

# Sermon Note: Anticipation

## Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

### Introduction

This Sunday we conclude **The Days are Surely Coming** with Week Three: *Anticipation*. Jeremiah points toward a promised shepherd-king who will lead with wisdom, gather the scattered, and make daily life secure. This is anticipation with substance—rooted in God’s commitment to justice and the care of people who have been harmed by poor leadership. It honors the ache of the present and leans into God’s promised future, trusting that righteousness belongs in public life as much as in prayer. Together we’ll explore how anticipation becomes a way of living now—steady, honest, and ready for the reign of Christ.

### Illustration Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SeDoP4ILwjc>

In *The King’s Speech* (2010), King George VI moves through rooms and hallways to a microphone, awaits his cue, and delivers a wartime broadcast to the people of Great Britain.

### Why This Video?

Anticipation is layered in this sequence in *The King’s Speech* (2010). For King George, the walk to the microphone tightens into a personal test, with Lionel Logue’s quiet cues offering steady encouragement. In adjacent rooms, his wife, technicians, and political leaders wait with their own tension, fully aware of his speaking challenges and the stakes of the moment. Visual cuts to households across Britain show the anticipation of a nation in waiting. When the address concludes, people across Britain are deeply moved, filled with a sense of moral purpose and duty.

### Video Discussion Questions

1. How does the slow walk through rooms and hallways shape your sense of anticipation before the broadcast begins?
2. When the door closes and only Lionel Logue remains, what small cues (a glance, a hand signal, where he stands) show their partnership?
3. In the opening lines of the speech, what do you notice about the King’s breathing and pacing? Does this change throughout the King’s address? If so, how?
4. As the King waits for the cue to begin, where do you see anticipation in his body and face, and how does he move through it once he starts speaking?
5. As the address continues, how do the scenes to households across Britain build the sense that this is a shared national moment?
6. What do you imagine is happening for the Queen, technicians, and political leaders waiting nearby, and how is that anticipation different from the King’s?

7. When the address concludes, which signals of public response stand out first—faces, posture, movement—and what do they show about the nation’s mood?
8. Choose one listener shown during the broadcast. What might this speech have meant for them in that moment, and what do you think they may have done next? Why?

### **Jeremiah 23:1-6 (NRSVue)**

<sup>1</sup>Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the Lord. <sup>2</sup>Therefore thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the Lord. <sup>3</sup>Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. <sup>4</sup>I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall no longer fear or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the Lord.

<sup>5</sup>The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. <sup>6</sup>In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: “The Lord is our righteousness.”

### **Scripture Study Questions**

1. “The shepherds” and “sheep” of Jeremiah 23 are the kings and people of the Hebrews. The king was expected to govern with righteousness; to care for and about his people. What does such leadership look like to you today?
2. If we believe in a separation of church and state, where and how does this “woe to shepherds” apply now? When we are so divided, what do we do when something that one calls “woe” is taken by others as “blessing”?
3. We can’t decide what’s woeful or commendable behavior if we don’t know what we stand for. The Affirmations of Faith in the United Methodist Hymnal (880-889) are concise creeds that lay out our essential beliefs. Look particularly at the World Methodist Social Affirmation (886). Read it out loud, then take it section by section (or even line by line). Do you believe in these precepts? Do you have problems with any of them? Why? How, if at all, do they inform or empower your life?
4. Consider any or all of these questions on your own or with a trusted spiritual partner: Who are you following? Who are you believing in? Who is the bearer of your hope? Who speaks to your hunger and your fears? Who defines what a life of meaning and fullness means? For whom are you waiting? And do you wait with joy? What we learn this Reign of Christ Sunday is that allegiance to this king invites us to consider *how* we wait and not just *that* we wait. Since waiting is living, or living is waiting, the real question for us this day is, “How will we live day by day?”

### **Additional (Optional) Questions**

1. What stood out to you in this text?
2. What didn’t make sense?

3. What do you understand a shepherd's job to be? What makes someone a good shepherd or a bad shepherd?
4. If we consider these shepherds to be the spiritual leaders of Israel at the time, what might some of them have done wrong?
5. Why do you think some people leave a church? Why do you think some people never join a church?
6. Is leaving a church (or *the* church) different from leaving faith? Why or why not?
7. What could make people who have left the church consider returning?
8. How can you (or we) as shepherds help people feel comfortable trying church again or for the first time?

### **Weekly Action**

Practice steady anticipation this week. Choose an upcoming moment—your own or someone else's. Write a brief handwritten note to that person (or to yourself). Include what's ahead, one sentence of hope, and one concrete support or next step. If it's your moment, place the note where you'll see it in the morning, bring it with you, and read it once before you begin. If it's someone else's, deliver the note today or the day before the upcoming moment, and follow through on the support you noted. If helpful, add when you'll pray for wisdom and peace.

### **Prayer**

O Lord, our righteousness: We hear the promise, "the days are coming...." Open our eyes and hearts to see the ways you are at work to bring this promise to fulfillment. Make us eager and willing participants in the execution of justice in the land. Turn our hearts from division, disgust, fear, and distrust to embrace forgiveness, repentance, and restoration. Make us instruments of peace with justice for all, in the name of Christ who reigns forever and ever. Amen.