

WEEK 1: HOPE

DEVOTIONALS FOR ADVENT

FEATURING UNION BAPTIST CHURCH ASSOCIATE MINISTERS



November 27

DEVOTIONAL SCRIPTURE: PSALM 42:11

Some argue that the word “hope” should not be in the Christian’s vocabulary. They believe that using the word “hope” is like wishing on a star and that it shows lack of trust in God. On the contrary, hope is at the core of our faith in Jesus Christ, our “Blessed Hope” (Titus 2:11-13).

Hope demonstrates certainty that God’s promises will come to fruition. David asks, “Why, my soul, are you downcast?” His answer? Put hope in the Lord and praise God anyway. Hope in the Lord makes the impossible become possible. Hope helps us to remain optimistic in a pessimistic world. Hope propels us forward and keeps us focused on the positive. Rather than the distractions of our present circumstances. Hope is confident trust in God.

Today, let’s focus on the hope found in Jesus Christ. Let’s also pray that those around us encounter our “Blessed Hope”.

**PRAYER FOR TODAY: FATHER, THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME HOPE!
HELP ME TO REMEMBER MY HOPE IS ROOTED IN MY TRUST IN
YOU. YOU ARE MY LIVING HOPE. AMEN**

HOPE



November 28

DEVOTIONAL SCRIPTURE: 2 SAMUEL 7:12-13

written by Rev. Phyllis Arrington

Some scholars suggest that our devotional scripture was composed for King Solomon while others assert that through the Prophet Nathan, the Lord had anointed the house of David: "Thus says the Lord of hosts to David's will raise up your offspring after you. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever (2 Samuel 7:8, 12-13).

These blessings relate to Solomon, David's successor and the royal line of Judah. However, they also relate to Christ who is often called the "Son of David." Solomon built the material house or temple, but Christ, is the builder of God's spiritual house. Solomon nor David's kingdoms were forever. It is the house that is built by Jesus that will reign forever.

During Solomon's reign, Israel benefited from the general peace and prosperity and David's family was Israel's ruling family. It was prophesied that their lives would be prolonged and expire naturally, not cut off by a violent or untimely one. The seed spoken of relates to Christ and that God will give Him all power in heaven and earth. He was assigned to build a spiritual temple for all true believers.

Something to think about:

1. What steps should we take today that will help us build an unwavering faith and hope in a Divine God?
2. How can we share this unwavering faith with others?
3. How can your faith impact your hope?



PRAYER FOR TODAY: GOD, WHEN MY FAITH IS FATIGUED AND MY HOPE IS ABSENT, DON'T LET ME FORGET THAT YOUR FAITHFULNESS IS BIGGER THAN MY PROBLEMS. HELP ME TO REMEMBER YOUR LOVE, GRACE AND MERCY WHICH BRINGS HOPE TO MY LIFE. AMEN



November 29

DEVOTIONAL SCRIPTURE: 1 PETER 1:3-6

Have you ever spent time in the grocery store selecting the best produce only to get it home, place it in your refrigerator and days later discover that it has spoiled? We are often surprised and disappointed when this happens, but we should not be because produce is perishable.

Peter, however, reminds us that the hope we have as believers never disappoints and is imperishable, and it will never fade away. It is secure. Our hope is alive because Christ is alive. His life changes our lives. Peter reminds us that at the very thought of our living hope, we should be overcome with praise. We can rejoice greatly because our living hope is with us and we are never alone.



PRAYER FOR TODAY: ALMIGHTY GOD, FULFILL OUR DESIRE AND KINDLE OUR HEARTS BY YOUR SPIRIT, THAT BEING FILLED WITH THE OIL OF YOUR GRACE, WE MAY SHINE AS BRIGHT LIGHTS AT THE COMING OF YOUR SON JESUS CHRIST; WHO LIVES AND REIGNS WITH YOU, NOW AND FOREVER.

November 30

DEVOTIONAL SCRIPTURE: PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

written by Rev. Dave Young

Today's reading forces us to slow down and acknowledge the immeasurable humility that Jesus displayed through his first coming. In the middle of Paul's love letter to the church at Philippi, he paints a portrait of Christ's descent from glory into the squalor of humanity for the price of redemption.

Through this vicarious act of love, Jesus sheds himself of respectability, riches, and reputation. Through the humility of Christ's service to humanity, God reveals Christ's Lordship and glory throughout the world.

