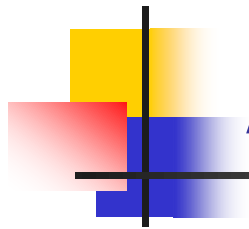


**We Wish**

 **You A Merry**

**Parousia!**



# Advent Fun Facts

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- Originally didn't have anything to do with Christmas
- Parousia referred to the victorious return of the KING!!!
- Beginning around 700 AD focused on preparing new converts to get ready for baptism through prayer, fasting, etc
- Eventually it included the whole church, so they could ALL be ready



# So, To Quote John's Song

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- WE MUST BE READY!!!!!!!!!!!!
- A couple of weeks ago we started looking at this, and found a powerful principle hidden in Luke 18:8
- When the Son of Man comes, WILL HE FIND FAITH ON THE EARTH??
- Absolute trust, dependence, surrender and humility – relying completely on the Lord
- Not my will but yours be done



# But Wait, There's More .....

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- **10** Then many will be led into sin,<sup>[s]</sup> and they will betray one another and hate one another. **11** And many false prophets will appear and deceive<sup>[t]</sup> many, **12** and because lawlessness will increase so much, **the love of many will grow cold. Mat 24**
- **4** But I have this against you: **You have departed<sup>[k]</sup> from your first love!** **5** Therefore, remember from what high state<sup>[l]</sup> you have fallen and repent! Do<sup>[m]</sup> the deeds you did at the first- Rev 2



