

Advent Week 1 – “The Certainty of Things”

Luke 1:1–4

Theme: From Promise to Praise — Week 1: CERTAINTY

Probably, Hopefully, We’ll See

Have you ever noticed how much of life feels uncertain?

We live in a world full of “probably,” “hopefully,” and “we’ll see.”

We order things online — *hopefully* it arrives by Christmas.

We make plans — *hopefully* the weather cooperates.

We make resolutions — *hopefully* we keep them for more than two weeks.

Prompt for personal anecdote:

A few years ago, we were preparing for a trip back to Oklahoma to see family. The day before we were supposed to leave, our son had a ziplining accident that meant a last-minute trip to the urgent care. It was a gentle reminder that occasionally in life, we are **surprised by uncertainty**.

You’ve been there too — maybe travel plans that didn’t go right, or perhaps there was a moment you desperately wanted clear answers. We all want the bright light of clarity to shine into all of the big decisions of our lives. We all want everything to always go as planned. And yet, more often than not, it doesn’t. John Lennon once wrote, “Life is what happens when you’re busy making other plans.” We all want certainty, we all want our “hopefully’s” and our “probably’s” to become “absolutely,” and “certainly.”

And yet... Advent begins in the dark — not with certainty, but with longing. The people of God had been waiting 400 years. Four centuries of waiting for God to speak, waiting for God to move, waiting for God to keep His promises. Four hundred years of heavenly silence. Four hundred years of wondering and hoping.

And then Luke begins his Gospel with a remarkable claim:

“So that you may KNOW the CERTAINTY of the things about which you have been instructed.” (Luke 1:4)

Advent starts with a promise:

God gives us a HOPE we can be certain of.

Point 1: The Certainty of God's Story

(Luke 1:1–2)

“Many have undertaken to draw up an account... handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses...”

Luke begins by saying: This isn't rumor. This isn't myth. This is history.

- Eyewitnesses saw Jesus.
- Ministers of the Word proclaimed Jesus.
- The early church preserved the story of Jesus.

Luke says, in essence:

“God's story is not shaky — it's steady.”

Reliable Sources

Recently, one of my wife's college friends called her with the good news that she was expecting. I overheard half of the conversation and had a pretty good idea about what was going on. However, that didn't stop me from texting the husbands and wives who are around my wife's age and ask which one of them was having a phone conversation about being pregnant! After all, it is the season of miraculous pregnancies! We will look at two of those over the next two Sundays!

But I was not a “reliable source” of information. And considering the news these days, you are best served to double and triple check various breaking news headlines for the accurate facts, so you can be confident in what you are receiving as the truth. Luke does something far better for us here. Luke is a much more reliable news-sharer.

Luke wants you to know: “This happened. Jesus came. God moved. The world changed. This is certain.”

Tie-in:

Hope isn't built on vague feelings.

Hope is built on a God who steps into history.

Point 2: The Certainty of God's Work in Our Lives**(Luke 1:3)**

"...since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning..."

Luke the physician investigates EVERYTHING.

He interviews.

He checks timelines.

He examines lives.

He leaves no stone unturned.

Why?

Because God's work withstands examination.

If you look closely, you won't find cracks — you'll find **Christ**.

When I was a child, my older brother would take apart anything electronic in our home to see how it worked. Stereo speakers were rewired. Record players and anything with equalizers were taken apart to see all of the components. Things were taken apart and then laid out to look at the pieces and then put back together. If something wasn't working correctly, he would immediately dismantle it to try to diagnose what the problem was.

And while the execution of the diagnosis left a lot to be desired, behind it all was the idea that the more you "look closely" at something, the more truth reveals itself. Luke is doing that to for us. He is looking closely into the events surrounding the coming of the Messiah. He is allowing truth to reveal itself. And as he does that he is teaching us something important that every person, regardless of belief, needs to hear:

God's work in your life is not...

- **Random. Rushed. Reactionary.**

It is...

- **Intentional. Involved. Invitation.**

Look back at this past year of your life. Investigate and examine how God has been at work in your own story of 2025. Even in the moments that feel uncertain and unclear. Can you look back and see how God was working? Can you see his intentional plan being laid out? Can you see how involved the Lord was in walking you, guiding you, and sometimes yanking you through it? And can you see how, all along the way, God was inviting you into deeper faith, deeper obedience, deeper compassion, deeper hope?

Because **every detail of your life is known, noticed, and nurtured by God.**

Point 3: The Certainty of God's Hope for Us

(Luke 1:4)

"So that you may know the certainty..."

Luke says he wrote this entire Gospel so Theophilus — and we — can be certain.

Certain of what?

- That God keeps His promises. His word is true.
- That God comes close to us. He is imminent.
- That God fulfills what He begins. He is faithful.
- That the Savior has come, and the Savior is coming again.

When I was a kid, acrostic's helped me remember things: (GRACE, FAITH)
Hope is not a wish.

Our hope rests on God's faithfulness.

Promises fulfilled in Christ.

Everything God said, He will do.

This first candle of Advent is called the **Hope Candle** for a reason:
Because Christian hope is certainty about a future God has guaranteed.

A few weeks ago, my son broke his foot in our basement. That entire first week was one marked with worry about the unknown. It was challenging to not be anxious about it because we just didn't know what was going on. And then we had an appointment with a surgeon in Morgantown and after that meeting, we have had a completely different second week. Now, because of that authority of that doctor, their wisdom, their plan, has helped us be less worrisome. We are waiting with confidence now, not anxiety. Not worry. We are still concerned about our son's foot. However, we are not worried because of the confidence in the physician.

Luke is sharing that same confidence with Theophilus and with us. We can have the most unshakable, unassailable confidence in the Christmas story. Advent is a time of confident hope.

Application Move:

So here's the invitation today:

Don't place your hope in perfect circumstances.

Don't place your hope in how much you can control.

Don't place your hope in your own strength.

Because we cannot create perfect circumstances. There is so much that remains out of our control. And our strength fails us so often.

Luke invites you to place your hope in Christ who cannot fail.

THE ADVENT CONNECTION — Lighting the Candle of Hope

Every year, we light the first candle — the Candle of Hope.

Not because life is perfect.

Not because we have all the answers.

We light it because **God's promises are certain even when our world is not.**

We light it because Christ is the fulfillment of everything God said He would do."

"Hope You Can Hold"

Luke wrote his Gospel so we could stand on something solid.
Hope is not a fragile flame you must protect.
Hope is a fire God Himself lit in the coming of Christ.

So today, if your life feels uncertain...
If you are facing something you didn't plan...
If something in your world is shaking...

Then hear the good news of Advent:

Your hope is not in what you feel — your hope is in what God has done.

Hope has a name.
Hope has a face.
Hope has come.
And hope is coming again.

So, we begin Advent not with fear...
but with **certainty**.
Not with anxiety...
but with **assurance**.
Not with faint wishes...
but with **a living hope in Jesus Christ**.

Let's Pray.

Jesus Christ, the Messiah, born in a manger, born to give us second birth. His birth, his life, his death, his wounds, his burial, and his resurrection and ascension — Luke writes about all of those things so that we can know that our HOPE is built on nothing less than Jesus. We can praise God that Jesus has come into the world, to be our living hope.

As you think of the hope in the manger, remember the promise fulfilled at the cross. Tie those two images together. A cross in the manger.