



Advent 2020
Wk. 1 "The Power of Hope"
By Pastor Jody May

Romans 15:8-13 ESV

Christ the Hope of Jews and Gentiles

⁸ For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs,⁹ and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

"Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles,
and sing to your name."

¹⁰ And again it is said,

"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people."

¹¹ And again,

"Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,
and let all the peoples extol him."

¹² And again Isaiah says,

"The root of Jesse will come,
even he who arises to rule the Gentiles;
in him will the Gentiles hope."

¹³ **May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.**

"The celebration of **Advent** is possible only to those who are troubled in soul, who know themselves to be poor and imperfect, and who look forward to something greater to come." ~ **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

That means that if you have all you want now, if you are satisfied with this life, then the season of Advent has nothing for you. So, what is it that Advent is supposed to do for us?



Advent 2020

Wk. 1 "The Power of Hope"

By Pastor Jody May

History:

The word "Advent" is derived from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning "coming," which is a translation of the Greek word *parousia*. Scholars believe that during the 4th and 5th centuries in Spain and Gaul, Advent was a season of preparation for the baptism of new Christians at the January feast of Epiphany, the celebration of God's incarnation represented by the visit of the Magi to the baby Jesus ([Matthew 2:1](#)), his baptism in the Jordan River by John the Baptist ([John 1:29](#)), and his first miracle at Cana ([John 2:1](#)). During this season of preparation, Christians would spend 40 days in penance, prayer, and fasting to prepare for this celebration; originally, there was little connection between Advent and Christmas.¹

By the 6th century, however, Roman Christians had tied Advent to the coming of Christ. But the "coming" they had in mind was not Christ's first coming in the manger in Bethlehem, but his second coming in the clouds as the judge of the world. It was not until the Middle Ages that the Advent season was explicitly linked to Christ's first coming at Christmas.²

That means right now for the church in the year 2020, Advent season is meant to put things on hold; to SUSPEND all things. Advent helps us connect with the OT believers as they awaited, for their Messiah to come, and it connects us with the church we see in scripture as they believed they lived in the last days.

It **suspends** us between **remembrance** and **anticipation** that is why the **first two Sundays** of Advent is supposed to focus on **Christ's 2nd coming (anticipation)**, and then the **last two Sundays** focus on His **1st coming (remembrance)** which walks us into Christmas. God, in His Sovereign planning, graciously had us stop with our last Luke sermon for the 2020 year talking about Jesus 2nd coming to prepare us for this season.

¹ Justin Holcomb, "What is Advent," *Christianity.com*, <https://www.christianity.com/christian-life/christmas/what-is-advent.html>, Web 2020.

² *Ibid.*, "What is Advent".



Advent 2020

Wk. 1 “The Power of Hope”

By Pastor Jody May

Mike preached from Luke 21:25-36 and we saw that God has promised in His Word (*Jesus said it*), that **He would return again**. Of the 300 plus prophecies about the Messiah, many were only partially fulfilled at his first advent. In preparation of the second coming, we saw that Jesus will return to judge the world and punish sin. As Christians, the church, we are called to trust His Word, that means, believe what it says not what the world says **TO HAVE HOPE**, and the by-product of that action is to be in prayer and be in a state of eternal watchfulness.

What we are **focusing on today is HOPE that is part 1 of anticipation** in the second coming, next week is PEACE part 2 of anticipation, then week 3 is JOY and week 4 is LOVE which is about remembrance of what Jesus brought in His first coming. I appreciate Advent season more and more every year because instead of living with the memories of the Ghost of Christmas Past I am looking more and more to now, Christmases are getting better for me, and they are now pointing me to a glorious reunion, with Jesus, I will have one day.

Christmases were not always fun at my house growing up, my dad had the uncanny ability to **turn into the Grinch** every year. We didn't do parades, we didn't have people over, we didn't go to parties, we weren't big on family traditions, but we did do lights. Then many times my dad would get depressed, drink a little too much, and make it miserable for mom and me. I think that's why both mom and dad used to spoil me with gifts on Christmas as a kid, like a guilt offering. The tragic truth of those days is though, that no matter how much I looked forward to it, no matter what I got, the joy of those presents for me usually wore off between that night and week later.