**ARISTIDES  
OF ATHENS  
B? – D 134  
AD**

**AUTHOR OF  
*APOLOGY*,  
WHICH HE  
PRESENTED  
TO  
EMPEROR  
HADRIAN**

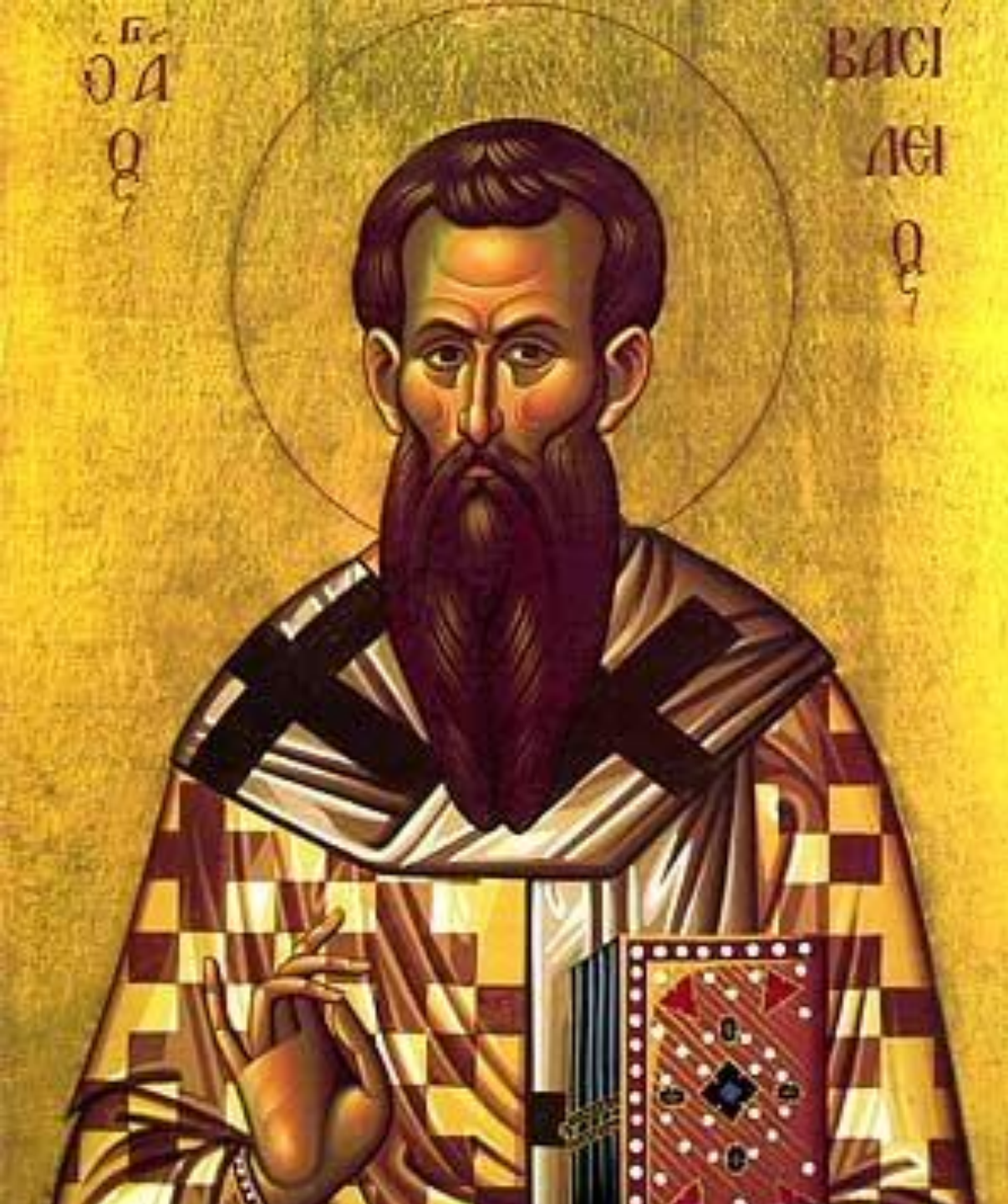


## Which Says in Part:

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**they love one another, and from widows they do not turn away their esteem; and they deliver the orphan from him who treats him harshly. And he, who has, gives to him who has not, without boasting. And when they see a stranger, they take him in to their homes And if they hear that one of their number is imprisoned or afflicted on account of the name of their Messiah, all of them anxiously minister to his necessity, And if there is among them any that is poor and needy, and if they have no spare food, they fast two or three days in order to supply to the needy their lack of food.**





**TERTULLIAN**  
**AD 160-225**

**BISHOP Of**  
**NORTH**  
**AFRICA**

**WROTE HIS**  
**OWN**  
***APOLOGY* IN**  
**AD 197**



# Sound Familiar??

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if he likes, each puts in a small donation; but only if it be his pleasure, and only if he be able: for there is no compulsion; all is voluntary. These gifts are . . . not spent on feasts, and drinking-bouts, and eating-houses, but to support and bury poor people, to supply the wants of boys and girls destitute of means and parents, and of old persons confined now to the house; such, too, as have suffered shipwreck; and if there happen to be any in the mines or banished to the islands or shut up in the prisons, for nothing but their fidelity to the cause of God's Church, they become the nurslings of their confession. But it is **mainly the deeds of a love** so noble that lead many to put a brand upon us.....

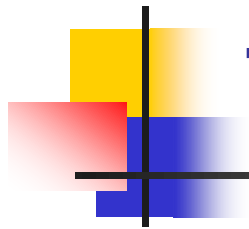




# From the Mouths of Pagans

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..... **“Behold, (they say,) how they love one another,”** for they themselves are animated by mutual hatred. **“Behold, (they say about us,) how they are ready even to die for one another,”** for they themselves would sooner kill.



# The Original Church Brand

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- These days there is an arms race among churches to build a better brand to attract attention and grow attendance
- Things like ... ?
- The early church was identified by friends and enemies alike as people who were completely sold out to loving and caring for each other, and the local community, NO MATTER WHAT 24-7-365
- According to Tertullian, the original brand



# Original Church Brand Acts 2

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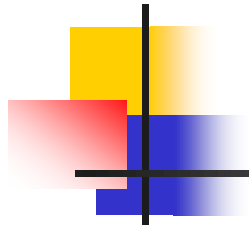
- 42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and [ao]to prayer.
- 43 [ap]Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and [aq]signs were taking place through the apostles. 44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; 45 and they *began* selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.



# Life Together

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- **46 Day by day** continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from **house to house, they were taking their [at] meals together with gladness and [au] sincerity of heart,** **47** praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding [av] to their number day by day those who were being saved.
- Behold, how they LOVE one another!!



# How is This Possible???

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“The Church is not a religious community of worshippers *of* Christ, but **is Christ himself** who has taken form among men.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer,

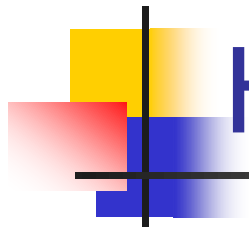
**Ethics** (ed. Simon and Schuster, 2012) -  
ISBN: 9781451688504



# Let Me Remind You...

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- So, when you “get saved,” you don’t become a saved **but still individual** free moral agent, **still independent** but now better equipped to live your life with more blessings throughout eternity ....
- NO, no, no, no ... when we are born again and the Holy Spirit takes residence within us, it is for the express purpose of becoming a part of HIS BODY, filled with His life and gifted with supernatural abilities from Him so He can LOVE the world through us



# Hold On To Each Other

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- **Hebrews 10:23** Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;
- <sup>24</sup> and let us consider how to **stimulate** one another **to love** and good deeds,
- <sup>25</sup> not **forsaking our own assembling together**, as is the habit of some, **but encouraging *one another*, and all the more** as you see the day drawing near.

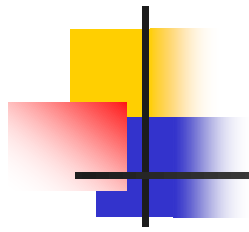




# Merry Parousia!

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- 34 “I give you a new commandment—to love<sup>[ch]</sup> one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.<sup>[ci]</sup> 35 Everyone<sup>[cj]</sup> will know by this that you are my disciples—if you have love for one another.”
- When the Son of Man comes, will he find his Body on the earth loving everyone at all times the way that He LOVES?



# Good News!, YOU Are

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- deeply loved by God,
- fully accepted by God,
- completely and permanently forgiven by God,
- lavishly blessed by God,
- and eternally, perfectly embraced by God as his child; a child who brings Him unspeakable JOY