

Hope Advent

Welcome to the first Wednesday night study after Thanksgiving. We are officially entering the church season of Advent. How many of you are excited about the Christmas season? How many of you have already put up your decorations? We were later this year than we normally like to be. Usually, my wife has me getting our decorations out the first week in November. This year we waited until the last week. I wonder how many of you have already bought your presents this year or at least some of them? Well, here at Everyday, we want to take time before Christmas to focus on something other than the decorations or the presents or the shopping. We want to take time to focus on the Coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This is a little different from what most of the culture today will focus on this season. The culture we live in will do its best to get you to think about all the stuff that you need to buy or maybe all the gifts that you will want to receive this Christmas. My hope is that after tonight, you will want to stop and think about what your focus should be on this season. Now it's going to be a little tough to stay focused on the coming of Jesus because the ads don't stop. In fact, they are designed to do the very opposite. The truth is when you think about the free gift of salvation that was given to you it should make us want to give, just not to the extent that the world has pushed it to.

Scholars indicate Advent, a long-honored tradition, began in the 5th and 6th centuries in Spain and Gaul, and it was a season of repentance, prayer, and fasting in preparation for the baptism of new Christians (Armstrong, 2012). Now, Christians prepare themselves on the four Sundays before Christmas by reflecting on Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love, lighting candles each week, and reflecting on each of the four Christian virtues every week.

Advent is a time to pause and reflect on who He is, God's redemptive plan, Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection. We should also reflect on where we are with the Lord and how he has been faithful throughout the years and generations in the past, present, and future.

So, let's discuss where the word Advent originated. It is from the Latin word *Adventus* and basically means 'coming. I got news for you, it isn't some guy in a big red suit that is coming but instead it is about the coming of God in the flesh, which is Jesus Christ, our Lord. He is the reason for the season or at least He should be. There is also the hope that we as believers have with the Holy Spirit living inside of us. And then there is the hope we have as we look for His second coming. It's all about having hope, and that is why the first week of Advent is called Hope.

What is Hope?

Hope in Hebrew is the word *yahal* (*yachal*), which means to wait, hope, and expect (Blueletter Bible, n.d.). Hope is a confident expectation.

Depending on the translation you read, the word hope is mentioned between 130 -180 times in the Bible. From Genesis to Revelation, we see hope. I believe this is important to know because the opposite of hope is hopeless, which means there is no hope that anything will get better or that the object in which you have an expectation to improve won't happen (Oxford Dictionary, 2025). When a person remains in a place of hopelessness, they get into despair, the complete loss of hope, a feeling of hopelessness where one believes a situation is irredeemably bad (Merriam-Webster, 2025).

The Bible is filled with people who experienced a loss of hope and dealt with despair.

1. Hannah- did not have a child and was taunted by the other wife Peninnah, she would cry and not eat, and in 1 Samuel 1:10 (NASB, 1996), “she was greatly distressed, prayed to the Lord, and wept bitterly.”
2. Job- He lost everything and cursed the day of his birth... That's despair, and in Job 15:15, he said, “Where now is my hope? And who regards my hope? In the verses before verse 15, he focuses on his condition and all the suffering he has experienced, which led him into despair.

The following passages explain why we place our hope in God.

The reason is: we know his nature.

1. **Psalm 119:114: “You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word.”** He has been our refuge and our shield.
2. **Hebrews 10:23: “Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.”** He has remained faithful to His promises. He has never left us nor forsaken us.
3. **Psalm 130:5 (NASB) “I wait for the Lord, my soul does wait, And in His word do I hope.”** His word has been a source of strength to help us through difficult times. This scripture is one of seven penitential Psalm (Psa 6:32; 38; 51; 102; 130; 143) where hope is cited.
4. **Hebrews 6:16-20 (NASB) says ¹⁶For people swear an oath by ^[a]one greater *than themselves*, and with them an oath *serving* as confirmation is an end of every dispute. ¹⁷^[b]In the same way God, desiring even more to demonstrate to the heirs of the promise ^[c]the fact that His purpose is unchangeable, ^[d]confirmed it with an oath, ¹⁸so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to **hold firmly to the hope set before us.** ¹⁹^[e]**This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a *hope* both sure and reliable and****

one which enters ^[f]within the veil, ²⁰ where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Hope anchors us in God. God's promises are certain because they are confirmed by an oath and his unchangeable character. Just as an anchor secures a boat, we can hold onto God's promises.

5. I Corinthians 13:13 says ¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. We have a hope that will abide forever.

