

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT (YEAR C) Sunday 1 December 2024

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

ADVENT CALENDARS

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Introducing the Gospel

Be prepared (Luke 21:25-36)

This Gospel reading for the First Sunday of Advent is part of Luke's adaptation of the thirteenth chapter of Mark's Gospel, the Apocalyptic discourse. The teaching is stimulated by the disciples' question, 'Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?' Luke's message to the disciples is to be on guard so that day should not catch them unawares. This passage has been chosen for the First Sunday of Advent to remind us that we, too, need to be on guard and to be prepared for the Lord's coming.

Our image to stimulate reflection on the theme of Advent is *Advent calendars*.

Core extract from the Gospel (Luke 21:34-36; for reflection throughout the week)

Jesus said, 'Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down
with dissipation and drunkenness
and the worries of this life,
and that day catch you unexpectedly, like a trap.
For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth.
Be alert at all times,
praying that you may have the strength
to escape all these things that will take place,
and to stand before the Son of Man.'

Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)

Lord Jesus Christ,
we look forward to your birth at Christmas.
Stay with us as we count the days,
so that we are ready to welcome you;
for you are our God.
Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

Luke 21: 25-36

The Coming of the Son of Man

‘There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see “the Son of Man coming in a cloud” with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.’

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

Then he told them a parable: ‘Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.’

Exhortation to Watch

‘Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.’

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ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

Dwelling with the text (Luke 21: 25-36)

Begin to explore Luke's teaching about the need to be on guard, to keep watch, and to be prepared for the Lord's coming by employing the SIFT approach of Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking. You may find that one of these approaches comes easier to you than the others. But it is worth trying all four.

- What details in the passage catch your attention (Sensing)?
- What big ideas in the passage spark in your mind (Intuition)?
- What most touches your heart in the passage (Feeling)?
- What most stretches your mind and makes you think in the passage (Thinking)?

Thinking and talking

Identify topics within the passage that can get you thinking and talking. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- What do you understand by signs in the sun, moon, and stars?
- How do you understand the parable of the fig tree?
- Why is Luke warning his readers against dissipation and drunkenness?
- Why is Luke warning his readers against the worries of this life?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

Using your Bible

See how Luke draws on part of Mark 13 and adds new material.

- Mark 13: 24-31

Explore how Luke develops the theme of keeping watch elsewhere.

- Luke 12: 35-38

Compare Luke's teaching in verses 34-36 with other New Testament writers

- 1 Thessalonians 5: 4-8
- 1 Peter 4: 7-9

Explore how Luke draws on Old Testament images.

- Ecclesiastes 9: 17
- Isaiah 24: 17

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Exploring online

Widen your exploration of Luke's teaching about the need to be on guard, to keep watch, and to be prepared for the Lord's coming by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Season of Advent
- History of Advent calendar
- Luke 21: 25-36

Drawing on experience

The image to stimulate reflection on Luke's teaching about the need to be on guard, to keep watch, and to be prepared for the Lord's coming is *Advent calendars*. Draw on your own experience of Advent calendars. For example:

- What has been your experience of the Church's season of Advent?
- What has been your experience of making or using an Advent calendar?
- What has been your experience of needing to keep watch?

What have you learned about Advent calendars?

Creating and making

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by Luke's teaching about the need to be on guard, to keep watch, and to be prepared for the Lord's coming, or by the image of Advent calendars.

- Create an Advent calendar to go from Advent Sunday to Christmas Day
- Create a poster illustrating the text 'Be on guard so your hearts are not weighed down with the worries of life'.
- Make cards displaying this week's Gospel prayer to take into Advent.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of keeping watch, or on the image of Advent calendars.

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**Liverpool
Cathedral**

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

Each week we are inviting people in their homes to look forward to those Sunday services that follow the Revised Common Lectionary Gospel readings. We employ the SIFT approach (Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking) to encourage reflection on the Sunday Gospel. We are suggesting a variety of ways in which people of all ages, and households working together, may engage with the Gospel reading and celebrate that engagement with shared activities.

Our invitation then is for you to share your reflections, prayers and photos of your creative work with the Cathedral by emailing them to smc.lesliefrancis@gmail.com.

These materials have been developed by the Canon Theologian of Liverpool Cathedral working in collaboration with the staff team here at the Cathedral, and with sponsorship and support from the St Mary's Centre in Wales.



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