

# PULPIT COMPANION

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THERE'S A  
SHOOT  
COMING

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PSALMS 72:1-4

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This powerful exploration of Advent reminds us why Jesus had to come—because humanity's attempts at justice, righteousness, and unity consistently fall short without divine intervention.

Drawing from Solomon's prayer in Psalm 72, we discover that even the wisest human king recognized the need for God's justice, a justice untainted by wealth, power, prejudice, or corruption. The message challenges us to examine how we treat 'the least of these,' revealing that our righteousness is measured not by how we treat those we like or admire, but by how we extend dignity to those society overlooks. Paul's words in Romans 15 cut even deeper, exposing our human tendency toward division—how small offenses become mountains, how we let differences defeat us, and how we struggle to welcome others the way Christ welcomed us at our worst.

The beauty of Advent is that Jesus came as a servant, not to take sides but to take over, bringing confirmation to some and mercy to others, uniting Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, saved and seeking. This season calls us to recognize that what divides us defeats us, and only Christ can truly unite us in harmony that glorifies God.

### SCRIPTURES FROM PULPIT AI

- **Psalm 72:1-4** - Solomon's prayer for divine justice and righteousness
- **Romans 15:4-7** - Unity, endurance, and welcoming one another in Christ
- **Romans 15:8-12** - Christ as servant to Jews and Gentiles, fulfilling God's promises
- **Isaiah 11:1-4** - The shoot from the stump of Jesse, the coming Messiah

### Alluded to or Quoted:

- **Philippians 1:6** - "He that began a good work in you will perform it" (referenced near the end)





## DEVOTIONAL

### Day 1: Divine Justice in a Broken World

**Reading:** Psalm 72:1-4

**Devotional:** Solomon's prayer reveals a profound truth: human justice, no matter how well-intentioned, bears the fingerprints of our limitations. We see it daily—systems that favor the privileged, courts swayed by influence, laws that protect some while marginalizing others. Solomon understood this and cried out for something higher: "Give the king your justice, O God." This Advent season, reflect on areas where you've witnessed injustice. Consider how God's justice differs from human attempts—it's untainted by wealth, power, or prejudice. Divine justice flows from the mountains to the valleys, defending the vulnerable and crushing oppression. As you prepare your heart for Christ's coming, ask God to give you His perspective on justice and to use you as an instrument of His righteousness in your sphere of influence.

**Reflection Question:** Where have you witnessed injustice, and how can you be an agent of God's righteous justice today?

### Day 2: The Gift of Unity

**Reading:** Romans 15:4-7

**Devotional:** "What divides us defeats us until Christ unites us." These words pierce through our modern reality where division comes easily and unity requires supernatural intervention. Paul's instruction to "welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you" confronts us with an uncomfortable question: How did Christ welcome us? He welcomed us when we were wrong, lost, sinful, and undeserving. Yet we often reject others at their worst while expecting grace at ours. Unity isn't natural—it's miraculous. Harmony is a gift that requires Christ's presence. This Advent, examine your relationships. Who have you excluded? What small offense have you allowed to become a mountain? Remember, God is not glorified by a chorus of contradictions but by voices united in praise. Christ came to heal our divisions because alone, we cannot bridge the gaps that separate us.

**Reflection Question:** Who do you need to welcome with the same grace Christ extended to you?







## DEVOTIONAL

### Day 3: A Savior for All People

**Reading:** Romans 15:8-12

**Devotional:** Jesus didn't come to take sides; He came to take over. This revolutionary truth dismantles every barrier we've constructed. The Jews needed confirmation of God's promises; the Gentiles desperately needed mercy. Jesus came for both. He didn't arrive in royal robes to dominate but as a servant to demonstrate what faith looks like in action. Some of us need confirmation that God's promises are real, while others simply need mercy for today. The beauty of Advent is that Christ meets us exactly where we are. He didn't come for the elite, the wealthy, or those who have it all together. God always intended a multicultural, global kingdom where every nation, tongue, and tribe would worship together. This season, recognize that the same Jesus who came for you also came for those who look different, speak differently, and live in different zip codes. His salvation plan includes everyone.

