

ADVENT 1 - HOPE FOR THE WORLD
EPHESIANS 1:15-23 / ROMANS 15:1-13
2025-11-30

Last week was Christ the King Sunday. It's difficult to come anywhere close to adequately proclaim Christ as King, since the whole Bible alludes to Him as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. It's also funny to set aside one day for this, since He's always King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

We concluded our series last week, "What's the Big Deal About Jesus, Anyway?" Ultimately, you can't get away from just what a big deal Jesus is. He is completely a game changer, a total life changer. Jesus is the only person who is Prophet, Priest and King. He's the only Son of God and in fact, God. He's **the only one** who's fully God and fully man. He's **the only** "human" who's worthy of our worship. He's **the only one** who can and has taken away our sins—washed them away by His own blood shed for us. He's **the only one** who can make us right with God the Father so we can appear before Him at the judgment without fear. He's **the only one** who can and has given us eternal life—salvation—through His sacrifice on the cross for us. He's **the only one** ever born for the purpose of dying. **Only by His** death and resurrection has He defeated sin, death, Satan and Hell forever.

In Ephesians 1, the apostle Paul asked God the Father to **give us believers the Spirit** (capital "S") **and revelation so that** we may know Christ better. That's remarkable! No one can give us wisdom and no one can give us revelation except God. And what incredible gifts they are! **Then he asked that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you may know the hope that He has called you to. God is calling each of us to hope.**

Today we begin Advent and this first Sunday focuses on the theme of hope. **God is calling you to hope.** And **that hope includes** the "riches of His glorious inheritance" for each of us, His saints. But what is this glorious inheritance? It's this: when we receive Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Saviour we become children of God. *John 1:12* says, "*Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His Name, He gave the right to become children of God.*" Isn't that remarkable! And when we become children of God, we also receive "*His incomparably great power for us who believe*"! But what is this "incomparably great power?" Glad you asked. It's "*the working of His mighty strength, which He demonstrated in Christ when God raised Him from the dead*" (*verse 19-20*)—God wants us to know this power and to exercise it, and partner with Him in revealing it in the world, to the world, for the world's benefit. Wow!

Do you think you could have hope if God says He wants us to share His "incomparably great power" with us? If He wanted to share His mighty strength with us—like He demonstrated when God the Father raised Christ from the dead? I could get a little excited about that!

Today's passages may surprise you for Advent readings. But the Bible's full of passages about hope. At the end of Romans Paul urges those of us who are strong to "*bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbour for his*

good, to build him/her up” (Romans 15:1-2). That’s always great counsel, but why would we do that? Well, “even Christ did not please Himself, but... ‘the insults of those who insult you have fallen on [Him]’ (verse 3). For—listen to this—“**everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we may have hope**” (verse 4).

Paul says: “*May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity* (remember last week’s message about breaking down the barriers/the dividing walls that was Paul’s great desire and hope) *among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify [God]*” (Verse 5-6).

So, God, through Christ, 1) makes you a child of God. 2) When that occurs He gives you His “incomparably great power”, 3) He gives you endurance and encouragement, 4) He gives you all of the Scriptures to teach you—particularly those of the prophets. 5) He gives us one another to have unity. And if you’re not strong, you are to be lifted up and carried by those who are!

Have you ever been down, with no will to carry on, ready to just throw in the towel? You can’t handle “it” any more—whatever the “it” might be. It’s just too much! We’ve all been there. Here’s the great hope. Whenever you find yourself in that place, God has not only sent Christ—He’s also given us one another to lift each other up, to carry one another’s burdens—another line from Paul in Galatians 6:2. Paul says, “*Accept one another; then, just as Christ accepted you.*” Why would you do that?—“*in order to bring praise to God*” (verse 7). Yes, God wants us to love Him and to be given over to Him, but He also wants you to uphold one another. You can’t love God if you don’t love one another.

Then Paul quotes Isaiah: “The root of Jesse will spring up—that’s Jesus—one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles—that’s us—will hope in Him” (verse 12).

The very next sentence: “*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*” (verse 13). The 4 themes of Advent are all right here. The God of hope will fill you with joy and peace because you trust Christ. When you trust Christ you will overflow with hope—and that takes us right back to God wanting us to have and wanting us to share in His power. Paul says you will overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. This hope isn’t just for a better day or an end to suffering, but also hope that our lives have meaning and possibility beyond our present situation. This is hope in God who makes all things new. Our hope is not in our circumstances, no matter how badly we want them to change.

God’s people experience oppressive circumstances just like others do. We don’t have special immunity. We get sick and are victims of violence just like others. Christians get killed in accidents, in war and by hunger. If our hope is only in a change of circumstances, we’ll always be disappointed. That’s why we hope in God who has always revealed Himself as a God of newness, redemption and transformation. Our amazing God sent a Saviour—His Son—to save

the world and that includes you and me. *“For God so loved, that He sent His one and only Son that whoever believed in Him would not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16).*

Is there enough here to convince you to have hope? Are you filled with hope this morning? The prophets oozed with hope. Moses, in Deuteronomy 18, speaking God’s word said, *“I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put My words in His mouth, and He will tell them everything I command Him. If anyone does not listen to My words that the prophet speaks in My name, I Myself will call him/her to account” (Deuteronomy 18:18).* That prophet is Jesus.

We’re familiar with the prophecies of Isaiah, *“For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given; the government will be on His shoulders. He will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to His authority and peace. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness...forever” (Isaiah 9:6-7).* *“He will be born of a virgin. He will be called Immanuel—God with us” (Isaiah 7:14).* He will be born in Bethlehem according to Micah 5:2. The time of His coming is revealed by Daniel. As we are about to come to the table this morning, it’s worth hearing:

“He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. He was despised and we esteemed Him not. Surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows yet we considered Him stricken by God...But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him and by His wounds we are healed. We all like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his/her own way, and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth. By oppression and judgment He was taken away. And who can speak of His descendants? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of My people He was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked and with the rich in His death, though He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth. Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush Him and cause Him to suffer, and though the Lord makes His life a guilt offering, He will see His offspring and prolong His days and the will of the Lord will prosper in His hand. After the suffering of His soul, He will see the light of life and be satisfied, by His knowledge My righteous servant will justify many and He will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give Him a portion among the great and He will divide the spoils with the strong because He poured out His life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For He bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:3-12).

If that doesn’t give you infinite hope and even greater gratitude, nothing will. Come to the table in awe and reverence! Then share your hope with others you meet this week. Consider this week:
Wouldn’t Peace be Special?
Is there Joy in Your Life?
Who Really Loves You?