Here's what I was doing, I was putting hope, in that what I would receive, would take my mind off of the miserableness of my current family situation.

I like to think of Hope as putting an emotional deposit in a future investment that one can't see yet, because what one has right now is not cutting it. *What we do is we get ok with what we have currently, even when it's painful because we have decided to take a part of our heart out of a current situation and place it in a future place.* So, growing up like every kid, when you have trudged through half a school



Advent 2020
Wk. 1 “The Power of Hope”
By Pastor Jody May

year and you’re needing a pick me up, you place an emotional deposit on Christmas day expecting that whatever you get will make you feel better.

I mean that’s at least what I have been learning through the Hallmark channel over the last 2 weeks. That if I just believe in the magic of Christmas, I can have the dream relationship that I have always wanted, right!? That’s the ultimate Christmas message, is that Christmas is supposed to make everything better. Friends let me be a little honest with you this morning, if you are expecting Christmas, the gifts, the food, the family, the shopping, the 24 hours of never-ending Christmas music, to **take away the funk of 2020** you are about to set yourself up for another let down this year.

The Dilemma:

Here’s what you’re going to learn, there is nothing that this world has to offer you, where you can take a piece of your heart and put it in that future, that will make your life all the better when you get to that point in your life. You aren’t going to find peace and joy in a new president, a new house, in a new relationship, in a new wardrobe, in another diploma, in a new job, in your kids, in reparations, in your team, in your new school, in your new car, and even a new you, **there is nothing you can place your hope in that will fill you up emotionally**. Because all of that comes with holes, they aren’t complete fixes and they leak Hope like a Siv, and your joy will run dry, every time!

BUT in scripture we are told about a different KIND of HOPE, that is placed in something outside of you and what you can do, and this Hope is guaranteed by God not to fail, and it can be yours.

Hope is found over 200 times in the Bible, 53 times in the NT in 48 different verses. Hope in the Bible is **ALWAYS** associated with God and what He delivers to His people, it is **never associated with what you can do for yourself**.³

Definition of Hope:

³ Bible.Org, <https://bible.org/article/hope>, Web, Dec., 2020.



Advent 2020
Wk. 1 “The Power of Hope”
By Pastor Jody May

Hope – *elpis*; the expectation of good, anticipation usually with joy, a joyful and confident expectation of eternal Salvation.

Hope / elpis as it is defined by NT authors as the **expectation of good**. I like how Strong’s defined it: **to anticipate usually with joy** and while Hope means all of that, to Paul it has an added dimension which also **means joyful and confident expectation of eternal Salvation**.

I am going today talk about Hope for the next few moments from the traditional Christmas scripture of the book of **Romans (j/k)**. **Because I want us all to learn, to grow, and to leave here changed with a joyful and confident expectation of eternal Salvation and all that it has to bring to you!** And instead of taking time off in the holidays, since Jesus is our sabbath, I am going to heed the words of the apostle John because here’s the cool thing about Hope, especially if you are already a Christian, it **DRIVES your SANCTIFICATION!**

1 John 3:3

All who have this **hope** (*joyful and confident expectation of eternal Salvation*) in him **purify themselves**, just as He is **pure**.

Today we have **5 things we are going to learn about hope** and each one of those five things is going to lead you into a **season of purifying yourselves** as you wait with anticipation for Christmas celebrating the truth that Jesus will return.

1. Hope depends on a Spirit filled Life

Romans 15:13 ESV

May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and **peace** in **believing**, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in **hope**.

The thrust of the passage we read his morning was to show at the end of all of Paul’s great systematic theological work (Romans) **he ends his dissertation with a simple prayer**. His prayer is not that they would embrace Christianity like he embraced Judaism, but that God the initiator, supplier, creator, and store house of HOPE would fill the new church, with the fruit of the Spirit so that in them Hope (*joyful and confident expectation of eternal Salvation*) may come to life!



