

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE - 12.3.2023

HOPE FOR THE WEARY

WHAT IS ADVENT?

- Advent comes from the Latin for “coming” or “arrival”.
- Advent is a season of reflection on the Advent of Christ.
- During Advent, we reflect on the coming of Christ to earth in his incarnation. We celebrate his birth.
- We also identify with the people of God who waited in anticipation of his coming in fulfillment of God’s promises in the Messiah.
- We are also waiting, we are waiting on Christ’s second advent.
- Why do we need this? We need this time to slow down and rehearse the familiar story and the promises of God and allow them to renew and refresh our weary souls, so that we can patiently wait with endurance on our Lord’s glorious return.
- Advent is a time for us to live with worshipful reflection on what was and with hopeful anticipation of what is yet to be.

THE WEARY WORLD

- Why is the world weary in the first place?
- Darkness first entered God’s good creation in the Fall.
- As the Lord pronounced the curse upon the serpent, he declared there would be all out war between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. It would be all out war!
- The Lord announced that the woman would have difficulty in childbirth.
- And when the Lord cursed the ground, life became exceedingly difficult. Work would become wearisome.
- And the worst part of it all, our connection to our Creator was broken.
- Death was the new reality.
- Sin ruined everything! It would truly be a weary world.

- The teacher in Ecclesiastes declares, “all things are full of weariness” (Ecc. 1:8).
- Paul writes in Romans that all of creation was subjected to futility, it was frustrated, and in bondage to corruption and decay. (Romans 8:20-22)
- Creation has been groaning under the weight of our rebellion.
- What a hopeless and helpless condition the weary world is in.

THE PROMISE OF HOPE

- The Advent season is about HOPE because God wove the theme of hope into the story of Redemption.
- The Creator, from all eternity, purposed to do something about our hopeless, helpless, wearisome condition.
- Genesis 3:15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”
- Through the seed of the woman, God would bring a Deliverer.

- That promise of hope is scattered throughout the OT history of God’s people.
- We see the promise of hope renewed in the covenant God makes with the patriarch Abraham. (Gen. 12, 15 and 17)
- The promise of hope is seen in God’s rescue of his people out of bondage in Egypt.
- We see the promise of hope in the covenant God makes with David, Israel’s great king.
- Through the voice of his prophets, God heralded the promise of hope through the Messiah.
- Scripture contains hundreds of Messianic prophecies about the ONE who would deliver God’s people.

- From Genesis 3 forward, the people of God anticipated the coming of the Messiah.
- Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. 6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.
- This was a word of hope to a people living in a time of deep hopelessness and great despair.
- Isaiah's pronouncement is that even in the midst of their brokenness, sin and rampant corruption, in all of the darkness that enshrouds them, a light was coming.
- God had not forgotten them and he certainly had not forgotten his promise.
- The darkness they were under tried to smother all hope from the people of God and Isaiah's word was like a booster shot of hope.
- But they would have to wait for a very long time to see the arrival of the promise.
- From the time of the planting of the seed of hope until the arrival of the Messiah, thousands of years passed.
- Millennia of longing, waiting, yearning, anticipating, and expecting.
- Luke's gospel gives us a short bio of two people who got to behold the promise they were longing to see fulfilled.
- Luke 2:25-32; 36-38 Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, 28 he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, 29 "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; 30 for my eyes have seen your salvation 31 that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel."
- Luke 2:36-38 And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, 37 and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. 38 And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.
- Simeon and Anna got to be eyewitnesses of the fulfillment of God's promise of HOPE—Jesus Christ.
- And if they had not been waiting, if they had not been expectant, if they had doubted the promises of God, they would have missed it.

OUR NEED OF HOPE

- Without the promise of hope all the way back in the garden, and the renewed promise of hope throughout history, God's people would have lived in utter despair. They would have been crushed by the darkness.
- Now, we know a thing or two about hope.
- We have placed our hope in a lot of things, and sadly many of those things have let us down.
- We all have examples of misplaced hope in people and things that will always let us down and disappoint us.
- But the promise of hope that we find in Scripture is that it is an unfailing promise.
- It's unfailing because all of the promises of God always come to pass.
- We can have true and lasting hope because God is faithful to do everything he said he will do.
- Hebrews 6:13-20 13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, 14 saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." 15 And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise. 16 For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. 17 So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, 18 so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. 19 We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, 20 where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.
- God cannot lie. He is all truth. It is the very essence of his being.
- This means any promise he makes is as good as done.

- God chose to reinforce his word of promise to Abraham by swearing in oath that he would fulfill his promise.
- Because nothing and no one is greater than him, he swore by himself.
- God is supremely confident in himself and in his ability to bring about whatsoever he purposes and pleases.
- Are you as confident in him?

- And then the writer of Hebrews uses the surety of the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham, the unchangeable purpose of God in that promise, and the impossibility of God lying, as encouragement for us to hold fast to the hope set before us.
- What is the hope set before us? That through the appearance of Christ, through the work of the greater and eternal High Priest, he has become the source of eternal salvation (Hebrews 5:9).
- We were like a ship adrift at sea, hopeless, helpless, tossed about by every wind and wave.
- But now, we are securely anchored in Christ.

- Hebrews 10:19-23 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.
- The things we hope for in Christ are a certainty.
- Through him, we have access to his presence, we have the forgiveness of sins, everything that separated us from God has been reconciled, and we can draw near to him.
- He is faithful! He who started our salvation will be faithful to bring it to completion.

- Notice how we are encouraged to hold fast to our confession of hope.
- Don't waffle in your confession of the hope you have in Christ because God is faithful!
- Our hope in Christ cannot be taken from us.

- Romans 8:22-25 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.
- What are we hoping for? The redemption of our bodies. For all things to be made new.
- Revelation 21-22--John's vision of the new heaven and the new earth.
- The things that brought weariness into the world are not present in the new.

CONCLUSION

- Where is your hope placed?
- Is it in Christ? If it is, your hope is anchored in unshakeable ground.
- But if it is in material possessions, people, and things, those will fail you.
- Trusting in any of those things will leave you frustrated, angry, anxious, sad, and weary.

- As we reflect this Advent season and identify with the waiting of God's people throughout history, we're reminded that whatever darkness might seek to rob us of hope, or threaten the hope that we have in Christ, God is faithful.
- We can place all of our hope in him.

- Romans 15:4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.
- Rehearse the gospel story. Immerse yourself in the story of Christ's first Advent, the fulfillment of Hope.
- Stir your hope by contemplating what will be at Christ's second Advent.
- This will encourage you to patiently wait on the promises of God.
- We must endure, trusting that God will come through because he said He would.
- We will have moments of darkness, disappointments, and difficulties, but none of those things can rob us of our hope.

- Romans 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?