**Reflection Question:** How does knowing Jesus came for all people change the way you view those different from you?

### Day 4: Hope from the Stump

**Reading:** Isaiah 11:1-4

**Devotional:** When the world sees a stump, heaven sees a seed. Isaiah prophesied about a shoot emerging from Jesse's stump when Israel looked defeated, cut down by injustice and oppression. That fragile shoot—small enough to ignore, vulnerable enough to overlook—carried the power to overthrow everything that claimed the final word. This is God's holy habit: turning stumps into stories, ashes into answers, remnants into revolution. Perhaps you feel cut down by circumstances, pressed by poverty, knocked down by systems that never meant you well. God specializes in growing glory where life tried to bury you. The shoot doesn't rise because conditions are favorable; it rises because God is faithful. If God is in the root, life must come forth. Your wound is not your waste; your remnant is your resurrection. This Advent, remember: your story isn't finished—it's just beginning.

**Reflection Question:** What "stump" in your life is God preparing to transform into a testimony?





## DEVOTIONAL

### Day 5: Get Ready—The Shoot is Coming

**Reading:** Luke 2:8-14

**Devotional:** "Get ready, get ready, get ready!" The shoot is about to break through. Advent reminds us that when humanity failed to fix what was broken, God Himself stepped in. Jesus came not because we deserved it but because we desperately needed it. He came to confirm promises, extend mercy, heal divisions, and bring justice. The long-expected Savior arrived as a vulnerable baby, yet carried the weight of heaven's answer to earth's deepest need. As you prepare to celebrate His birth, recognize that the same Jesus who came 2,000 years ago is still coming—into your circumstances, your pain, your questions, and your waiting. Don't let anyone tell you your story is over. The God who turns stumps into shoots is still at work today. He sees potential where others see problems. He brings resurrection where others pronounce death. Get ready—your breakthrough is coming. His name is Jesus.

**Reflection Question:** How are you preparing your heart to receive what God wants to birth in you this Advent season?

**Closing Prayer for the Week:** Lord Jesus, thank You for coming as the Shoot from Jesse's stump. Help us embrace Your divine justice, pursue supernatural unity, and extend grace to all people. Transform our stumps into stories of Your faithfulness. As we wait in expectation this Advent season, prepare our hearts to receive You afresh. May we be instruments of Your righteousness, agents of Your mercy, and witnesses of Your transforming power. In Your holy name, Amen.





## SMALL GROUP GUIDE : "There's a Shoot Coming"

### Opening Prayer:

Begin by asking God to open hearts and minds to receive His word. Pray for wisdom, unity, and the courage to apply what is discussed.

### Key Scripture:

- Psalm 72:1-4 - Solomon's prayer for divine justice
- Romans 15:4-7 - Unity in Christ across divisions
- Isaiah 11:1-4 - The shoot from the stump of Jesse

### Icebreaker Question

Share one thing you're grateful for this past week that you might normally take for granted (health, safe travels, relationships, etc.).

### Sermon Overview

This sermon explores why Jesus had to come (Advent) by examining three key areas:

1. **The Need for Divine Justice** (Psalm 72) - Human justice fails; we need God's perfect justice
2. **The Problem of Division** (Romans 15:4-7) - Humanity cannot heal its divisions alone
3. **The Promise of Hope** (Isaiah 11:1-4) - When we feel cut down like a stump, God brings forth a shoot





## SMALL GROUP GUIDE : "There's a Shoot Coming"

### Discussion Questions:

#### Section 1: Divine Justice vs. Human Justice (15-20 minutes)

1. The pastor said, "Prayer won't fix the justice system. Righteousness will." What do you think he meant by this? How does this challenge or encourage you?
2. Read Psalm 72:1-4 together. Why do you think Solomon asked for God's justice rather than trusting his own wisdom? What does this teach us about humility in leadership?
3. The sermon stated: "How you treat the least of them reveals if you understand what righteousness is."
  - Who are "the least" in our community today?
  - How does your treatment of them reflect your understanding of God's justice?
4. Reflection: Where have you seen human justice fail? Where have you experienced or witnessed God's perfect justice?

#### Section 2: The Problem of Division (15-20 minutes)

1. The pastor said, "What divides us defeats us until Christ unites us."
  - What are some of the divisions you see in our world today? In the church?
  - How does Christ provide the solution to these divisions?
2. Read Romans 15:7: "Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you."
  - How did Christ welcome you when you were at your worst?
  - Who is difficult for you to welcome? What would it look like to welcome them as Christ welcomed you?
3. The sermon mentioned people at Thanksgiving holding onto "small stuff" that becomes mountains.
  - Why do we struggle to let go of small offenses?
  - What practical steps can we take to pursue unity in our relationships?
4. Challenge Question: The pastor noted that Jews needed confirmation while Gentiles needed mercy. Which do you need more of right now—confirmation of God's promises or God's mercy?







