

## **Lk. 21: 25-36**

**25**“There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. **26**People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. **27**Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in a cloud’ with power and great glory. **28**Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

**29**Then he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees; **30**as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. **31**So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. **32**Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. **33**Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. **34**“Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, **35**like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. **36**Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

**WE NEED A LITTLE CHRISTMAS**

From the show "Mame" (1966)

(Jerry Herman)

Haul out the holly  
Put up the tree before my spirit falls again  
Fill up the stocking  
I may be rushing things, but deck the halls again now.  
For we need a little Christmas  
Right this very minute  
Candles in the window  
Carols at the spinet  
Yes, we need a little Christmas  
Right this very minute  
Need a little Christmas NOW!!!

**IN THE 1966 MUSICAL "MAME," THAT SONG IS ACTUALLY SUNG DURING A SWELTERING GEORGIA JULY! MAME HAS LOST A FORTUNE IN THE 1929 STOCK MARKET CRASH, A BROTHER IN WWII, AND A PLANTATION OWNER HUSBAND IN A TRAGIC ACCIDENT, LEAVING HER DESPERATELY GRASPING FOR SOME ELUSIVE JOY. SO HAUL OUT THE HOLLY! BECAUSE WE NEED CHRISTMAS, RIGHT THIS VERY MINUTE. BUT DON'T LET THE SONG'S PEPPY TUNE FOOL YOU. LISTEN TO MAME'S ANGST: "BECAUSE I'VE GROWN A LITTLE LEANER, GROWN A LITTLE COLDER, GROWN A LITTLE SADDER, GROWN A**

**LITTLE OLDER AND I NEED A LITTLE ANGEL SITTING ON MY SHOULDER. NEED A LITTLE CHRISTMAS NOW!!” THAT ONE LITTLE THREE-LETTER WORD COULD SUM**

**UP OUR CULTURE. “NOW!” WE WANT WHAT WE WANT, FEEL ENTITLED TO WHAT WE WANT, WHEN WE WANT IT, WHICH IS NOW! BY SOME DECEIT OR TRICKERY THIS**

**YEAR, BLACK FRIDAY WAS THE WHOLE MONTH OF NOVEMBER, BECAUSE NO MATTER HOW EARLY SOMETHING STARTS, WE HAVE THIS INSTANT GRATIFICATION NEED FOR**

**IT TO BE QUICKER, SOONER. AND WHATEVER THE HOT GADGET IS FOR THIS SEASON, ALL I KNOW IS I HAVE TO HAVE IT FIRST, POST IT FIRST. FIRST OUT OF THE GATE**

**CLAIMS THE DAY, CONTROLS THE NARRATIVE. YOU WAIT, YOU LATE. YOU SNOOZE, YOU LOSE. NOPE, THE WORD IS “NOW!” NATIONAL DEBT, EDUCATION DEBT,**

**MARKETING IN GENERAL IN THE INFORMATION AGE ARE ALL ABOUT NOW. REAL TIME. ON**

**DEMAND. AND YEAH, TRY 21 MONTHS INTO A PAN-  
DEMIC TO TELL FOLKS THEY NEED TO WAIT  
YET A WHILE LONGER TO GET BACK TO  
NORMAL—NO MASKS, NO DISTANC-  
ING, NO PROTOCOLS, EVEN IF YOUR REASONING  
INCLUDES, “PEOPLE MIGHT DIE.” AGAIN,  
NOPE. RATHER RISK MY HEALTH AND  
YOURS THAN TO WAIT ON THE ALL-  
CLEAR. SO MUCH COMPELLING POWER IN THAT  
TINY WORD: NOW! THE OPPOSITE OF WHICH  
IS THE NASTIEST 4-LETTER WORD IMA-  
GINABLE, THE DREADED W-A-I-T.  
WAITING HAS NO PLACE IN AN INSTANT GRATIFI-  
CATION WORLD. WE ARE FULFILLMENT PEO-  
PLE, NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, WHICH MAKES  
THE ADVENT WREATH, THESE SCRIP-  
TURE LESSONS, THIS SEASON AS ABSURDLY  
COUNTER-INTUITIVE AND COUNTER-CULTUR-  
AL AS IT GETS. EVERY CONGREGATION  
IS CONVINCED THAT IF YOU GOO-  
GLE THE WORD “GRINCH,” A LUTHERAN PASTOR’S  
PICTURE WILL APPEAR, BECAUSE WHILE**

