

Our Sabbath Scripture Stories



F A M I L I E S R E C L A I M I N G S U N D A Y

Read aloud: Isaiah 2:1-5
 Romans 13:11-14
Gospel: Matthew 24:37-44

Breakfast was held in the living room this Sunday morning because the dining room table was adorned with sparkling, immaculate, antique silver pieces. Yesterday, all the Paulines spent the afternoon polishing the tarnish from forks, knives, spoons, candleholders, and serving trays.

"Don't they look pretty?" 4-year-old Hillary exclaimed when she saw the silver pieces shining under the dining room fixture.

Lucy and Mary Clare agreed. "There sure was a lot of grime on them before!" Lucy offered. "Now they are twinkling!"

Mom put her arms around her girls. "I think my grandmother would be very pleased with their luster," she said. "I felt very honored when she left me these treasures."

As the girls stood there admiring the transition of the silver pieces from yesterday to today, Dad's voice was heard coming from the other room. "Time for our Scripture reading for today!" he called out.

Everyone came rushing in, except Mom. She had stayed in the dining room very mysteriously.

"Where is Mom?" Vincent asked his dad.

Dad just stood there quietly and directed all his children to gaze towards the dining room door.

Then, just at that moment, Mom walked in. She processed in slowly, holding a silver antique Advent wreath. One of the four purple candles burned brightly. It was a glorious moment. As she steadily set the Advent wreath on the coffee table, she proclaimed, " *It is the*



hour now for you to awake from sleep. For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed; the night is advanced, the day is at hand. Let us then throw off the works of darkness [and] put on the armor of light.' " (Romans 13:11-12)

As everyone had their eyes fixed on the one lit candle, Dad read the Gospel reading for today: " 'For as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. In those days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day that Noah entered the ark. They did not know until the flood came and carried them all away. So will it be [also] at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be out in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left. Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come. Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour of night when the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and not let his house be broken into. So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.' "

(Matthew 24:37-44)

The Pauline family stood there silently gazing at the lit candle for this first Sunday of Advent. They thought of what Mom had read from Romans, Chapter 13, Verse 11, that "it is the hour now for you to awake from sleep. For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed."

Mom spoke first. "We do not know the day or the hour of our death, but we should have no fear. Jesus came to be the Light of the World."

Dad agreed, "This Advent wreath represents two things for us this morning. The first is that the world waited for its Savior. Jesus was 'the word made flesh, who dwelt among us.' We light the first candle of our Advent wreath in anticipation of His birth on Christmas. The second is the shimmering silver Advent wreath itself."

"Huh?" they all asked.

Mom answered, "Yesterday, when we unpacked our Advent wreath, it was all tarnished and full of grime. Our souls can become the same way. We can become grimy with sin and unrepentance, and not be ready to be ushered into heaven at the hour the Lord calls us. Our Gospel reading for today tells us to *always* be ready, *always* be polished and shiny, and *always* keep our souls gleaming. Our souls should shine like the sun!"

"The sun: S-U-N, or the Son: S-O-N?" Vincent quipped.

"Both!" Mom laughed. And with one last look at the gleaming Advent wreath, the family blew out the candle and scurried off to church.

***"So too, you also must be prepared,
for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come."***

(Matthew 24:44)