



Advent: HOPE

1 Peter 3:15-17

Pastor Dwayne Smith

I. HOPE is Evident

- a. HOPE makes its presence known. You can't miss it.
- b. Christmas is a season of HOPE:
 - i. ADVENT: The word "Advent" is derived from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning "coming."
 - ii. "Advent is about recalling the wonder of His first coming, but it is no less about the glory of His second, when His kingdom will come and everything will be put right...if we let this longing fade, we end up with a truncated faith. Our faith becomes all about this life and what we can accomplish now – a sure formula for despair and anxiety."¹
 - iii. Two parts of Advent (coming):
 1. First coming of Christ (John 1:14).
 2. Second Coming of Christ (John 14:1-3, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).
- c. We are on a Journey – on our way to our "home."
 - i. Heaven, eternity with Jesus is our HOME (Revelation 21:4).
 - ii. **If we are not on our way to somewhere, it is easy to give up and go anywhere.**
- d. What is *hope* (Hebrew - *qâvâhl*)?
 - i. **WAIT with expectancy.**
 1. We wait for what we do not have.
 2. There is a reward to HOPE/waiting. (Isaiah 40:31)
 - ii. Waiting is difficult; we don't like it.
 1. We have been conditioned for instant gratification (superficial - disposable).
 2. We were made for delayed gratification (deep, lasting).
 - iii. **HOPE is what gets us there.**
 1. **Hope is a ROPE:** *qâvâhl* - to collect, bind together (i.e. a rope)
 2. The right rope allows you to climb over obstacles.
 3. Our challenge is that we hope in the wrong rope – too short, frayed, breaking, or missing all together.

¹ Mark Galli, *Kindling Righteous Anxiety*, ADVENT.

II. HOPE is DEFENDED

- a. HOPE is revealed during hard times.
 - i. Hardship gets our attention, dominating our news and conversation.
 - ii. What I reach for during hard times reveals where I am placing my hope, or my trust.
 - iii. Character is not created in hard times; it is revealed.
 1. “If you are going through hell, keep going!” – Winston Churchill.
 2. “A gem cannot be polished without friction.”—Chinese proverb.
- b. What I hold onto provokes people around me.
 - i. Ralphie’s approach: coercion and manipulation.
 - ii. “Spiritually mature Christians will provoke responses from the world around us...”—Charles Swindoll²
 - iii. HOPE brings out different responses in people: Resentment and Desire.
- c. Revealed HOPE requires a DEFENSE – *apologia*, to give an account, a legal testimony.
 - i. This “defense” comes only when we recognize ourselves as “blessed.”
 - ii. “We acknowledge that Christ is Lord over our unfair treatment.”³
 - iii. Jesus is the basis of our Hope. He is in charge and He is out for our good.
- d. How we defend: with a good conscience, gentleness, and respect
 - i. Good Conscience: Living a life for God, holy and pleasing.
 - ii. Gentleness: Invites others in. (Romans 2:4)
 - iii. Respect: Valuing those around you. Seeing others as God sees them and made them.
- e. A Key to HOPE: Never forget who you are – a Child of God!
 - i. Satan’s tactic is to make you forget this – he is trying to replace God.
 1. He will often use scare tactics, doubt, and insecurity.
 2. REMEMBER: Satan is a liar. “When a resolute young fellow steps up to the great bully, the world, and takes him boldly by the beard, he is often surprised to find it comes off in his hand, and that it was only tied on to scare away the timid adventurers.” – *Ralph Waldo Emerson*
 - ii. Never forget! (2 Peter 2:12-13 and Luke 22:19)

Reflection Questions:

- How is HOPE evident in my life? What is Jesus trying to remind me of this Christmas/Advent season?
- Do I long for heaven?
- What do I need to be reminded of today? What is God speaking to me?
- Am I ready to give a defense? How am I doing in my defense in the area of having a good conscience, gentleness, and respect for others and God?

² Charles Swindoll, p. 214.

³ *Ibid.*, 216.