

Discipleship Moment

Sermon Text: Luke 1:1-4

Growing up near Kansas City we would regularly go to Kansas City Royals baseball games. Several times a Summer we bought the \$10 tickets and went to a mostly empty stadium. The Royals were not very good while I was growing up. But we, like many good baseball fans, endured the bad times. When 2015 rolled around it looked like the bad times were going away and, in their place, an exciting, young team was bringing some hope to Kansas City. The Royals went onto the World Series that year. They had played their first two games flawlessly, lost the third, and won the fourth. Now it was Game 5 and the Royals had the opportunity to clinch the Series and walk away, after thirty years, with a championship.

Sara and I were living in a small, rural Wisconsin community then. We decided to go out to the local bar to watch the game there and have some dinner. When we walked into the bar we expected to see the Royals game on most of the TV's and figured we could find a spot most anywhere. To our shock, when we walked in, we only saw one television on the *World Series* game—it was small and tucked in the corner. Meanwhile, every other television was on the Packers-Broncos game. It wasn't even that exciting of a game. But we were in Wisconsin. Here's what we realized, there was good news to be heard—the Royals were going to win the World Series. They were going to win the Series tonight! But those Wisconsinites did not have ears to hear—truly a crooked generation.

There was a *gospel* that we wanted to proclaim. A “gospel” is just an announcement, usually associated with an announcement of a new King or ruler ascending the throne. But even in Biblical times these announcements were not long or necessarily detailed. But these Wisconsinites just didn't want to hear this gospel.

People in the Ancient Near East (Judea, Israel, Samaria, and the surrounding countries) would have been familiar with gospels—they would have heard them growing up. That is until the Holy Spirit inspired four men to create a new genre of story. These gospels became Gospels. A new genre of literature that wasn't *just* announcing good news but was providing an opportunity to *experience* the new King. This is what the Biblical Gospels do: they draw us into the story of Jesus in such a way that, through the Holy Spirit, we actually *experience* Jesus. Jesus is not here physically like he was with the disciples, but the Word of God in the Gospels draws us into his presence. This is good news that is more than just an announcement: it is an experience.

But not everyone wants to hear the good news or experience Jesus in the Gospels. The announcement of a new king Jesus will fall on deaf ears. So we, as Christians, must not get discouraged when we only have a small television in the corner broadcasting our good news and the rest of the world is pumping out a completely different kind of news.

This Advent let us remain faithful to the Gospel of our Lord—Christ has come and is making all things new!

Going Deeper

1. If someone asked you what Advent was, what would be your answer?
2. Advent has, historically, been considered a time of *waiting* for Christ to come. While the rest of the world hurries and stresses about the holiday season, Christians have historically decided to *not* hustle during this month but wait patiently for Jesus to come again. How does this come in conflict with and counteract the stress and hustle a lot of people feel at this time?
3. What are your favorite Christmas traditions? Why do you enjoy them so much?
4. What would you say if someone asked you "What is the Gospel?"
5. What does it mean that "many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us"? Why would many people record the events of Jesus' life?
6. Read Luke 1 and ask God to prepare your heart to worship the baby King.