



THE CHURCH OF THE
ADVENT

Read: Ephesians 4:17-24 and John 15:1-17

Summary: This week we are wrapping up our series about our Advent DNA. Pastor Tommy preached on Ephesians 4 and John 15 to draw together the key points from the previous sermons in this series. Together these passages help us to understand what it means to live life in three dimensions. Pastor Tommy first discussed how everyone ultimately longs for three things: transcendence, belonging, and significance. We often strive in vain to fill these spiritual longings with our worldly things such as our political affiliations, vocational pursuits, romantic relationships, or material consumption. In the words of Paul, we are alienated from the life of God due to our darkened understanding and hard hearts (Ephesians 4:18).

Pastor Tommy then described how Jesus teaches us to prioritize three corresponding relationships: our upward relationship with God, our inward relationship with other Christians in the Church, and our outward loving service to the world. In John 15 Jesus calls us to simultaneously to “abide in me”, to “love one another as I have loved you”, and to “bear much fruit” as His disciples in the world. By holding all of these relationships together we are able to know the fullness of joy that Christ offers us. Pastor Tommy concluded by examining a few of the corporate practices that help us to balance our three-dimensional life as a community and to live into God’s transformative work in Washington, DC.

- Questions:**
1. What are the most profound spiritual longings in your life today? How are seeking to satisfy those longings in the unhealthy ways?
 2. Share with one another the ways that God is working to enrich your upward, inward, and/or outward relationships. Celebrate these and discuss how this growth is bringing greater joy and spiritual consolation to your life.
 3. Pastor Tommy described how our neglect of any of these “dimensions” can compromise the balance in our faith and the integrity of our Christian witness. How can we guard against these sorts of imbalances?
 4. Take a few moments to briefly review/recollect the last three sermons on our Advent DNA. How do the lessons from those passages help us in this call to live “three-dimensional lives?”

5. Our Sunday worship, sacramental life, and core groups are some of the many communal practices that our parish cultivates in order to balance God's upward, inward, and outward call. What are some habits that you can foster as individuals, families, and core groups as you walk alongside the rest of our Advent community in living out this three-dimensional life?

Prayer: Pray that God would guide us to discern where we are called to participate in the transformative work He is doing in our community. Pray that God would continue to empower our church and other gospel-centered churches to bear fruit throughout the city, that Washington, DC would come to know Jesus Christ as King.

Do: Celebrate the places we are seeing Gospel transformation taking root. Identify tangible steps that you can take to direct your longings for transcendence, belonging, and significance towards the upward, inward, and outward relationships Christ calls us into. Share those with your core group, triad, spouse, or friends. Follow up in the weeks ahead to help hold one another accountable to these goals.