

# Advent Means... HOPE!

Advent Means... #1 - Pastor Gary Combs - December 3, 2023 - Titus 2:11-14

**INTRO:** Good morning church! We are beginning a new sermon series today entitled, “Advent Means ...” As we explained earlier, the word “Advent” comes from the Latin word “*adventus*,” which means “coming, approach, arrival.” When we expect guests to arrive at our homes, we turn the lights on; we anticipate their arrival and welcome them with joy. In Advent, we prepare our homes, our churches, but most of all our hearts, as we joyfully anticipate Christ’s arrival, the day on which we celebrate the birth of the Light of the World!

Today is the first Sunday of Advent. The advent season includes the four Sundays before Christmas. It’s a season when believers look back to Christ’s first arrival in Bethlehem and look forward to His second and future return. For the next four Sundays we will reflect on four Advent themes: Hope – Peace – Love – Joy. Today’s sermon is “**Advent Means... HOPE!**”

At Jesus’ first advent, He was proclaimed as “Savior.” As the angels announced to the Shepherds, “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:11).

In His second advent, He will return as King and will gather all those as Paul says who “have longed for His appearing.”

We live now between the two advents, the two comings... waiting... in anticipation of Christ’s return.

**ILL:** Do you remember the sense of anticipation you felt when you were a child at the approach of Christmas Day? When I was growing up, Sears used to mail out a catalog they called the Wish Book usually by late September. That gave children 3 full months to dog-ear and circle the toys they dreamed of seeing under the tree on Christmas morning. Me and my brother would wear that Wish Book out, usually inserting notebook paper describing the page and detail of each item we wished for.



Sears launched the Wish Book in 1933 and mailed it out every year until 1993 when they discontinued the catalog. Now, the online retailer Amazon has realized the power of mailing out a Wish Book, launching their very own version in 2020. This year, they called it “Amazon’s Holiday Dash.”



But we need more than a wish book. We need hope, real hope, the kind of hope that’s more than a wish. When we say, “I hope it doesn’t rain today.” That’s not biblical hope. That’s just a wish. The hope that we have in Jesus is a blessed hope. It’s a confident expectation that just as God kept His promise that Jesus would come as Savior, so He will keep His promise that Jesus will come again as Lord!

**Need:** Do you have this kind of hope? Many today live lives of hopelessness. They don’t really have anything to look forward to. When we’re younger, we seem to have more to hope for, like looking forward to graduating from school. Or getting married. As we get older, we might be looking forward to owning our first home. Or having children. Or looking forward to a vacation in some exotic place. Some of us live just looking forward to the weekend! Yet, the truth is, we start running out of things to hope for. Because most of the things we actually get, end up being so temporary anyway. The thing hoped for rarely lives up to its anticipation. Or it never comes to pass, so we give up on hoping for it. Have you lost the sense of hopeful anticipation that you had as a child?

**Trans:** The Advent season is an invitation for us to step back from the busyness of our daily lives and to slow down and remember that Jesus has come and that Jesus is coming again. God has given us reason to hope, but our hope is not dependent on a wishful feeling. Our hope is in the person of Jesus!

**BODY:** In the book of Titus chapter 2, the apostle Paul reminded his disciple Titus that the hope he had in Christ was a blessed hope. We can be reminded that the hope we have in Christ is a blessed hope. Why is the hope we have in Christ a blessed hope? The text gives three reasons why the hope we have in Christ is a blessed hope?

**Read text:** Titus 2:11-14 (ESV) <sup>11</sup> For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, <sup>12</sup> training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, <sup>13</sup> waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup> who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

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## WHY THE HOPE WE HAVE IN CHRIST IS A BLESSED HOPE:

### 1. Because it is anchored in the grace of salvation.

**EXP:** (11, 13) This is PAST hope, hope anchored in the past work of grace that Christ accomplished at His first advent, first “appearing” (11). Notice how Paul wrote, “the grace of God has appeared.” Past tense.

“**Blessed**” (13) (μακάριος, *makarios*) - happy, supremely blest, fortunate, well off, to feel blissful.

“**Hope**” (13) (ἐλπίς, *elpis*) - to anticipate, (with pleasure); expectation, or confidence, hope. “Hope” is commonly used to mean a wish: its strength is the strength of the person's desire. But in the Bible, hope is the confident expectation of what God has promised and its strength is in His faithfulness.

“**Grace**” (11) (χάρις, *charis*) - grace; that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness: grace of speech, good will, loving-kindness, favor

“**Appeared**” (11) (ἐπιφαίνω, *epiphainō* - Aorist) - to show, to bring to light, appear, become visible. This is the 1st advent. The second “appearing” (13) is also referenced in this passage.