There are two types of hope.

1. **Worldly hope** refers to optimism based on the belief that a certain event or situation will happen. The world believes and hopes in itself to be able to accomplish anything its heart desires. They hope for prosperity, hope for career progression and status, they hope for cars, homes, stuff, and some hope for a good life.
2. **Biblical hope** is different because it goes beyond general optimism and for things. It is a confident expectation of God's promises even when they are not immediately fulfilled. (Easton's Bible Dictionary). Biblical hope knows God's redemptive act, Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection, have come to pass, and gives us full confidence to trust God will do what He says He will do now and in the times to come. Our hope is in the fact that we have eternal life with God. Lastly, Biblical hope has God as its source and object of hope. We can see that in the following scripture:

Romans 15: 13

13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

God is hope; therefore, He is the source from which our hope comes. God is also the object of our hope to do something that only He can do, and it is founded on what He will do! Again, we have a confident expectation that, just as God would, did, and will save his people now and eternally, as scripture indicates (Hebrews 9:27-28), we wait with a confident expectation. Hebrews 9:27-28 (New American Standard Bible 1995).

²⁷ And inasmuch as it is ^[a]appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment, ²⁸ so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without *reference to sin*, to those who eagerly await Him.

The Coming Messiah

I want to start with what people hoped for before Jesus came. In Old Testament times, the hope that they had was that God would save His people. They were hopeful that a Messiah would come. The problem was that they were a little confused about what he was coming to save them from, which is why most of them missed Him when He came. The reason they were hopeful about these things is that this is what was prophesied about by all the prophets.

Isaiah 7:13-14

13 Then Isaiah said, “Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? 14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.;God with us;

Micah 5:2

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”

Isaiah 9:6-7

6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

The Holy Spirit in the Hearts of Believers

The second coming I want to discuss with you is what happens the moment someone confesses with their mouth Jesus as Lord and believes in their heart that God raised Him from the dead like it says in Romans 10:9. See, for those of us who have done that, who have confessed Jesus as Lord, we have something a little different to be hopeful for. We have the hope of the Holy Spirit that comes to live inside of us. Now how do we know this? Well, I’m glad you asked. All we have to do is look at scripture.

Romans 5:3-5

3 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Romans 15: 13

12 And again, Isaiah says, “The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; in him the Gentiles will hope.” 13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Second Coming

The third coming that I want us to look at is kind of the same as what the Old Testament Israelites were hopeful, for the coming Messiah, only this time it is His second coming, and man what a day that will be! That is the hope that we have and the hope that we should be sharing

with others. That Jesus Christ who was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life and died on the cross will one day return to take us home.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore, encourage one another with these words.

John 14 3-6

3 “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. 4 “And you know the way where I am going.” 5 Thomas *said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?” 6 Jesus *said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

So what is the Christian believer’s stance concerning “the second coming/ arrival of Jesus? What position should we take as we hope for the second coming? Well, there is a tension between how we should wait, which focuses on how to prepare for the second coming of Christ.

1. How do we wait?

Romans 8:23-25 NASB which says, “Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait **eagerly** for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope, we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it **patiently**.”

- We should wait **eagerly with anticipation**, yet we also wait **patiently** for the second coming of Christ in full confidence through the Holy Spirit that He will come for us. Therefore, as Christians, we CHOOSE to wait and hope.
- There is a ‘so what’ in why we wait **eagerly** and **patiently**.

Eagerly with anticipation of the second coming of Christ, being obedient to follow his will of making disciples so others can await the coming of Christ according to **Matthew 28:19** “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the ages.”

2. What do we do while we wait in hope? Do you prepare to wait in hope?

I Peter 1:13 (NASB, 1995) says, “Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

1. Prepare your minds.

This verb in Greek, according to the Strong’s Concordance, is *anazonnymi* (anahdzonoomee), which means to gird up (be prepared). In my study, the authors related this to the historical

Biblical practice of girding up their long-flowing robes that could hinder or impede, or distract their ability to complete their tasks/chores or movement. They would tuck their garments at the waist with their belt when they were getting ready to work or travel. This signified they were committed and prepared to serve the Lord, go to battle, or go on a journey. So Peter is encouraging us to “get rid of the mental (thoughts, feelings, desires contrary to God’s desires), internal and external distractions around us, and be prepared to serve, work unto the Lord, or go into battle with intention to trust and have confidence in God. HOPE in God.

