

## **Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.**

**November 27, 2022 "Advent: You will need HOPE."**

### **I Intro.**

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message Sunday. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing, and you can use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. We're deep in fall and in the season of Advent. Our children's program is thriving and we're still tweaking ways to love on them well. We also have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can find all that through our new website, upgraded app, and social media sites. We're so encouraged by your love and presence when you gather with us. A great group of familiar and new faces join us each Sunday. If you're joining us online, we appreciate your presence also. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family, and if there is anything you need, prayer, ideas or suggestions, please pass them our way. We know the future is still uncertain, but we are committed to making our virtual congregation as central to NCC as our in person group.

### **II Sunday.**

Sunday was the first Sunday of a season in the church calendar called Advent. Let me explain it a bit before we move into this first Sunday's theme. Advent is an ancient practice built into an annual church calendar that walks people through different emphases during the year. I won't get into all of the other emphases, but Advent is always the four Sundays before Christmas. And is designed to prepare people for the coming of Jesus. We typically already do all the work preparing for the holiday of Christmas. We plan, shop, decorate, and more for Christmas. But we tend to not spend the same amount of energy and time preparing ourselves on the inside for why we have Christmas...the birth of Jesus. There are four specific themes that are highlighted in Advent- Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. With the Christmas Eve celebration being Christ himself. Each Sunday we will hit those themes. So, let's start with some questions.

**What does hope mean to you?**

**Why is hope important?**

**What are some things you need in order to grow or have hope?**

The scripture was a slightly different take than what we traditionally do for Advent. Read **Hebrews 10:19-25**, and we'll look for some deeper truths in how to live in hope.

**What jumped out to you from this passage?**

**How is Jesus the center of our hope?**

**What do you see as some of the essential elements to having hope?**

Kal then hit four specific things at the core of living a life of true bold hope.

**1. Bold hope is built on trust.** Seems simple enough. You can't have a genuine bold hope in something you don't trust. But we have to be honest about how we use the word trust. We throw the word trust around but don't wrestle with how it looks in real life. **Do we get life insurance, wear seatbelts, save money?** You do those things because it's smart to do them (AGENCY), but you know that it does not necessarily promise an outcome (CONTROL) Trust is belief-in, plus action, in the goodness of God. There is still action. We trust, place our faith in following God. Trust knows that even when things aren't going the way we think they should, we still put our faith in a God who is

working things out for good. You want a bold and confident HOPE? Actually put your trust in God and you will discover the ability to be bold.

**2. Bold hope and trust is a gift given to us by a loving God.** *"We can confidently approach the presence of God."* We can't generate hope and trust on our own. And God doesn't expect us to. We are so distracted by everything around us. And none of us has mastered the trust thing to its fullest. Jesus opened up this 'pathway to hope' that allows us to go directly to God. We can't appreciate how revolutionary this was. There once was an elaborate process to get to God before Jesus came. Knowing God can only be born out of nurturing and growing a personal relationship, and not just following and striving to check off a list of do's and don'ts. Trust that leads to a bold HOPE is rooted in our ability to let go, and allow God to fill that space with the ability to trust in him. This is where boldness comes from. Because God will prove to be trustworthy.

**3. Bold hope calls, commands, us to hold on.** We have to do our part. We are offered hope, this thing we cannot generate on our own, BUT... it is up to us to hold onto it. God isn't going to force trust, boldness or HOPE on us. We've all seen people who claim, and probably do, have a genuine relationship with God, but they're afraid of everything. They listen to the voices in the world telling us to do all sorts of things to protect ourselves. It just feels they haven't done their own work of finding that God can be trusted and they're holding onto the things of the world rather than onto God. **So the question is; what are you holding onto?** We are encouraged to hold on tightly to the Hope God so freely gives us. God gives us the hand...we grab onto it.

**4. Bold hope spurs us into action.** Hope calls us to do some specific things in addition to holding onto. **To actively live in community with others who are seeking Jesus.** In meeting together we are to spur each other onto good works, to put hands and feet to our words. And this is seen and confirmed in our commitment and our life bent towards the benefit of others. Keep meeting together, with an intentional purpose. **WHY?** Our tendency to lose hope is because we can feel or know our own inability to generate our own hope. Hopelessness comes from trusting in self or the things of the world. It's in gathering together, we can grow a bold hope from the Holy Spirit. It's because in meeting together we get to practice, and grow trust. Being vulnerable, helping each other grow, sharing struggles, dreams, and hopes. Real, meaningful relationships are primarily born in a physical commitment to others...especially others who are different. So we continue to regularly gather, and encourage each other to do good work born out of this hope from God.

### **III Challenge.**

The word we continually used Sunday morning we believe is at the **root of the hope is boldness.** When we learn to surrender ourselves to the work of the Holy Spirit, meeting together and serving each other we find boldness. What it takes to live in this world is boldness. A confidence born out of knowing who God is, and an assurance of his goodness. And the work being done inside of us that wraps that boldness in kindness and compassion.

**So, in understanding how important and essential hope is to growing a boldness to live in our world, how can you grow trust and the ability to hold onto God to grow the perfect hope you need?**