

St Martins C3 – November 30, 2025

Advent - Hope

Sermon Notes:

Advent is about hope and anticipating the coming of Jesus. Biblically speaking, hope is about waiting for God to come and show His faithfulness.

Read Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

The child born is the king who reigns and his name is Jesus. So, today we want to make this an opportunity to turn our eyes on Jesus and focus on Him.

The Hope for Humanity

Jesus is the hope for humanity. What He did on the cross is the great hope of the world. The Old Testament time was the time of waiting. It was a time when the people of Israel were longing for the Messiah to come.

Jesus looked a bit like some of the heroes of old, but He was the true and better version of them. Consider how Jesus is like Adam, Abraham, Joseph, Moses and others but so much more. He is the point of every story, and every story is about Him.

The great hope of the world is found in that event in history, and it is a hope we can hold onto right now, the salvation of our souls.

The Hope for Eternity

Jesus is not only the hope of humanity, but the hope for all eternity. Did you know that Advent means “arriving” and

traditionally refers to waiting for Jesus' second coming as much as his first coming? As people anticipated Jesus coming, they weren't just thinking of the baby in the manger; they were anticipating the second coming of Jesus, as the judge and renewer of the world.

In the same way, that the Old Testament people of God waited for Him to arrive, we too long for His return.

Read Romans 8:20-23

So our response is not despair, it is hope! Hope for all who put their faith in Jesus, that one day He will arrive and we will spend eternity with Him. It is a hope that has been dreamed about for centuries.

The Hope for our Hearts

Eternal hope may give us some perspective, but what about things getting better right now? The biblical witness is that we should continue to hope even when we don't know when God is going to arrive in our situations.

Christ has come, Christ will come again, Christ is coming now.

Apparently, one of the earliest Advent prayers was simply the word *Maranatha*, "Come, Lord Jesus". It's a prayer of hope and one we can adopt. Today, choose to hope despite your difficulties. Call on God and He will come through for you.

Read Romans 8:24-27; Psalm 42; Isaiah 40:28-31

Questions for Connect Groups:

Key Point

To focus in worship and expectation on the hope the arrival of Jesus brings.

Questions

What stood out to you from this week's message?

What does this message tell you about God and humans?

What are you looking forward to about this Christmas?

What Advent traditions have you been part of in the past?

What would it have been like to be a person in the Old Testament times longing for the Messiah?

If Jesus is the hope for humanity, why do people not reach out for Him? How can we?

Why is it important to hope for the second arrival of Jesus?
What difference does it make to our lives today?

When you think about the age to come, what do you think reality will be like?

How does knowing that eternity awaits us help us put our problems into perspective?

What part of your life are you looking for hope right now?

What would it look like for God to turn up in that situation?

Monday Devotion: The Anchor of Hope

We who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary.

Hebrews 6:18-19 (NLT)

Hebrews talks about God's trustworthiness to fulfil His promises and the requirement for His people to live with faith and endurance.

The New Testament writers did not view hope as mere wishful thinking. Hope was a thing of substance. It believed that God was faithful and even though we may not see yet how He will come through in our situation, we still believe Him.

It is described here as an anchor. An anchor for a ship will hold it fast and keep it from drifting out to sea or being dashed against the rocks. Our hope will also keep us secure and connected through all difficulties.

The anchor referred to here is Jesus Christ. The one who has entered the sanctuary of God's presence and made a way for us to do the same. When we place our trust in Jesus, we are securing ourselves to the anchor that is attached to the rock of God's heart. It is immovable, and so are we if we continue to hold onto the promises that come from being connected with Him. Do whatever it takes to connect yourself with Him today.

Tuesday Devotion: The First Advent

Read Genesis 12:1-3; Malachi 4:5-6

Many of our favourite movies will have a “all hope is lost” moment. A number of movies start with that as the premise – think of The Matrix, The Hunger Games, Wall-E, and most Marvel movies. The reason we relate to it is because there are times when we look around our world and our lives and wonder the same thing.

