

HOW WE WAIT (MK 13:24-37)

Sermon given by the Rev. Corinne Hodges
Sunday, Nov. 30, 2008, St. John of the Cross, Bristol

- I. Retreat last June
 - A. Left with no time to spare
 - B. Construction zone set me back, no way out
 - C. Angry at self for not allowing more time, checking route, etc.
 - D. Frustrated because I had to wait—waiting has never been my strong-suit
 - E. Time I got through 30 minutes late, no way I could change it
 - F. At this realization, became calmer, turned on music, and sat back to enjoy the ride
 - G. Wild turkey—delight in seeing this creature
 - H. Put me on guard. Drove more alert since not sure what else I might see/experience on the way
 - I. Realization that my retreat had already started. If I had rushed and focused only when I got there, I would have missed out

- II. Psychologist Fred Bryant's research on savoring—enjoying all phases
 - A. Three parts to enjoying experiences of life: anticipation, being in the moment, reminiscing
 - B. Results are that many of us are not that great at anticipation
 - C. Anticipation means getting ready, preparing, it also means waiting
 - D. As many of us have heard and would agree, "Waiting is the hardest part"

- III. Advent is all about waiting
 - A. Waiting for Christmas Day, the day we celebrate the birth of Christ, but as our Gospel reminds us, it's also about waiting for Christ's return
 1. Now in the 1 C. people believed Christ would come again in rather short order
 2. Can you remember the last time you waited for someone or something?
 3. When waiting is short-lived, it can be easy or rather livable
 4. But when we have to hang in there day after day, year after year, we often lose our patience and enthusiasm

- IV. Nonetheless, waiting is indeed a fact of life and, furthermore, Jesus tells that how we wait matters!
 - A. We can distract ourselves by keeping busy with noise, consumerism, lots of glitter, the to-dos
 - B. We can grow impatient, irritated and wish that the season would just get over so we can start a new year
 - C. Either way we will not be making the most of this important phase

- V. In our Gospel reading today Jesus tells us exactly how we are to wait...expectantly. His instructions are to "Be alert! Be aware! Be on watch...you never know when the master will come."
- A. How many of us live a life of expectation?
 - B. We live our lives looking forward to something ahead or past, not recognizing that this time now is of value
 - C. The time of expectation and anticipation is meant to be lived fully with great awareness and respect
- VI. This Advent, I urge you to try to enjoy, yes enjoy, the waiting
- A. Don't clutter it with busyness or wish it past
 - B. Make time to notice the lights in the darkness, the stars in the sky, the smiles of children, the songs in the background
 - C. Sit with the stillness of an early morning snow
 - D. Keep alert. Stay awake. Advent is not a time to be glossed over
 - E. Savor these most precious and holy days and expect anything to happen