

Second Hand Preacher
Third Sunday of Advent
December 14, 2014
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

When I go on a trip I often need some kind of a check list. Sometimes I try to keep it in my head, but often I write it down so I can mark off each item when I accomplish the task. St. Paul seems like he is giving the Christians in Thessalonica a list to get them ready for the coming of Christ. Items include: "rejoice always," "pray without ceasing," "give thanks," "don't hold back the Spirit or despise prophecies." He wants them to test everything and refrain from evil. These can seem like daunting tasks, but Paul wants them ready for the very important Second Coming of Jesus.

There are joyful overtones in the passage that may help us realize the joy we have on this Third Sunday of Advent. Paul felt joy for these believers. He wants to fill them with a joy that will protect them Spirit, Body, and Soul. Paul throughout his writings, really stresses the duality of Body and Spirit. We are to avoid the flesh and live in the Spirit. Paul does acknowledge our body and the role it can take in making us ambassadors of Christ. Paul brings in soul to show the eternal nature of the Second Coming. Paul wants all Christians to be ready as he believes the Second Coming will happen in his life time.

The Second Coming didn't come for Paul; will it come for us? Will the moments we share with people be the last moments of our time on earth? This is a mind blowing process that fills us full of wonder. We need to be ready. We need to keep our relationships focused on Christ and let no business of the Spirit go undone. We must trust that the anointed one will come again to set all people free. Make your check list for the Coming of the Lord at a time you may never know.