Israel was called to be a light to the nations, but they did not fulfil their calling. The Old Testament ends with Malachi longing for the prophet to come, or he declares the whole land will be cursed. And then there is silence. Malachi is written about 430 BC, and for over four hundred years, there is nothing from God. There is oppression, there is division, there is doubt. Israel is occupied by Rome. It is a bad news time.

Where is the hope?

Have you ever asked that question? People die or life feels meaningless, and God is seemingly silent. If that is the case, then you can put yourself in Israel’s shoes.

But then ... a child is born. Like a tree that is withered down to the ground, that then shows a sign of life. A new hope! From death comes life. Angels appear, and the mighty oak of our faith comes from the broken place of our failure. May we look to Jesus to be the hope that we grow from.

Wednesday Devotion: A First Prayer of Hope

Read Luke 1:46-55

At the beginning of the story about Jesus, we have a song and a prophecy that make up the earliest prayers about Jesus.

Mary's song has been whispered in monasteries, chanted in cathedrals, recited in small remote churches by candlelight, and set to music with trumpets and kettledrums by Johann Sebastian Bach. Mary praises God for what he has done for her and shows that as God has seen her in her lowly state, so he is going to do the same for everyone. Jesus brings radical social change and hope for all.

In this song, we find hope, but more than that, it is triumph! It is not a polite, reserved stating of facts; it is full of emotion and vigour and an unrestrained praise. This song is a celebration of who God is. He is the Lord, Saviour, Mighty One, Holy One, Merciful One, Faithful One. He is the champion of the humble, the poor, of enslaved Israel, and against the powerful, the rich, and the proud.

This prayer is brand new and also something ancient. There are references in here to 12 different Old Testament passages. These passages spoke of mercy, hope, fulfilment, reversal, revolution, victory over evil, and of God coming to rescue at last. The gospel is the fulfilment of all our hopes and it is all about Jesus. Come to him today, worship, and adore Him.

Thursday Devotion: Another Prayer of Hope

Read Luke 1:57-79; Genesis 22:17-19

After John the Baptist is born, his father Zechariah begins to prophesy. He looks on his son, and he sees the future spread out in front of him. He sings this song called the *Benedictus*, after its first word in Latin. The first part is about Jesus and His redemption, and the second part is about his son and his role.

Again, there are so many references here to the Old Testament, 16 in fact. Powerful verses of the nature of God and the salvation, that was coming. Like a light dawning, like the sun from heaven shining on a cold and dark land. That is the light of Jesus.

Much of the poem could be seen as a celebration of a political salvation but there is evidence that there is more going on here. God's mercy, the forgiveness of sins, the rescue from death itself; all of this points to a wider meaning of salvation.

Zechariah's prophecy is filled with the hope of one who sees that finally the darkness of sin and death are being pushed back and the hope in God has led to the coming of the Messiah.

This Christmas, take some time to ponder on the meaning of Jesus' birth and what his coming brought into the world. May it be an opportunity to bring all the world's problems – political, spiritual, and personal – to Him.

Friday Devotion: The Second Advent

Read Revelation 21:1-8; 22:12-13

The season leading up to the coming of Jesus is known as Advent. The word literally means “arrival”, and for many Christians, this word represents the expectation surrounding Christ’s birth. It brings a sense of anticipation for all the things Jesus did through his life (his miracles, his teaching), his death, and his resurrection. As we wait for Christmas Day, we have all these things in mind.

However, the original interpretation of Advent was much larger than Jesus’ first coming. As early Christians anticipated Jesus coming, they weren’t just thinking of the baby in the manger; they were anticipating the second coming of Jesus, as the judge and renewer of the world.

The early Christians were looking forward to the time when Jesus will come and bring the new heaven and the new earth. They were anticipating a time where Immanuel, “God with us”, will actually live with us. They were full of hope for the world where Jesus will bring comfort, healing, and life to the nations. On that day, all that is wrong will be remade. In that time, every individual who declares Jesus is Lord will become all they were meant to be.

This Christmas, let us submit ourselves to Jesus as we anticipate his once and future coming.