Advent 2020
Wk. 1 “The Power of Hope”
By Pastor Jody May

Paul in Galatians gives us the full list of the fruit of God’s Spirit brings: ²² *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,* ²³ *gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.* (Gal. 5:22-23).

When you read Galatians 5 it is a description of two different types of people: those that walk in the flesh (gratifying desires by their own power) that is those that put hope, a little piece of their hearts in future events that will bring them happiness. Then you have those that walk by the Spirit (people gratified by what God has done in them) that are growing in a Biblical Hope (*joyful and confident expectation of eternal Salvation*).

The difference between the two is that one group has surrendered to the futility of trying to muster their own brand of hope and one has not. One group has realized that God has already saved them, and one has not. One group of people have been converted and made alive by the HS and one group has not. Friends and family, I am just simply saying that if you want Hope (*joyful and confident expectation of eternal Salvation*) then you must first realize you are dead in your sins, you need to be Saved first!

Hope does not come from what you can do for you it only comes from God alone! He must save you and if you don’t have this Hope today ask Him to save you from your sinful desires, your desire to rule your life, for the forgiveness of your sins, and ask the Father to put Jesus as King in your life AND THEN you will receive Hope. True, life-changing, Biblical Hope (*joyful and confident expectation of eternal Salvation*) depends on the working of the Spirit in your life, so at least now we all know where to start...

2. Hope defined by the Word of God

Romans 15:4 ESV

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the **Scriptures** we might have **hope**.



Advent 2020
Wk. 1 “The Power of Hope”
By Pastor Jody May

God gave us His Word, the **scriptures**, so that we may be saved. As children of the reformation, we understand that it is through the **authority of Scripture alone** that we gain Salvation. But sometimes when we read it, if we are honest, all we see is how we mess up, we can't do what we want, and it makes it seem pointless to try.

But the scriptures while it **must condemn you for your sin it never demands you pay for your sin** – *But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. Isaiah 53:5*

You see when you and I read the Bible it should always be in the light of HOPE (*joyful and confident expectation of eternal Salvation*), that Jesus has paid for the mess ups, that **when we never want to do** the right thing He did, He does, and He always will. Then seeing, that He did it when no one cheered Him on, makes us want to jump out of our skin in Joy over Him!

So, here's my Christmas wish for you, **read more Bible**. Don't give up on the reading plan when you miss a day, start over again. Read your Advent devotional with your family, put your faith in what is to come, read the good news of the Gospel, give thanks and tell yourself to take joy in it! For your Hope is not defined by what happened to you in 2020, it is not defined by how you feel, **it is defined by what God's Word says it is**, fight for that belief!

3. Hope derives from a life of trials

Romans 5:2-5 ESV

Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only that, but we rejoice in our **sufferings**, knowing that suffering produces **endurance**, ⁴ and endurance produces **character**, and character produces **hope**, ⁵ and hope does not put us to **shame**, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

So, there is a chain of events that brings us to Hope in God, to have *joyful and confident expectation of eternal Salvation*. And you all are smart, you know what that looks like; sufferings to endurance to character, **oh yeah that's working out!**



Advent 2020
Wk. 1 “The Power of Hope”
By Pastor Jody May

That is *Sweat Equity*, that's *no pain no gain*, that 's *that which doesn't kill you makes you stronger*, that's *when the going gets tough the tough get going*. You see, the world recognizes that pattern of life, but for the world this philosophy falls short all the time.

The world says that when you get some character, integrity, pride, that you can keep enduring hardships. Over the past 4 years some of you have become acquainted with the name Jordan Peterson, a Clinical Psychologist, philosopher, sociologist, etc. Peterson has spent years studying mankind, prided himself on living out his principles and just recently returned to the talk stage because he had been battling benzodiazepine (for anxiety) use. It's not that he was abusing them, but that Peterson's hope was in himself and what he could do and not God and it led to some horrible pain in his life.

