



## *"Wake up and live in the Light"*

There's something quietly powerful about those moments before dawn—when the light begins to seep around the edges of the curtains or through the blinds. You're still warm under the blankets, half-asleep... tempted to stay just where you are.

But the light keeps coming, getting brighter by the minute. It doesn't ask your permission. It simply arrives, gently but insistently, saying: "It's time to get up. A new day is here."

Advent is exactly that moment in the Christian year. The light of God is dawning, and the Church hears a gentle but urgent whisper from God: "Wake up. Live in My light. Be ready for My coming." And our readings today all echo that theme—some softly, some loudly.

### **Point 1 | The Dawn God Promises (Isaiah 2:1–5)**

Isaiah opens with a breathtaking picture—almost like he's been given the opportunity to stand on a mountain ridge at sunrise. He has a glimpse of a sunrise over the mountain of the Lord. A vision of nations streaming toward God, learning His ways, discovering peace. Of swords being reshaped into ploughs, and spears transformed into pruning hooks. Isaiah's vision is not a fantasy, but a promise. A glimpse of God's intended future.

And then he turns to us and says, "Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord." Not one day. Not eventually. Now. Live today as people shaped by God's intended tomorrow.

### **Point 2 | A People Who Long for Peace (Psalm 122)**

Psalm 122 doesn't just give us a picture of joyful anticipation—though the psalmist is clearly thrilled to be heading to the house of the Lord. He describes the joy, the unity, and a real sense of expectation about what God's promised future will be like.

But the psalmist does something more. He *invites* us to take part in bringing God's vision to pass. He says, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem." It's not just a lovely sentiment—it's a calling. A responsibility. A way for God's people to join His work.

We're called to pray for Jerusalem... but also to pray for one another... and to *live* as signs of the peace God intends for the world. To be people whose lives point—however imperfectly—to the harmony, unity, and wholeness of God's coming Kingdom.

So, the first Advent whisper is 'where can I be an agent of peace this week?' Where might God be nudging me to sow peace, or rebuild a bridge, or soften a hard edge? Because Advent is not just about waiting—it's about active, hopeful participation in what God is doing.

And that is precisely the bridge that leads us into Paul's challenge in Romans. If the Psalm invites us to pray for peace, Paul urges us to *wake up* and live like people of the coming day—people who not only long for God's peace but embody it in every choice, attitude, and relationship.

### **Point 3 | It's Time to Wake Up (Romans 13:9–14)**

And Paul doesn't tiptoe around anything. He looks us right in the eye and says: "It is already the hour for you to wake from sleep." Not physical sleep. Spiritual sleep. The kind of sleep where you're technically awake but moving through the day foggy, distracted, unfocused... just going through the motions.

Paul says, "The night is nearly over; the day is almost here." The world might feel dark. Our news broadcasts might feel dark. Our personal circumstances might feel dark. But Paul insists—*the true story of the world is that dawn is approaching*.

And because dawn is coming, he gives two instructions:

Firstly, we are to lay aside the deeds of darkness. Anything that numbs us... distracts us... pulls us away from keeping our eyes on Jesus ... anything that tries to cover who we are called to be. It could be habits of thought, habits of consumption, habits of speech, or habits of avoidance. Paul says: Let them go. They belong to the night.

Secondly, we are to put on the armour of light—the protective wear Jesus has given us. Not "try harder." Not "fix yourself." But: "Put on the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ." Wear His character. Clothe yourself with His compassion, His purity, His attentiveness, His courage, His love.

Advent is a season of spiritual waking and spiritual dressing. Waking from the places where we've grown drowsy or distracted...and dressing ourselves for the daylight of God's coming Kingdom.

None of us would dream of turning up to church in our pyjamas. In the same way, we shouldn't step into our day—into our neighbourhood, our volunteering, our relationships, our decisions—still clothed in the habits and attitudes of the night. Paul's invitation is clear: Don't live as though the darkness is permanent. Live as people who know the dawn has already begun.

So each morning, before the world lays its demands on us, we "put on" what Christ has given us—His character, His compassion, His purity, His courage. We deliberately clothe ourselves in the righteousness He has already provided.

