SERMON NOTES

**Small Group Devotions**

**Week of November 27, 2016**

**Advent 2016**

**Watch**

**Matthew 24:36-44**

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*“Advent is not primarily concerned with the Christmas story. Rather, its concern is with preparation; to watch and keep awake.”*

Why do you think the church would begin this season with the second coming instead of the first coming? Why wouldn’t it be the other way around?

What does preparing for the second coming look like? What does it mean to watch and to keep awake?

Keep Awake

*Supplemental Text: Romans 13:11-14*

Jesus tells us to keep awake, that He is coming like a thief in the night. Yet, we are reminded, even in Scripture, that staying awake is difficult (Apostles in the Garden). What makes it so difficult to stay focused on Jesus and His coming? With that in mind, what does it mean to keep awake?

Paul’s letter to the Romans tells us that it is time to wake from our sleep, that salvation is nearer now than when we became believers. He wants us to live in the light, not like those in the darkness. List out the actions of those who live in the dark in this passage. What, then, would be the ways to live in the light? Which of those do you struggle with?

Readiness

*Supplemental Text: Matthew 25:1-13*

To watch is not an idle venture; it is to be focused on Christ’s eventual return and preparing ourselves and our world for whenever that may be. We do that in love, peace, joy, and hope, rooting out evil whenever it becomes known to us. How would you describe watching for Jesus’s return? If watching is actually work, then what kind of work do you need to be doing and what kind of work do you need to let go so that you can prepare in that way?

Five foolish and five wise bridesmaids; it’s an odd parable because all the bridesmaids were there on time, all had lamps, and all were dressed for the day. What made the five foolish was that they were not able to live the Kingdom life for the long haul. Being loving is easy for one day, but terribly difficult over a lifetime. What are some ways of “readiness” that are easy for one day but difficult for the long haul? Why? What is needed in your life to make those a part of who you are for good and not just today?