**PARISHIONERS PREFER CHRISTMAS CAROLS,  
WARM FUZZIES AND SWEET LITTLE JESUS,  
WE TORTURE THEM EVERY ADVENT IN-  
STEAD WITH JUDGMENT, JOHN THE  
BAPTIST, BROODS OF VIPERS, AND THE CATA-  
CLYSMIC END OF THE AGE! ADVENT IS  
ABOUT CHRIST'S COMING, ALRIGHT, BUT  
NOT SO MUCH THE BABY AS THE  
JUDGE AT THE END OF ALL TIME, FOR WHICH THE  
CLARION CALL OF THE SCRIPTURES AND THE  
CHURCH IS WATCH! WAIT! PREPARE!  
ANOTHER SEASONAL TUNE APPLIES,  
"YOU BETTER WATCH OUT," ALRIGHT, BUT NOT  
BECAUSE SANTA CLAUS COMING TO TOWN.  
NO, JESUS IS COMING, AND WE'RE TO  
PAY ATTENTION TO THE COMING  
ONE'S PROMISE TO DO JUSTICE, AS JEREMIAH  
SAYS, SO, AS PAUL ADMONISHES THE THES-  
SALONIANS, THAT YOU MAY BE BLAME-  
LESS AND HOLY WHEN JESUS  
COMES. FRUSTRATING WORDS WHEN WE'RE WITH  
AUNTIE MAME IN WANTING SOME FULFILL-**

**MENT, SOME CHRISTMAS FEEL-GOOD, RIGHT NOW!  
OBVIOUSLY, CHRISTMAS, GOD BECOMING  
ONE OF US, IS FOUNDATIONAL AND  
CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION! AND CEL-**

**EBRATE IT WE WILL! THE CHALLENGE IS OUR RE-  
TICENCE OR UNWILLINGNESS TO EMBRACE  
THE SPIRITUAL NECESSITY OF WAITING  
PATIENTLY AND PREPARING INTEN-**

**TIONALLY. ADVENT'S PENITENTIAL PURPOSE IS  
TO PREPARE US FOR THE COMING OF CHRIST  
IN MUCH THE SAME WAY THAT THE PEN-  
ITENTIAL SEASON OF LENT PRE-**

**PARES US FOR THE JOY OF EASTER. BY WAITING,  
HOPING, AND REPENTING. RICKY BOBBY IN  
TALLADEGA NIGHTS PREFERS TO PRAY  
TO 6 LB. 8 OZ. BABY JESUS BE-**

**CAUSE, HE ARGUES, "I LIKE THE CHRISTMAS JE-  
SUS BEST." WHO WOULDN'T, COMPARED TO  
THE JUDGE WHO COMES AT THE END OF  
TIME? BUT IF HE'S COMING, HOW DO**

**WE PREPARE? MUCH AS WE WOULD IN OUR OWN  
HOMES WHEN WE HEAR THAT "COMPANY'S**

**COMING!” BY CLEANING THE HOUSE, GETTING THINGS IN ORDER. ONLY IN ADVENT THE “HOUSE” IS YOU, ME. ADVENT IS A PRECIOUS GIFT TO THE CHURCH, TO US. IN THIS LIMINAL SPACE OF PANDEMIC AND BETWEEN CHRIST’S COMING ONCE IN BETHLEHEM AND AGAIN AT THE END OF ALL THINGS. FEEL-GOOD CONTRIVANCES SIMPLY CAN’T ELIMINATE FAITHFUL WATCHING, WAITING, PREPARING. IF FULFILLMENT IS ALL WE’RE ABOUT, THEN WE LOSE HOPE ITSELF. ADVENT TEACHES US, REQUIRES US TO HOPE. AND ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE PAST 21 MONTHS, LORD KNOWS WE NEED HOPE WHEN IT FEELS LIKE THE RUG IS BEING YANKED OUT FROM UNDER US! AS WE LIGHT THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE TODAY, ADVENT LIGHTS A FIRE UNDER US TO WAIT, WATCH, REPENT, HOPE.**

**(SING) “SO YES, WE WANT A LITTLE CHRISTMAS—RIGHT THIS VERY MINUTE...BUT NEED A LITTLE ADVENT NOW!” AMEN.**