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Advent: The Messy Preparation

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Advent: The Messy Preparation

Abstract

"The stark reality is Advent season, while one of the most anticipated of the entire year, tends to be one of the most stressful times for people."

Posting about keeping our focus on the meaning of Christmas from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/advent-the-messy-preparation/>

Keywords

In All Things, Advent, Christmas, expectation

Disciplines

Christianity

Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service](#) at [Dordt College](#).

Advent: The Messy Preparation

 inallthings.org/advent-the-messy-preparation/

Ross Douma

This is post 1 of 2 in the series *"Advent Devotions"*

1. Advent: The Messy Preparation
2. [Preparing, Advent and Psalm 51](#)

The preparation of Advent season, in many regards, mirrors the manner in which we live our daily lives within the context of our culture today. We tend to be in a constant state of preparation in an attempt to arrive at peace and harmony. It is highly ironic that we continue to run ourselves ragged in the pursuit of trying to alleviate the very madness we have created in the first place. Trying to arrive at the nostalgic setting of a peaceful Christmas dinner followed by a pleasant afternoon of opening gifts with family is many times preceded with the carnage of rushing to the grocery store multiple times to secure the appropriate ingredients and dashing to the nearest mall at the 11th hour to grab the final present on the shopping list.

Meanwhile, society rewards and encourages forward thinking and emphasizes the need to be proactive and admonishes us if we, even slightly, are caught off-guard with a forgotten detail. Dinner dates, anticipated vacations, and general appointments are commonly found in our daily planners in an attempt to secure a sense of serenity in our haste-filled lives as we await the next big leisurely outing to partake in.

More to the point, the secular holiday season is often portrayed to exhibit a Norman Rockwellesque feel with snowflakes gently falling while warm cider and cookies await smiling children who spent a beautiful December day sliding down manicured hills of snow. The stark reality is Advent season, while one of the most anticipated of the entire year, tends to be one of the most stressful times for people – and rarely is the north wind in Northwest Iowa not cutting us to the bone as we walk across campus. The point here: try as we might to neatly control all variables through our own preparation and present a utopian feel to every strand of our life, God often times rattles our cages during the process during which we are reminded how difficult the planning and preparation phases can be. Sometimes we lose sight of the intended destination due to the high volume of obstacles we encounter along the way.

Before Jesus arrived in the manger and angels sang to the shepherds on high, there was a rugged voice in the wilderness forewarning of a coming Messiah. Before the magi brought gifts to the King, there was a man donned in camel skins, munching on locusts dipped in honey while challenging the masses to repent of their sins. John the Baptist, the precursor to Jesus, enters the Advent season like an underdog boxer in a ring. He came with no fanfare blindly swinging at the next person he encountered. There is nothing glamorous about him or the manner which he relayed the message, but the content had eternal implications.

The process to get to any intended finish line can be difficult and challenging. The people we encounter and the unexpected events along the way are often times what shape us the most. During Advent, may we be reminded that memories are also made in the preparation phase, not just on Christmas Day.