When we realize we are suffering we also need to remember what Jesus brother James (1:2-3) pointed out, “(rejoice)when you meet **trials** of various kinds, ³for you know that the **testing of your faith produces steadfastness.**” These trials were sent your way by God, to build your steadfastness the ability not to be shaken, **you need to rejoice!** Because the Father treats us the same way He treated His Son, He tested Him, He put Him through a workout, so that **when Jesus' day on the Cross came, He won!** And now Hope (*joyful and confident expectation of eternal Salvation*) grows when we see our character actually looks like Jesus' character!?! C'mon what a Christmas gift, to actually believe we are developing character that mirrors the greatest being ever to walk the planet!

You want some Hope today that won't fail you, take heart, you're going get it, rejoice in the year 2020! It wasn't a bad year it was just **the year that God decided to put the whole church on a new workout regime** to get us ready for His return! **You want Hope expect some tribulations and rejoice in them.**

4. Hope denotes a prayerful life

Romans 12:2 ESV

Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.



Advent 2020
Wk. 1 “The Power of Hope”
By Pastor Jody May

Ok so Paul is like, check, we listen to James and we rejoice when we see hope blooming, we are glad as John told us it purifies us, developing character like Christ, Check, so we are to be patient in tribulation because that’s the highway that gets us to hope, and then he adds - be **constant in prayer**.

Why? If God is doing all of it, why do I need to pray. Because according to Rom. 15:13 your supposed to be **believing it, practicing your Faith**. Again, if we are honest most of us don’t believe God is in the bad things of life and for many of us that do believe He does it out of spite/anger/vengeance. But prayer is God’s way of encouraging us to keep talking it out with Him, ask the hard questions, ask if there is another way, just like Jesus did in the garden, and if He is silent be ok with that, because you have hope (*joyful and confident expectation of eternal Salvation*) and it does not fail.

Want to have more hope start praying prayers that don’t ask all the time **father remove this** but perhaps **Father show me** how this is for the good, how this glorifies you, how this is changing me to be like Jesus, how this is saving me, and God will be faithful to answer you for those are things that God loves to do because it is about Kingdom building!

How about this, you pick out in your life this year where you put too much hope in the things of this world in 2020, pray and ask for forgiveness, and then share that with someone and ask them to pray for you. If they share the hope they will.

5. Hope develops the patient life

Romans 8:25 ESV

But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

When we have hope (*joyful and confident expectation of eternal Salvation*) and realize we don’t have it ALL yet, that it will come when God is ready, that there are still more to be saved, then we develop patience.

Patience helps you hang in there when everyone else says quit. Patience helps you forgive a spouse one more time not expecting them to change but desiring it.



Advent 2020
Wk. 1 “The Power of Hope”
By Pastor Jody May

Patience helps you to love a child when they have broken something else in your home again. Patience makes you keep working that job you don't like as you wait for another. Patience helps manage your finances because you don't feel you need it all now. Patience helps you testify for God because evangelism is not tied to whether someone accepts the good news or not. Patience restores family relationships because you are not swayed by cold shoulders and snarky comments. Patience helps you not be so disappointed in what the world has given you because you aren't waiting on it to bring you an answer BECAUSE you are waiting on Christ to make all things right!

What is it you are losing your control over, your temper, your restraint, ask yourself is it really worth it if you are really living with *joyful and confident expectation of eternal Salvation*? **Remember Paul's words**, “*For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,*” (2 Cor. 4:17).

Things that try our patience are just things prepping us for glory. Every time you forgive, every time you let it roll, you have processed one more degree in your sanctification according to John, you have purified yourself more, through Hope, even more.

It is my prayer for you today, that this Advent, suspending of time between remembrance and anticipation, that you will not just find Hope but will work it out, will process it, will pray for it, will practice it, so that in 2021 we won't get fooled again. That by Christ we will become even more filled with Joy and Peace because slowly yet surely Jesus, His return, is becoming our true hope.



Advent 2020
Wk. 1 “The Power of Hope”
By Pastor Jody May

PRAYER

COMMUNION

BENEDICTION

Go in the name of the Father, the author and supplier of hope, a hope that will never run dry, may His hope satisfy you today.

Go in the name of the Son, that brought hope to us, through His sacrifice, and demonstrates to us by His resurrection what we have to look forward to.

Go in the name and the power of the HS, that brings us the fruit, that grows patience and that delivers Hope to the point where we all want to share it with others.