## SMALL GROUP GUIDE : "There's a Shoot Coming"

### Discussion Questions:

#### Section 3: The Shoot from the Stump (15-20 minutes)

- 1. Read Isaiah 11:1-4 together.** The pastor said, "When the world saw a stump, Isaiah saw a seed."
  - When have you felt "cut down" like a stump?
  - How does this image of a shoot coming from a stump give you hope?
- 2. The sermon declared: "If God is in the root, life must come forth."**
  - Where do you need to see new life spring forth in your circumstances?
  - What "dead" situation do you need to trust God is still working in?
- 3. The pastor shared his testimony about being a "stump from 2822 Calumet in Chicago."**
  - How have you seen God bring life from what looked dead in your own story?
  - How can sharing our "stump to shoot" stories encourage others?
- 4. Advent Reflection:** Jesus came as a servant, not in royal robes. How does this challenge our expectations of how God works in our lives?

### Key Takeaways

Write these down or share which one resonates most with you:

- 1. Divine justice is not tainted by wealth, power, prejudice, or corruption—only God's justice is truly just.**
- 2. Unity is supernatural—we cannot heal our divisions alone; we need Christ to unite us.**
- 3. Jesus didn't come to take sides; He came to take over—His salvation is for everyone, regardless of background.**
- 4. Your stump is not your ending; your shoot is your beginning—what looks dead to the world is where God grows new life.**
- 5. Advent reminds us: Jesus came for those who need confirmation AND those who need mercy—He came for all of us.**







## SMALL GROUP GUIDE : "There's a Shoot Coming"

### Practical Applications:

#### This Week's Challenge:

Choose at least ONE of the following to practice this week:

#### Option 1: Practice Divine Justice

- Identify one "least of these" person in your sphere of influence
- Intentionally show them kindness, respect, or practical help
- Reflect on how this changes your perspective

#### Option 2: Pursue Unity

- Reach out to someone you've had division with (even over "small stuff")
- Practice welcoming them as Christ welcomed you
- If reconciliation isn't possible yet, pray for them daily

#### Option 3: Trust the Shoot

- Identify one "stump" area in your life where things feel dead or cut down
- Write down Isaiah 11:1 and place it somewhere you'll see daily
- Journal each day about signs of life (shoots) God is bringing forth

#### Option 4: Prepare for Advent

- Each day this week, read one of the Advent scriptures (Psalm 72, Romans 15:4-12, Isaiah 11:1-10)
- Ask God: "Why did you need to come? What brokenness in me needs your arrival?"
- Thank Jesus for coming as a servant to all people

### Group Activity (10-15 minutes)

#### "Get Ready" Exercise:

The pastor ended with: "Get ready, get ready, get ready—the shoot is about to break through."

- Go around the circle and have each person complete this sentence:
  - "I need to get ready for God to bring a shoot in the area of \_\_\_\_\_."
- After each person shares, the group responds together: "Get ready, get ready, get ready!"
- Pray specifically for what each person shared.





## SMALL GROUP GUIDE : "There's a Shoot Coming"

### Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Pray together:

- Thank God for the coming of Jesus (Advent)
- Ask for eyes to see shoots where the world sees stumps
- Pray for unity in the body of Christ
- Ask for grace to welcome others as Christ welcomed us
- Request divine justice to flow in our communities

### Memory Verse for the Week

*Isaiah 11:1 (ESV) "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit."*

### Before Next Meeting

- Practice your chosen application
- Be ready to share one way you saw God bring "a shoot" in your life or someone else's
- Continue reflecting on why Jesus had to come—and why we still need Him today

### Leader Notes

- **Be sensitive** to those who may be struggling with justice issues, family divisions, or feeling "cut down"
- **Create space** for silence and reflection—not every question needs immediate answers
- **Encourage vulnerability** by sharing your own struggles with justice, unity, and hope
- **Focus on hope:** This is Advent—a season of expectant waiting and hope. Keep the tone hopeful even when discussing difficult topics.

*"Your stump is not your ending. Your shoot is your beginning. Your wound is not your waste. Your remnant is your resurrection. And your story is not finished. It's just beginning."*

