

Advent II

December 8, 2024

Romans 15: 4-13 & Luke 21: 25-33

After setting the tune of what Advent is all about last week, by telling what we need to do (cast away the works of darkness and put on the about of light), because of the time that we are in (in-between times), the Church is now teaching us today that we must have hope in the future.

What is hope?

The modern and secular idea of hope is “to wish for, to expect, but without certainty of the fulfillment; to desire very much but with no real assurance of getting your desire.”

According to the Hebrew and Greek words translated by the word “hope,” hope is an indication of certainty.

According to the Bible, hope means “a strong and confident expectation.

For example, most of the time, we do not see the work of God with our eyes, nor do we see how the Holy Spirit operates when we are baptized. But we believe this to be a reality based on the promise of God.

What are some of the results of having hope?

1 Hope has the potential to change how we see ourselves. A man of hope is someone who sees himself as a pilgrim. We are in the world, but we are not of the world. That’s why in 1Pe 2: 11 we read: “Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul.”

2 Hope changes what we value. It makes us heavenly-minded rather than earthly-minded.

Matthew 6:19-21 Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; 21 for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

How do you value what God has given you? What are you doing with your life?

Recently, I learned that a commercial was going on in France and the company that put this ad on the air used children with Down syndrome. And because the children were smiling, some women complained that it is offensive to the women who want to commit abortion, particularly women who want to get rid of their babies diagnosed with Down syndrome. That’s how far we have gone in the world today.

I also remember a friend of mine in Africa. She was pregnant. And the doctor told her that it was risky: she must choose between getting rid of the baby and live, and keeping the baby and die. She turned around and said, "My hope is placed in God. Let him take control." I will never forget those words! Today, that child is a priest back in my country. Hope changes what we value and what we do with our lives.

But the real question comes down to this:

What is your source of hope? Where do you learn to have and cultivate hope?

Today's Epistle teaches that the Bible was written so that we may have hope.

That's our source of hope. It is in the word of God that we learn how to wait in joyful hope for the fulfillment of God's promises. Nowhere else! Our knowledge can't do it; our degrees can't do it; our relationships can't do it. But only God. And we learn that in His Word.

So, on this Second Sunday in Advent, let us remember that "*what was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope...*" because "*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away*", says the Lord.

Advent is a time of letting the word of God minister to us so that we may get to a place where we embrace and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life.

Prayer

GRANT, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that the words which we have heard this day with our out-ward ears, may, through thy grace, be so grafted inwardly in our hearts, that they may bring forth in us the fruit of good living, to the honour and praise of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.