

Sermon for the Second Evensong in Advent

'Will he speak to you soft words?'

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Your first parents questioned the one true God. They doubted His wisdom; they rejected His benevolence. Therefore, they heard the whispers of the serpent, and sinned in silence. Rejecting the fatherhood of the Lord, they chose the slavery of Satan. Loosing themselves from the love of God, they listened to the Leviathan, and became his thralls.

Having hated paradise, we chose the purgatory of this world; we thought we chose freedom from God; but a shackle now throttles our throats.

Idols we have made, for suffering everything in this world of our own imagining, this fallen dream of sinful man, we trust in anything if it promises us but some reprieve; we hold on to anything if it offers but some solace. Whatever these things may be of themselves, they have become our heathen gods:
wealth and pleasure; vice and cruelty.

Yet how shall any created thing give us peace when we have chosen to enslave ourselves to the Leviathan, and to death, our first enemy? It is not merely that the ancient serpent torments us; it is not that he attacks us; he owns us, for he is the *god of this world*.

Indeed, those ancient myths which depict the entire world as a flat disk, with a snake coiled around it, were closer to Christian orthodoxy than pagan fantasy.

There is no making truce with this tyrant, for he himself is consumed with pride and hatred, hatred for God, and for God's image. There is no enticing him, no beguiling him, for *'he*

will not make many pleas to you. He will not speak to you soft words. He will not make a covenant with you.' He shall make you but dust, and devour you *all his days of his life.*

Neither shall any idol, that is, any human machination, any mortal scheme deliver us from the Leviathan's oppression, for he owns even our minds; even our imaginations; even our thoughts are his. *For 'Though the sword reaches him, it does not avail.' 'He counts iron as straw, and bronze as rotted wood.' 'Behold, the hope of man is false.'*

Yet it is written: *'He who trusts in the Lord shall be exalted.'* The Lord speaks: *'For Zion's sake, I shall not be quiet, till her vindication shines forth as the dawn.'*

Therefore, put away your false gods, ye makers of idols; put away all sin, ye workers of iniquity. For our Savior is coming. *'He recalls his promises'*. Almighty God is coming. *Watch therefore, and be still. 'Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage.'* *'Wait for him in silence, for hope is in him.'* For *'The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who keeps watch.'* To all who have faith, He shall bring to Himself. It is no easy thing to wait; for in waiting, one does something by doing nothing; one trusts another by despairing of one's self; one crucifies his pride, that he might boast of the crucified. To wait, one dies to the world, that he might live to God.

Our Advent devotion demands exactly this of us: that we despair of ourselves, that we crucify our pride, that we die to the trappings of this life; that we wait.

Light a candle in the night, and keep vigil, for the dominion of Satan, the ancient serpent, is coming to an end. *'Behold, the kingdom of God is at hand.'*

For even now, clothed in mortal frailty, within the womb of a peasant girl, Him who shall break every shackle of the enemy that keeps us, and free every slave of the tyrant who binds us, silently threatens the power and possession

of the infernal foe: [From out the womb
of Mary the Conqueror silently makes his claim against the prince of this world:]

'Behold, all that is under heaven is mine.'

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*Preached by Pastor
Fields*

*Sermon Text: Job
41:1-11*