

Title: “The Mountain that Draws Us”

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Isaiah 2:1-5

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Service Readings: Isaiah 2:1-5, Romans 13:11-14, Matthew 21:1-11

The mountain of the Lord is not climbed, it draws us near. Jesus comes to us.

Message:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

It shall come to pass in the latter days
that the mountain of the house of the LORD
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be lifted up above the hills;
and all the nations shall flow to it,
³ and many peoples shall come, and say:
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.”

Over 300 people have lost their lives attempting to conquer Mt. Everest, and over 200 of those lifeless bodies remain – permanently resting where they took their last breath. It is too dangerous to retrieve them and so they lay where they fell. These were men and women of tremendous strength and skill who spent a lifetime preparing for this single challenge. Prepared and motivated they set out with a confidence that they were good enough, strong enough to achieve what few others could, only to be overtaken by the limitations of their own bodies and the unforgiveness of nature’s wrath. Three hundred strived and failed.

Of course, some climbers do reach Everest’s summit. But even they don’t do it on their own. Every ascent depends on bottled oxygen, ropes fixed before them, ladders placed by others, and the tireless labor of Sherpas carrying supplies. No one climbs the mountain unaided. Nobody reaches the summit by their efforts alone. Every success relies on borrowed strength.

Yet, even when a climber does reach the top, the mountain gives nothing back. It grants no life, no lasting peace – only a brief moment on a ridge that must be descended. Everest may be conquered by a few, but it saves no one. “What is the use of climbing Mount Everest,” someone asked who successfully ascended and descended this mountain? “It is of no use... What we get from this adventure is just sheer joy. And joy is, after all, the end of life.”

A lifetime of preparation, of training, and formation. A lifetime spent with one single goal in mind. And those who have realized success find that what they have chased after, what they have cheated death for, is meaningless and void. This is a mountain of empty promises and false hope, a summit that cannot satisfy.

In our Old Testament reading this morning, Isaiah shows us a very different kind of mountain. It is the mountain of the Lord—a mountain not climbed by human strength, but descended by the one who gives

life. On this mountain, no fleeting earthly joy awaits, but heavenly promises and confident hope. It does not leave its dead behind; it conquers death itself and, for all who believe, raises the dead to new life.

God the Father didn't demand that we climb to him; he knew that would be futile for any who tried. Instead he sent down his Son to dwell among the lowly. Our Lord Jesus Christ who did for us what we could not do. He descended from heaven so that he could ascend: not a mountain but an altar where he would lay down his life for all mankind.

This is the God that we worship. This is the one that calls us to the mountain and then brings us up to him.

Two mountains that cannot be more opposite in every way. This is where Isaiah confronts us on this first Sunday of Advent. God calls us to his mountain, but often times we still try to climb a different one. We build our own Everests, we trust our own strength and abilities. And you know what? We know this. We have been baptized into Christ. We have been given the Holy Spirit. We have the faith that tells us that the mountain of this world is the mountain to be rejected. That is why we gather on Sunday, to be reminded that of it: we are called by Jesus to the mountain of the Lord. We know this. But where we fail, *where we fail* is in thinking that we must climb it ourselves. This is the real problem we have.

And so, as we enter into the season of Advent, I challenge you to contemplate this problem in your own life. Your mind tells you that Jesus has come down and prepared a way for up the mountain. You know that when he returns he will carry you up it. You know that on the last day he will not even stand on the summit but will come down one final time to live with us in bodies that he has raised from the dead. But what does your heart tell you?

Does it tell you that on that last day he will not stand at the summit but come down for *you*? Does it tell you that *you* are the one that he will raise from the dead, that *you* are the one that he will bring to the place he has prepared for you? Does it tell you that *your* death is undone, swallowed up, and conquered once and for all?

You see, this is season is for you. Take advantage of it and let it reteach your heart what your mind already knows: that the Lord who once descended in humility will descend again in glory—coming not to judge you from a summit, but to lift you up into his eternal life.

Please pray with me.

Lord Jesus Christ, You are the mountain that draws us. You came down in humility to save us, and you will come again in glory to raise us and bring us home. Turn our hearts away from trusting our own strength, and fix our hope on your grace alone. As we enter this Advent season, teach us to watch, to wait, and to walk in your light until the day you gather us to yourself. For you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.