2. He then says to “**keep sober in the spirit.**”

Keep sober is “Nepho” (neefo) in the Greek, meaning to be calm and collected in spirit, to be temperate (pleasant, comfortable, self-controlled), dispassionate (composed, unemotional, objective), and circumspect (careful, guarded, cautious, prudent) (Strongs Concordance). Basically, in the words of Pastor, which I don’t like but is true... “Calm down” ... keep calm and level-headed so you can be objective.

3. Lastly, Peter says to **fix your hope.**

In Greek, hope is *elpizo* (el pidzo)- interpreted as “to hope, to trust” (Blueletter Bible, n.d.; Strongs Concordance). It’s a verb that connotes action.

Wait a minute... do I have to do something with hope? Yes! One translation used the word “set.” When I hear the word set, I often think about Jello molds. We place the Jello in pans and then place them in the refrigerator. Why...because we need the Jello to set... but it wiggles once it is set. Therefore, it is not fixed. However, if I “set” my keys on the counter, it are in a fixed place. Therefore, I need my hope to be fixed on God’s word. If my hope is fixed, it will not be moved despite distractions or struggles.

What have you fixed your hope on...in God or on something else?

Maybe you fixed your hope on your spouse, your job, your finances, or other people in your life.

All of them will fail. Plus, the Bible says put NOT your confidence in man.

Are you asking your spouse for time or to change how he or she responds to you?

Are you being a people pleaser, hoping to get your needs met through others and not God?

Are you trying to defend yourself from false accusations?

Are your thoughts bogged down trying to find a way out of a tricky situation or trying to fix a situation?

If so, then your hope is in yourself, others, you are relying on worldly hope, and your hope is not FIXED on God!

To fix our hope on God, we must circle back to the first point, which is... we MUST prepare our minds! In the same manner that some of us prepare for work, or prepare to cook, or as we prepare for Christmas in Bethlehem....for us to have hope, we must prepare our minds and hearts so that when the struggles or distractions of life come our way, we can remain hopeful because difficult times will continue to occur.

BLUF: Bottom Line Up Front

We prepare for the second coming by:

1. Girding up our minds and getting rid of all the distractions, thoughts about what to buy for Jimmy for Christmas, praying against feelings that would boggle down our minds, negative memories, and disappointments that would keep us from waiting with expectation for the second coming.
2. Being calm, pleasant, operating in self-control, yet guarded against the plots and schemes of the enemy
3. And confidently fix our hope on Jesus

See, hope is not passive but active, coupled with patience, as we rest in God

See, our hope is really about where home is if you ask me, and I don't know about you, but this is not my home. Is anybody with me? Listen I am not in the death zone, as Dr. JK likes to call it, but the truth is none of us know how much time we have left. The hope I cling to is that I won't have to spend eternity separated from my creator. I wonder what hope you cling to and with whom do you share it. I know that most of us will spend this season thinking about what food we will prepare, what gift we will get, or even what gift we will give, but this free gift of salvation, this hope is the best gift you could ever offer anyone. Do you realize how many hopeless people you pass by each day? I mean people who feel utterly hopeless. It breaks my heart that they don't share the same hope that I have. I want to challenge you this season to take a moment each morning and ask the Lord to show you one person with whom you can share hope with. Maybe it will become a daily prayer for you. I know that seems like a lot but it really isn't. I also know that God is faithful, and if He shows you someone, then He will give you the words to say. Most people are convinced that they don't know what to say but the truth is all you have to do is trust His Spirit that lives in you to give you the words to say. So, as I said before my hope is that you will spend this season a little differently than the rest of the culture. That your thoughts would be filled with something other than food and gifts and decorations. That your hearts would be broken for the hopeless and that you would be willing to share the hope that you have with someone. I if you don't know Jesus as your Lord and Savior, I pray that you come find someone here at the church to talk to about that.

Two Memory Verses

We make this declaration from:

Psalm 130:5 (NASB) "I wait for the Lord, my soul does wait, And in His word do I hope."

And we instruct ourselves to:

I Peter 1:13 (NASB, 1995) says, "Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Questions to reflect

1. What type of hope do you find yourself learning towards when the culture focuses on worldly expectations?

2. When was the last time you shared the hope we, as Christians, have? If you have yet to share about the hope you have in Jesus, what prevents you from doing so?
3. How do you prepare to remain hopeful when life seems hopeless?
4. When Pastor Jimmy challenged you to share your hope with someone else, who did God place on your heart? When will you share the hope of Christ with them?