

Faith + Culture

I am confident

The way you live your life follows the way you see yourself. So where does your self-perception come from? Abuse? Tragedy? "Success?" When you start to believe his vision of who you really are, your whole life changes.

We have a God who didn't just create a place for us to dwell. We have a God who went over-



Chris Stefanick
Real Life Catholic

board and set a trillion galaxies in motion as the backdrop for where we would meet him.

We don't have a God who gave us a little glimpse of his love. We have a God of the Cross and Resurrection. We don't have a God who sometimes helps his people out. We have a God who splits seas, conquered death, moves hearts, and makes heroes.

That's the power and love you're tapping into when you pray. Extravagant is God's middle name.

YOU are BOLD, CONFIDENT, and POWERFUL because those are the names that God has given you.

Making a good Advent



Fr. Keith Streifel
St. Joseph's Parish

Advent is near! This does mean that Christmas is near, but there is preparation which must be done first. Our retail establishments are ready to sell us presents. I understand. I am not against economics (A nonsensical stance in any case, they must sell to make a living, and we need things to live.) But Christmas is not first a shopping season, nor is its first sign some *thing* in pretty paper. If we get this confused, then Barbie's Malibu Mansion (batteries not included) becomes more important than baby Jesus, saving Jesus, Jesus who owns my heart.

How do we avoid getting confused? I have a few

suggestions for things to make a good Advent.

Poverty. I am not talking about material poverty, which is not entirely under our control. "Blessed are the poor in spirit" is a beatitude that recognizes our reliance upon and our need for God. Somehow, Advent involves looking around and taking stock of what we have. The poor are very grateful for what they do have, not sentimentally, but really. Another thing we see when we look around at this time of year is the darkness. Advent recognizes our poverty of light, and our absolute need for the Light. We are a wealthy nation, but the clamor from both sides of the aisle make clear that, even though we don't agree about needs and solutions, we all recognize that we are deeply, if not materially, needy. If that is true politically, it is also true spiritually.

Silence. Christmas music, Christmas programs, Christmas lights, Christmas sales, Christmas parties, if we turn them on too soon and turn

them up too bright, these add to Christmas noise, which makes sense at Christmas but can easily drown out the still small voice calling us to make straight the path and can keep us too busy for the concerted effort of lowering mountains and raising valleys in our souls and in our relationships. There is a salutary silence in waiting in darkness and following stars.

Longing. If we make the kind of space that is necessary for Advent to have its effect, the glow of Dawn will be evident on the horizon. We won't be distracted or asleep, like most mornings. Rather, the coming of the Light will be a sight for sore eyes. We will not only be unsurprised that Christmas has come so quickly, but we will also not be so keen to have it over, because the Guest has finally arrived. If we prepare for the spiritual reality of Christmas, whose first sign is Presence not presents, then even though our house may remain bare or quiet, we can still welcome Him to make it Home.

Jesus sinned?



Jeremy Kadrmas

The other day I heard a statement that can almost leave a bad taste in your mouth for a few days after. "Jesus sinned. Jesus was a man like us and He did some things that were good and some things that weren't. Jesus; broke the Sabbath Laws and Stole grain from a field". Unfortunately,

some denominations hold on to heresies like this as doctrine and it acts like a red herring leading people astray. I'm going to try my best to refute both of these false ideas.

Both of these accusations are cut from the same cloth, so to speak. It boils down to authority. Does Jesus have the authority to work and heal on the Sabbath and lawfully pluck grain from a field? Taking these two passages out of context can be deadly, as we have already seen, but by looking at them in the entirety of scripture one can see to what Jesus is trying to point and demonstrate.

So what is the answer to this conundrum in which we find ourselves? Jesus and the apostles may do on the Sabbath what they do because they stand in place of the Levitical priests in the temple. Obviously the answer is pointing towards Jesus ushering in the new covenant. But how do we defend it?

I think we can start with Deuteronomy 18:15 where a new Moses is promised to the people. Clearly not a small promise by any means and Jesus shows He is the fulfillment of that passage by the parallel of some of His own signs to those of Moses's. Jesus shows He is the righteous branch that is promised to come in Isaiah 11. This is shown by Christ's work to heal and restore Israel, also by His dwelling in Nazareth (Matt 2:23), which all point back to the restoration of Israel. This started when it was taken over by Assyria. Why is this a big deal? Because if Jesus fulfills Isaiah 11 he is the son of David promised to the people. There are other passages prophesying the coming son of David that Jesus fulfills as well. All of this, along with David's lineage brings along with it Kingly and priestly faculties. This being said, by being a new Moses, He is the prophet to the nations.

To put all of this together, we have to look at all the evidence. Jesus heals, among other things, on the Sabbath, but if He has proper priestly faculties, as we have shown, he is exempt from all the Sabbath Laws (as were all Levitical Priests) and can do what needs to be done. This also includes and ties up the last loose end, eating of the grain. Here we need to simply finish reading the entirety of Matthew 12, and by using our foundation we built earlier, we can interpret the rest of the passage. Jesus points out the Pharisees have missed the point. Proof to that point: David was a priest/king and his followers were righteous men who were on the run from the maniac King Saul. The Levitical priests performed countless acts of mercy by offering up the sacrifices of the people. The Pharisees want to focus on the need for sacrifice and Jesus says I desire mercy.

There is much, much more that could be said on this topic, but I hope this starts to build a defense against the accusation that Jesus did any wrongdoing. Jesus proclaims He is the Lord of the Sabbath and to show Jesus is the promised Messiah and the God-man, He has the authority to decree what is and what is not acceptable for the Sabbath.