

Hope - The Tension of Waiting

Matthew 2:13-23

Hope - anticipating the future that is better than the present

Two words for hope in the OT.

yakhal - simply "to wait for."

qavah - also means to wait. Related to the Hebrew word *qav*, which means cord. *Qavah* is the feeling of tension and expectation while you wait for something to happen. ~ Tim Mackie

Romans 15:13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Only by the Holy Spirit!

Believing with anticipation God's promises to be true. The light will break through the darkness.

Tense expectations.

1. God is faithful and his kingdom can not be stopped.
2. Jesus in his incarnation embodies human suffering.

Hard Truth: An easy care free life is not a divine right nor a promise given by God.

The person and life of Jesus echoes hope.

vs. 13-14, Flee to Egypt

Our limited finite hearts can not endure the level and darkness of global suffering.

Remember: There are three things that actively resist the advancement of God's kingdom.

1. Flesh -> human selfishness
2. The World -> the propensity to seek and hold power
3. The Enemy -> the schemes of the devil, spiritual forces in the heavens (Ephesians 6:11-12).

Psalm 39:7 Now, Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in you.

1 Peter 1:3-4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead **4** and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.

Advent is the purposeful recognition of waiting.

vs. 15, Out of Egypt I called my Son. (Hosea 11:1)

- Jesus summarizes the whole experience of Israel.
- Every hope and trial in the OT is woven together for the appearance / expectation (anticipation) of the Messiah

vs. 16-18, Herod does what he has a reputation of doing.

Historically: There is no other account of this specific activity concerning Herod. The Bible is the only source that speaks of Herod's assault on the children of Bethlehem.

vs. 17-18, Another prophet. This time Jeremiah (31:15).

- These mothers were summarized / personified by Rachel.
- The mother of the patriarchs (Joseph and Benjamin who had been carried away to Egypt).

Darkness is not something to ignore.

- It is a reminder of the failure and heartbreak caused by people. People we know and people that are far away. No one is immune.
- This brokenness (darkness) must be acknowledged and grieved.
- Loss is, in fact, terrible. It can not be reversed.

The world is a constant cycle of danger and unpredictability.
It presses against us and our bodies (physical and spiritual) feel the weight.

There are many more that relate to Jesus in his suffering than those who have created a fantasy of safety cloaked in religion in the west.

Jesus is King. Jesus has promised the restoration of all things.
Yet, for now, the nations rage (Psalm 2).

John 8:12 Jesus spoke to them again: "I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life."

vs. 19, Herod dies.

- Archelaus was in charge of Judea and his reputation wasn't any different than his fathers.

vs. 23, Nazareth spoken through the prophets (plural).

- A no name from nowhere. Despised and rejected (Isaiah 53:3)
John 1:46 "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Nathanael asked him.
- The Hebrew word for branch is nezer. Matthew is making a reference to the kingly branch from David's line.
- Jesus is the light to those sitting in darkness.
- God's grace is displayed through an extended time of respite. Nazareth was a tiny agricultural village. From 2-30 years old Jesus was in a place of profound peace and an environment for preparation.

Optimism - lives in the denial of real facts.

Hope - persists in spite of the very real facts because it is anchored in something / someone greater than our circumstances.

Advent is about clinging to the love and promises of God. It is about living in the already / not yet.

Intellectual space -> Trying to answer the question and solve the problem through philosophy and theology.
Experientially -> for all of us (some much more than others) the problem of evil is front and center.

Hope -> At the end of all things, night will be no more.

Revelation 22:5 And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

Jesus is the light that darkness cannot overcome.

- We are waiting to be rescued from evil and death. And so we wait!

Practices

- Read Revelation 22 and ponder the truth that Jesus is the light in the midst of the darkness.
- Listen to Come, Jesus, Come by Stephen McWhirter.
- Listen to A Seed, A Sunrise: Advent to Christmas Songs by Caroline Cobb.
- Pick any of the world that is ravaged by violence and pray for the people, pray for peace, surrender your propensity to "answer and solve the problem through philosophy and theology."
- As you deal with your own personal sufferings, ask God to fill you with hope.

Read, Meditate, Memorize

Romans 15:13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.