We live in a world fraught with individualism, consumerism, and materialism. Social media consistently serves as the catalyst to distorted depictions of success. A thirst for opportunity has replaced the Christian virtue of obedience. A quest for popularity has replaced communalism with individualism to the point that following our dreams has caused us to forget the disinherited.

The beauty of Jesus' first coming is his subtle entry into the world. He does not come through the regality of Tiberius. He is not born in a pristine palace with servants flanked around him. No, our Lord and Liberator comes to us in a feeding trough—or a more accurate translation, a "donkey dish." The putrid smell of barn life would have offended our American-social class sensibilities.

Since Jesus comes to us this way, today's reading forces us to ask ourselves whether we, the church, are coming into the same places that Jesus went? Are we meeting with the marginalized? Are we bringing opportunity to the outcasts? Are we being a beacon of hope to the hopeless? May we imitate the witness of Jesus during this season of Advent by coming into the world like him.

In what ways can we follow the formula of Christ's faithfulness by emptying ourselves of pride and prestige and ministering to the marginalized?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: MERCIFUL SAVIOR, SHOW ME OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE YOUR WONDERFUL GIFT OF SALVATION AND HOPE WITH OTHERS. HELP ME TO CONFIDENTLY DECLARE MY HOPE IS IN YOU. THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME HOPE. AMEN



December 1

DEVOTIONAL SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 10:23

We live in a society where a promise carries little weight. Yet, God is as faithful in His promises to us today, as He was when they were first uttered thousands of years ago. God promises: to supply our every need, to give us sufficient grace, to never leave or forsake us, to provide eternal life and so much more. God neither retracts, nor fails in His promises.

As His children, we must maintain a steadfast grip on the hope and trust we have in Him regardless of what we see taking place around us. This hope begins upon the confession of our faith in Christ as our Lord and Savior. It has no end. It continues to grow as we experience God and ultimately meet Him face to face.



PRAYER FOR TODAY: LOVING GOD, I PRAY THAT JUST AS YOU ARE FAITHFUL IN YOUR PROMISES TO ME, THAT I WILL GROW IN MY FAITHFULNESS TO YOU. HELP ME TO MAINTAIN A STEADFAST HOPE EVEN WHEN I CANNOT TRACE YOU BECAUSE OF YOUR PROMISE TO ALWAYS BE WITH ME. AMEN

December 2

DEVOTIONAL SCRIPTURE: ROMANS 5:1-5

Did you know there is a difference between faith and hope? Oftentimes they are used together because they are related, but different.

Faith is the foundational belief in something, but hope takes that faith and moves it forward. People who believe in God can sometimes feel discouraged and stuck during a trial. It is because we lose hope in God moving in that season. Loss of hope can go unnoticed for quite a while, like a slow leak in a car tire. We will get around for a little while, then become sluggish, eventually ceasing to move at all.

Today's Scripture says through faith we obtain access to God, then hope is developed through our experience with God. And when we have persevered with God through some the challenges of life, we develop hope that will not disappoint us.

PRAYER FOR TODAY: GOD GIVE ME ENDURANCE TO DEVELOP A HOPE THAT LASTS. AMEN

December 3

DEVOTIONAL SCRIPTURE: MICAH 5:2-5

written by Rev. Allen Ingram

Micah declares that God's ancient covenant with Israel is safe and steadfast, even as it may come about in an astonishing way. Micah tells of a new King that would be coming from Bethlehem, where most inhabitants were poor farmers. The Prophet tells of a new King that will not be coming from the royal city of Jerusalem, but from the small town of Bethlehem.

This new King, the ideal leader – the one “from of old, from ancient days” – provides assurance that God's covenant with David (2 Samuel 7) is everlasting and is still working. This new King will not only be one that rules but one that also shepherds. This new King will usher in a time of strength, justice, and peace.

As we muddle our way through the immeasurable fears of today, preparing for Christmas day. Let the words of Micah signal us to lookback on Bethlehem, where we can always find the King who is our peace.

Are you prepared to be surprised? Are you prepared to welcome the Holy One into your midst?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: O LORD OUR GOD, MAKE US WATCHFUL AND CHEERFUL AS WE AWAIT THE COMING OF YOUR SON, CHRIST OUR LORD, THAT WHEN HE COMES AND KNOCKS, HE WILL FIND US NOT SLEEPING BUT AWAKE AND REJOICING IN HIS PRAISES; THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.