



Sermon Series: The Hope, part 2

Sermon Title: Hope, despite tears

Speaker/ Date: Armin Sommer, December 13, 2020

For some people the holidays are seasoned, not with joy, but with grief. Whether it's their first Christmas, or 20th Christmas without that spouse, child, mother or father, or close friend, for them the holidays are the reminder of an absence

Herod was a vicious leader. His paranoia led him to execute several of his sons and his wife. So when we read about the elimination of a handful of infants in the small village of Bethlehem was entirely in character. It wouldn't have been considered a notable event in a reign characterized by brutality.

The death of innocents reveals, not the kind of God we have, but the kind of world in which we live. The world that produces death is evil; but the God who emptied Himself to be born in Bethlehem is Good.

(Big Idea) An evil world delivers death; our gracious God offers life.

Two truths help us to maintain our equilibrium on our sin-polarized planet..

1st Truth. We live in an unjust world.

Everything that assails us -- from wars to warts -- stems from fallen state of our world. **Romans 8:22**

That evokes another question. "Wasn't it God who cursed the creation?" Yes, and with good reason. **Genesis 2:7-9, Genesis 2:15-17**

In the center of the Garden were two remarkable trees:

(1) "Tree of life" -- that would give life forever to whoever ate of it. It is the same tree that reappears in new earth (**Rev 22**).

(2) "Tree of the knowledge of good and evil." The knowledge was more than just an awareness. It's an experiential acquaintance with both good and evil.

To this point human beings had experienced only good. Our first parents yielded to the temptation of Satan, the adversary of God, and ate from the tree God had forbidden.

God drove man out of the garden to prevent him from eating of the tree of life. (**Genesis 3:22–23**) Why? Because we would have lived eternally alienated from God.

Believers will someday once again eat from the tree of life, but not until our redemption is consummated in the new heaven.

2nd Truth. We serve a Life-Giving God

He is constantly working to make Christ-followers more like Jesus.

Philippians 1:6

The outcome of the battle with evil is certain – God knows the end from the beginning – but it *is*, nonetheless, a *battle*. **1 Corinthians 15:24, 26**

God is taking *His* time because He may be giving *more* time... for you, your children... your parents... your friends. **2 Peter 3:9**

God already performed the ultimate act in giving His Son. **Revelation 13:8**

The drama of redemption has from eternity been in the forefront in God's plan. The cross was never imposed on the Son. It was in His mind since before a moment in our time.

And someday, **Revelation 21:4** promises,

Revelation 21:4 (NIV) — ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’

But until then, there will be tears. It's part of our place in history to mourn when we experience the separation from loved ones by that monster, death.

But in the midst of our grief and mourning allow the salt of our tears to make us thirsty for God and hungry for heaven. Tears are sometimes the most effective means of preparing our hearts to receive the One who would save us.

The world that produces death is evil; but the God who emptied Himself to be born in Bethlehem is Good. (

Discussion Questions:

- **What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?**
- **Why would God put the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil near each other in Eden? Why did God allow Satan to enter the Garden of Eden and tempt man?**
- **What is it that causes some people to softened toward God, and some hardened toward him when they experience sorrow?**
- **Describe what the world would look like today if man ate from the tree of life and lived forever in his sin**
- **Why does God allow believers who walk closely with Him to experience painful loss?**
- **Do you know anyone who was driven to God because of a loss he or she suffered?**
- **In your opinion what will make heaven, heaven?**