

December 5, 2010

SOLI DEO GLORIA
2nd Sunday in Advent

Good Shepherd, Novi

LUKE 21:25-36 / ROMANS 15:4,5
THE COMING OF JESUS IS YOUR HOPE.

In the name + of Jesus.

Whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. (Romans 15:4) This hope that you have is more than “wish I may, wish I might have the wish I wish tonight.” No, your hope is something that is firm and certain. It is only called your hope because you do not have it yet.

And what is your hope? It is what you long for and what you pray for. It is a life without pain and frustration. It is a life without guilt or shame. It is a life where no one gets sick, or angry, or hurt. It is a life where no one is lonely, or depressed, or rejected. It is a life free from evil in all of its forms – from anything that would harm us in body or soul. Or, to put it positively, it is a life where everything goes right all of the time.

People seem to think that the holidays gives us such hope. We are told that we should take the spirit of Christmas – whatever they mean by that – and make it last all year long. Such sentiments warm the heart, but they do not change the world, do they? Charities have their place to bring comfort and aid to the poor, the needy, the sick, and the dying. But charities will never bring an end to these things. The poor you will always have with you. There will always be needy people. By all means, pray for the sick and dying and comfort them, but you will always know people who are sick and dying. The “spirit of Christmas” will not take these things away. The world is evil. Since the Garden of Eden, the world has always been evil. It always will be evil. Hope does not change it.

So, are you foolish to have such a hope? **Whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. (Romans 15:4)** The Scriptures point you to a hope that will not be disappointed. All that has been written has been written to comfort you in the midst of an evil world. All that has written has been written so that you will have patience as you wait for God to give you what you hope for. The coming of Jesus is your hope.

The season of Advent reminds us that Jesus is coming, but that also means waiting for him. And waiting is not easy. It is not easy because of the conditions we must wait in. **Men’s hearts (will be) failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth. (Luke 21:26)** We also can become unglued by all of the things we see happening upon the earth. We hear of earthquakes and tsunamis, hurricanes, typhoons, and tornadoes. We catch reports of wars and rumors of wars. We are warned about the bird flu, then the swine flew, and then whatever mutated germ brings the next super-disease. We can’t tell the difference between real reports and hyped-up reports. We are ready to believe anything. We can become gripped with fear because the world as we know it is unraveling. But then again, that is what happens when sin corrupts everything. It is all death, destruction, and decay.

Men’s hearts (will be) failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth. (Luke 21:26) But fear not! **Whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and**

comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. (Romans 15:4) You have hope. The coming of Jesus is your hope.

While people around you are fearful because their world is quite literally falling apart, you need not fret. This only testifies that our Lord is coming again. Jesus has told you, **“Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near.” (Luke 21:29-31)** Jesus is coming, and this is your hope. Despite all the world’s fears, you will always have hope. When nations go to war, you have hope. When we hear about the next pandemic, you have hope. When you lose family and friends and even your own life to death, you still have hope. And there is nothing that can take it away from you. Listen to the encouragement that Jesus gives you when you see this world unraveling: **“When these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.” (Luke 21:28)** Jesus is coming, and that is your hope.

The reason you have this hope is because Jesus came to earth once before. Jesus bore flesh and blood so that he could bear the sins of all flesh and blood. Sin had brought death, destruction, damnation, and decay upon all that God had created. And Jesus came to rectify all that was made wrong by sin.

Jesus has already come to establish your hope. Sin always brings death and destruction. And so Jesus, who bore your sins in his body, also bore your death, and destruction, and damnation. There were signs in the heavens as Jesus suffered and died for you. For, the sun had stopped shining when Jesus hung from the cross. God the Father had deserted his Son, leaving him in darkness. For that is what sin brings – a divine curse, total rejection, and hellish torment. But Jesus’ death means your hope because he bore all these things for you.

Your hope is that you will not suffer a cursed death, abandonment by God, or eternal torment for sins. Jesus is your hope. He exchanges your curse for forgiveness. You are never abandoned by God. You are never alone. You need never be afraid. God’s blessings are yours. Your hope is heaven. Your hope is the resurrection from the dead. Your hope is eternal joys. And your hope will never disappoint you.

Even though we live in a world which is becoming more violent, more crazy, more godless, and more heartless, do not fear. Your time here will not be much longer. Therefore, your struggles here will not last much longer. Your anxieties will only last a moment. But your hope will stand. It cannot be shaken. Jesus promises you, **“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.” (Luke 21:33)**

Therefore, pray. Keep watch. Cling to your Savior, because he is the only hope you have. This world will unravel, and that need not bother you. Will you really cling to what is corrupt, decaying, dying, and marked for destruction? Do you really want to keep your grip on a life full of disasters and disappointments? The world is passing away, and we say, “Good riddance!” because the world is evil. We have something much better that awaits us. The Kingdom of God is near.

The coming of Jesus is your hope. The Lord is coming with redemption. He brings deliverance from this wicked world. He brings exactly what we hope and pray for: It is a life without pain and frustration. It is a life without guilt or shame. It is a life where no one gets sick, or angry, or hurt. It is a life where no one is lonely, or depressed, or rejected. It is a life free from evil in all of its forms – from anything that would harm us

in body or soul. Or, to put it positively, it is a life where everything goes right all of the time.

You don't have to dream about it. You only have to wait for it. When Jesus comes, your hopes will be realized. Until Jesus comes, watch and pray. Cling to his promises. Listen to his word. Flock to his altar. For he who called you is faithful, and he will keep you safe. Your redemption is drawing near. The Lord Jesus is coming. That is good news, and that is why the Church prays, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus."

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.