“**Bringing salvation**” (11) (σωτήριος, *sōtērios*) - saving, bringing salvation, he who embodies this salvation, or through whom God is about to achieve it,

**ARG:** This hope is a blessed hope because it is a living hope anchored in the resurrected Jesus.

1 Peter 1:3-13 (ESV) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

**ILL:** **Hope and waiting go hand in hand.** The first advent of Messiah was long awaited by the OT saints. There are over 300 Messianic prophecies in the OT, so they were hoping and waiting for Him. Consider the story of old Simeon that took place when Jesus’ was brought to the Temple on the 8th day after His birth:

Luke 2:25-26 (ESV) <sup>25</sup> Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. <sup>26</sup> And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

**Tell the rest of the story:** Luke 2:27-35 (ESV) <sup>27</sup> And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, <sup>28</sup> he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, <sup>29</sup> “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; <sup>30</sup> for my eyes have seen your salvation <sup>31</sup> that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, <sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.” <sup>33</sup> And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. <sup>34</sup> And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed <sup>35</sup> (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

**APP:** You can have this blessed hope by believing that Jesus has come, that He died for your sins, was buried, and was raised on the third day. This is real hope! Hope not based on human emotion, but anchored in the grace of God that has already appeared in Christ Jesus!

### 2. Because it is being trained in godly living.

**EXP:** (12) This is PRESENT hope, hope that marks the way we live today, training us “to renounce” ungodly living and to live “godly lives in the present age.” God’s grace trains us how to wait in the present.

“**Training**” (12) (παιδεύω, *paideuō*) - to be instructed or taught, to cause one to learn, to correct.

“**To renounce**” (12) (ἀρνέομαι, *arneomai*) - to deny, reject, renounce. Say “no” to...

“**Ungodliness**” (12) (ἀσέβεια, *asebeia*) - want of reverence towards God, impiety, ungodliness.

“**Worldly passions**” (12) (ἐπιθυμία, *epithumia*) - over much or excessive desire, craving, longing, lust.

“**To live self-controlled**” (12) (σωφρόνως, *sōphronōs*) - Say “yes” to living with a sound mind and...

“**Upright**” (12) (δικαίως, *dikaiōs*) - just, agreeably to right, as is right, uprightly

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“**Godly**” (12) (εὐσεβῶς, *eusebōs*) - piously, godly

“**Present age**” (12) (νῦν αἰῶνι, *nun aiōni*) - at this time (age), the present, now.

**ARG:** How do we live with this blessed hope in the present? By preparing our minds...

1 Peter 1:13 (ESV) Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

**By depending on the Spirit's filling...**

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.

**ILL:** We've taken several mission trips to Uganda to partner with the ministry of our brother, Pastor George Mbonye. Because we've been before I know what to expect. So in between trips, I know there are things I have to do and prepare for in order to go again: Passport, inoculations, planning, prayer, funds, training our team, packing, etc. When you hope to take a trip in the future, you must prepare in the present!

**APP:** Are you saying “no” to ungodly living and “yes” to godly living today? Are you preparing in the present for Christ's future return? Are you living with “abounding hope” that fills you with joy and peace today?

## 3. Because it anticipates the glory of Christ's return.

**EXP:** (13-14) This is FUTURE hope, hope that is “waiting” expectantly for the glorious “appearing” of our “great God and Savior, Jesus Christ!”

“**Waiting**” (13) (προσδέχομαι, *prosdéchomai*) - to wait (with confidence or patience), to expect.

“**Blessed hope**” (13) - The blessing of joyful and confident expectation that God has done and will do what He has promised. The strength of blessed hope is not a measure of our desire, but of Christ's promise.

“**Appearing**” (13) (ἐπιφάνεια, *epiphaneia*) - a manifestation, appearing, brightness. Translated *adventum* in the Latin Vulgate: “*expectantes beatam spem et adventum gloriae magni Dei et salvatoris nostri Iesu Christi.*”

“**To redeem**” (14) (λυτρόω, *lutroō*) - to release on receipt of ransom, to redeem, purchase.

“**All lawlessness**” (14) (ἀνομία, *anomia*) - the condition of living without law, iniquity, wickedness

“**To purify**” (14) (καθαρίζω, *katharizō*) - to make clean, cleanse, to free from guilt of sin

“**Own possession**” (14) (περιούσιος, *periousios*) - belonging, possession, Christ purchased us for Himself.

“**Zealous**” (14) (ζηλωτής, *zēlōtēs*) - one burning with zeal, most eagerly desirous of, zealous for a thing

“**Good works**” (14) (καλῶν ἔργων, *kalōn ergōn*) - beautiful, magnificent, good, excellent—works, deeds.

**ARG:** Our present sufferings won't compare to our future glory at Christ's return!

Romans 8:18-25 (ESV) <sup>18</sup> For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us... <sup>23</sup>...but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. <sup>24</sup> For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

**ILL:** An expectant mother who groaned in labor soon forgets her suffering at the child's appearance.

**APP:** Hope, blessed hope, waits expectantly, anticipating the glorious return of Christ Jesus!

**CONCLUSION:** Do you have this blessed hope? You can have it today. How? 1) By anchoring your hope in Jesus' past coming as Your Lord and Savior, 2) By letting your hope in Christ train you in godliness in the present, and 3) By watching and waiting in confident anticipation for Christ's glorious return! Let's pray.