expectation, as the things we have planted deep, begin to take root and find the light. Those small moments, the delicate actions and thoughts of Advent, open our hearts to see that faint light as it breaks through the chaos of our culture.

These are the gifts of the season: patience, hope, anticipation, and like every perfect gift, these presents bestow on us just what we need when we need it most. In a season marked by the opposing forces of starkness and extravagance, God’s generosity appeals to us in the simplicity of God’s desires for us: to be patient, to live in hope, to anticipate the freedom that will unshackle us from oppression. “And what I say to you, I say to all:

Keep awake!” | tens.org



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

What are the gifts that you can give that meet the needs of the world?

What patterns in yourself to you want to nurture with the coming Light?

