

“The Power of Hope”

Jeremiah 33:14-16; Luke 21:25-28

November 28, 2021

Treasured Artifacts

- In my family, there are important relics of days gone by that are venerated.
 - o There’s an old plastic Santa head that came from my grandmother Bryant’s house. It’s arrival on my mom’s mantle is the first indication of the Christmas season
 - o There’s Gently, an old stuffed-animal of mine that I created a shrine for out of an old Bass Shoe box
 - o And then there’s the tape
 - A VHS tape, believe it or not
 - Tarheels 1982 victory over the Georgetown Hoyas
- Watching that always gave us hope
 - o When the Tarheels would blow another shot, we’d watch that, remember the glory days of Michael Jordan and Sam Perkins and James Worthy.
- Hallmark Movies
 - o I confess a fascination for them
 - o They’re comforting, you know there will be a happy ending waiting for you at the conclusion
- Open ended-things give our fears a chance to run wild.
 - o Scrooged Movie
 - Promo for their Christmas special
 - Word War
 - Epidemics
 - Crime
 - o YOU MUST WATCH THIS SHOW
- Fears are employed to manipulate us
- Hope is the antidote to fear

When we Most Thirst for Hope

- When things seem hopeless
- For most people, things right now aren’t where we’d like them to be.
 - o COVID
 - o Orwellian world in which privacy a thing of the past
 - o Civility is breaking down
 - A few years back, a gun man walked into a nightclub and shot fellow Americans
 - We argued about gun rights, gay rights, faith rights, you name it.
 - o Didn’t grieve.
- Ask most anyone about their hope for America right now.
 - o Most are a little dubious in ways that haven’t been evident in my memory ever before
- The Younger the generation the greater the worry
 - o They’re going to be here
 - o But in their fear, younger generations are turning to
 - Escapism
 - Sexual Immorality
 - Drugs
 - Cheating
- The Church
 - o More “nones” than any time ever before
 - o Spiritual but not religious
 - But oftentimes what that spirituality boils down to is little more than whatever makes me happy, I do. Whatever brings me grief, I avoid

- That's not being spiritual, it's being selfish

- We need hope now more than ever but, with the world's hope, we don't have very much hope for things improving at all

Christian Hope versus Hope in the World

- I hope the Braves will win again next season.
 - o Do I hope for that? Sure
 - o Will it happen? Remains to be seen
- Hope in Jesus Christ is different,
- Abraham takes Isaac to Mount Moriah
 - o Beloved child, God has promised that future generations, future blessings all run through this child living and having a family
- God comes to Abraham
 - o **Genesis 22:1-2** – *“After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”*
- We would have some questions – “WHAT?!?!?”
 - o **Genesis 22:3** – *“So, Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.”*
- Abraham's Hope
 - o God had promised.
 - o Abraham trusted God and so his Hope secure, he could do what was asked of him.
- What does Jesus tell us?
 - o **Matthew 10:28** – *“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”*
 - o **Matthew 6:25** – *“Therefore, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?”*
- And what about the future
 - o Paul and First Corinthians – Jacked up, secularly oriented church. They're struggling with sexual issues, idolatry issues, infighting, they're a mess.
 - o What does Paul remind them of?
- **1 Corinthians 50:50-56** – *“I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Christian Hope is Anchored to Jesus Christ

- That's why this season is so important
- That's why distancing ourselves from Jesus is the name of ecumenism or interfaith dialogue is a very bad, no-good idea
 - o It distances us from our hope
- Our hope is that BECAUSE JESUS WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD, we know (like Abraham knew about Isaac) that we will be raised from the dead just like Jesus.
 - o **John 14:19** – *“Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.”*

- But it all just isn't HOPE IN THE FTURE
 - o **Romans 8:31-32** – *“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?”*

Returned to Treasured Artifacts

- The Bible – Let me show you mine
- Because it's about HIM!
- Advent and Christmas are, too
 - o The presents are nice, the hope is the real gift
 - Hope for here, hope for tomorrow.