

There's an old saying so old and overused I just KNOW you have heard it. The saying is a story really, a precautionary tale for us to stay attuned to our environment.

The story is about a frog swimming in a pot of water on an open fire. You know, doing laps, counting "steps" on his waterproof Fitbit, with iPod Mini buds in his ears, deep into the music. Waiting, no doubt.



We don't know what the frog is waiting FOR. Maybe HE doesn't know, either. Maybe the frog lives in hope:

- Hope his marriage gets better.
- Hope her kids want to visit (or even call).
- Hope his lottery ticket wins the big jackpot (or even a small jackpot).
- Hope the exercise will fill her empty days.

Or maybe the swimming frog lives in fear rather than in hope:

- Fear of running out of money
- Fear of the coming diagnosis

There are a lot of fears—better keep swimming!

Maybe this frog has been in this pot his whole life. Maybe she knows her parents and their parents, all the way back to her Mayflower ancestor frogs he's so proud to be descended from—all those venerable frogs had swum in this same pot, over this same fire, waiting and hoping, waiting and hoping.

And just maybe (bear with me here) this frog was Jewish. There hadn't been any word of hope for so long—any word of prophecy for so long—the frog was devoid of hope. So empty, so focused on swimming he had forgotten what the prophet Isaiah had foretold centuries before: "God would come, in the flesh, to save us."

Oh, the frog sang the song as he swam: "O Come, O Come Immanuel, to ransom captive Israel." Then he thought, sacrilegiously "My little green feet he's coming! Doesn't God know this water's getting hot? I'd better swim faster and pretend I don't even notice the water's temperature."

That's the story—you KNOW this tale (more or less). Maybe you've lived this tale, for a while. So, you know how tired of waiting the Jewish people must have been when the angel Gabriel started tapping

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people on the shoulder and booming out, “PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD! PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD!”

Pretty soon, all the people were saying (or maybe even singing) “PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD! The Messiah is coming. Coming to shine new light, new joy, fresh hope, coming to shower us with understanding and love and healing. Coming to change our critique into love. Coming to turn down the heat of this world. Coming to help us safely exit the pot of our existence. And coming to prepare a way for us to go with him, to be with him, forever.”

But all this is history. Christ came and live with us, as one of us. In a historic sense we “prepared the way of the lord.” Christ taught us the meaning of our existence and showed us how to truly PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD: by living for others, by bearing and sharing Christ in our world.

“The day is coming,” Christ told us, “when I will come again.” And so, Christ has come (historically) and Christ is here (right now) with us still. But Christ is coming again also, in a cosmic sense. As we remember and celebrate these historic events of the past, as we proclaim our cosmic future, this is how we hold and share Christ in the here and now.



So, you know the real story of the frog swimming in the pot of water over a fire, don't you? If so, you know that I may have taken a few ... liberties ... with the story. In real life, the frog realized the water was getting too hot and he jumped out of the pot. He hopped over to church and thanked God for letting him know a new reality was coming, a reality that needed his immediate attention. Amen.