We're not dressing ourselves *for* God's love; we're dressing ourselves *in God's love*, stepping into the day as people who belong to the light. Paul's call to "wake up" in Romans 13 is strong—and it needs to be.

Because one of the greatest spiritual dangers we face is not outright rebellion against God... but simply becoming spiritually sleepy. Not hostile. Not faithless. Just drifting. Let's talk about that for a moment. Most of us don't abandon God deliberately. We drift silently, almost imperceptibly, the way a boat slowly moves off its mooring when the tide changes. No big splash. No dramatic moment. Just a quiet shift of the heart.

And the uncomfortable truth is that spiritual sleep often feels incredibly *comfortable*. It's warm. It's familiar. It doesn't demand much of us. And that's precisely what makes it so dangerous.

Spiritual sleep looks like those seasons when:

- prayer becomes occasional rather than essential;
- gathering with God's people feels optional instead of joyful;
- faith is more of a background hum than a guiding light;
- our reactions are shaped more by stress and headlines than by Scripture; and
- we stop expecting God to speak, to guide, to move.

On the outside everything looks normal—but inside, our spiritual senses have become dull. And when we become spiritually sleepy, we miss what God is doing right now. We miss the quiet whisper of the Spirit. We lose the sharpness of compassion. We become less prepared for the moments when God draws near and invites us to follow Him into something new.

This is exactly what Jesus warns about in today's Gospel.

#### **Point 4 | "So Be Ready" (Matthew 24:36–44)**

When Jesus speaks, He really brings the message to 'Wake up!' home. "No one knows the day or the hour," He says. Not the angels. Not the prophets. Not even Jesus Himself during His earthly ministry. Which means Advent is not about prediction, calculations, or fear. It is about readiness.

Jesus gave the example from the days of Noah – to people who were just living normally, playing golf, playing cards, shopping, reading books ... going about their lives with no awareness of God. And Jesus says: "Therefore keep awake...for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour." There's no threat in His voice. No fear. Just a loving warning: Don't drift, Don't sleepwalk through your life. Don't let ordinary busyness dull your spiritual alertness.

Live each day ready. Ready to forgive. Ready to pray. Ready to listen. Ready to respond to God's whisper. Ready to love like Christ. Ready to have your life found in Him. Advent readiness isn't about stocking up supplies.

It's about stocking up hope. It's about structuring your inner life around what truly matters.

#### **Application | Bringing It All Together**

Let's gather the threads:

- Isaiah shows the dawn God is bringing.

- The Psalm teaches us to long and pray for God's peace.
- Romans tells us to wake up, take off the nightclothes, and put on Christ.
- Jesus calls us to live ready—not anxious, not fearful, but attentive and faithful.

The message is simple and deeply Advent: *\*\*Wake up. Walk in the light. Live ready.\*\**

May the Spirit nudge us awake. May Christ clothe us with His light. May our lives reflect the day that is drawing near. And may we live ready—not with fear, but with hope, joy, and expectant love.

## *Concluding Prayer*

Gracious God,

As we enter this season of Advent, wake us from our spiritual sleep and open our eyes to Your light. Where our hearts feel heavy, bring hope. Where our lives feel cluttered, bring clarity. Where we have drifted, draw us back to Your presence.

Teach us to walk in Your ways, to pray for peace, to live with joy, and to put on the Lord Jesus Christ each day. Make us people who are ready—not fearful, but faithful; not distracted, but attentive; not rushed, but rooted in Your love.

As we wait for Christ's coming again, help us to recognise His presence with us now. May Your unfailing light guide our steps and shine through our lives for the sake of the world You love. We ask this in the name of Jesus, Amen.

## *Five Personal Reflection Questions*

1. Where in my life have I grown spiritually "sleepy" or complacent, and what might God be inviting me to wake up to this Advent?
2. What does "walking in the light" look like in my relationships, my habits, or my daily choices this week?
3. Where can I intentionally pray for and work toward peace—in my home, workplace, church, or community?
4. What are the "deeds of darkness" or distractions I need to lay aside so that I can more fully "put on Christ"?
5. If Jesus were to come today, what would I want Him to find me doing—and how might that shape the way I live the ordinary moments of my week?