

Hope for The Day

Victory Life Church, Durant (Central) — Sunday, December 3, 2023

Introduction

Jesus is calling us to be the light of the world as He is the light of the world, and to let our light shine for the world to see, not let it be hidden.

Matthew 5:14-16 (ESV) ***"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."***

John 8:12 (ESV) *Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, **"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."***

The light we are called to shine is our character transformed by the character of Christ.

Life marked by Love // Life pursuing Holiness // Life shaped by Wisdom // Life filled with Power

The Future Hope

Revelation 21:1-5, 9-11, 22-26 (ESV) Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw **the holy city**, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a **bride** adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you **the Bride, the wife** of the Lamb." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me **the holy city** Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.

And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for **the glory of God gives it light**, and its lamp is the Lamb. By **its light will the nations walk**, and the **kings of the earth will bring their glory into it**, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.

Revelation 22:1-5 (ESV) Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding

its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for **the Lord God will be their light**, and they will reign forever and ever.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV) *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

The church for many centuries celebrated the season leading up to Christmas by marking out 4 Sundays that precede the Christmas Day (and the 12 days of Christmas as a whole), a time of waiting in hopeful anticipation of the birth of Christ (his first advent) that acted as a way to deepen our hope and expectant waiting for his return, the second coming (advent). By practicing the hopeful waiting and anticipation for Christmas Day, so we as faithful followers of Jesus build up our excitement and patient waiting for his return when he sets the world to right.

Titus 2:11–14 (ESV) ¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing **salvation** for all people, ¹²**training**¹ us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³waiting for our **blessed hope**, the **appearing** of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to **purify for himself² a people for his own possession** who are zealous for good works.

The season of Advent is intended to draw us into a deeper understanding of what we are waiting for. The world was a place of darkness and despair, and the ancient Israelites were waiting and hoping for a Messiah, an Anointed King, the One who would come to bring salvation to God's people. They nurtured and preserved that hope. The season of Advent that leads us to the crescendo of Christmas morning is how we remember that Jesus came as the Messiah, the Anointed One, and was the light in the darkness, bringing salvation for the world. But we don't just reflect and remember the faithfulness and love of God in Jesus' first advent, we also nurture and preserve the hope of His promised return, His second advent.

The "Blessed Hope" is not us "going" to heaven, but that He will "appear" again.

This is what we are waiting for. Our waiting should not be a mindless passing of the time, or should make us live like everyone else. Our waiting should shape our lives a particular way. This hope that is blessed, Jesus' appearing or return, is called "the Day." We stand in between the two advents of Christ Jesus, Easter Sunday (the day of His resurrection) and "the Day" of His return. This is what we are waiting and hoping for. So what should nurturing that hope do in our current lives?

The Day

Romans 13:11–14 (ESV) ¹¹Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For **salvation** is nearer to us now than when we first believed. ¹²The night is far gone³; **the day is at hand**. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³Let us **walk properly as in the daytime**⁴, not in orgies and

drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

We are waiting and hoping for “the Day” of Jesus’ return, when our salvation will come to its completion. When “the Day” dawns fully, all darkness will once and for all be dispelled. Because of this, we should walk in the light, as if that day has already dawned. The kinds of works and behaviors that belong to darkness should be “cast off.” Our lives in the present age should reflect the light of Christ Jesus’ character.

Philippians 2:12–16 (ESV) ¹²Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own **salvation** with fear and trembling, ¹³for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. ¹⁴Do all things without grumbling or disputing, ¹⁵that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation⁵, **among whom you shine as lights in the world**, ¹⁶holding fast to the word of life, so that in **the day of Christ** I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

Us living out our salvation as children of God, and casting off the works of darkness, is a shining light to the world stuck in darkness, that is “crooked and twisted.” Our lives reflecting the light of Christ (our character being transformed by Jesus) is a lamp that points forward to the day when the light will shine fully, and all darkness will be eradicated. Paul says that “the Day of Christ” will reveal all of this, and he will be proud of his work in their lives.

1 Corinthians 3:10–15 (ESV) ¹⁰According to the **grace** of God given to me, like a **skilled**⁶ **master builder** I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. ¹¹For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— ¹³each one’s work will become manifest, for **the Day will disclose it**, because it will be **revealed by fire**⁷, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done⁸. ¹⁴If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though **he himself will be saved**, but only as through fire.

This can be a hard section of Scripture, and may require much further explanation another time. The essential thing to see for our purposes here is that when “the Day” dawns, it will reveal by the fire the nature of all that we have built. What is hidden will be revealed. The fire of God will determine what sort of work we have done with our lives, and whether it was “good or evil.” That which was built “in the dark” will be consumed, and that which was built “in the light” will be purified. So the encouragement remains to “walk properly as in the daytime,” for our lives will be fully revealed before the light of Christ. This is why our character should be transformed by Christ to be marked by love, pursuing holiness, shaped by wisdom, and filled with power, because that kind of life will last beyond “the Day” into the full light of eternity.

Conclusion

2 Peter 3:1–13 (ESV) ¹This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, ²that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, ³knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. ⁴They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.” ⁵For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, ⁶and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. ⁷But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for **fire**, being kept until **the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly**. ⁸But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹**The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise** as some count slowness, but is **patient** toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. ¹⁰But **the day of the Lord** will come like a thief, and then **the heavens will pass away** with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and **the earth and the works** that are done on it **will be exposed**. ¹¹Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of **holiness and godliness**, ¹²**waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God**, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! ¹³But according to his promise **we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells**.

Our waiting and our hoping is anchored, not in present circumstances or feelings, nor in humans or systems, they are anchored in the character and promises of God. We live in turbulent times, but in dark times such as these, the light shines brighter. We are people of the light, the light of Christ. There is another way to live, anchored in a different hope, the “Day” of Christ Jesus. This is why we celebrate Advent, to remind us of what we are waiting for, who we are placing our hopes in, and in whom we trust: Jesus Christ.

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.

¹ 1 Timothy 4:7b–8 (ESV) ...Rather **train** yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, **godliness is of value in every way**, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

² 1 John 3:1–3 (ESV) See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that **when he appears we shall be like him**, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus **hopes** in him **purifies himself** as he is pure.

³ 1 John 2:8b (ESV) ...because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.

⁴ John 12:35-36 (ESV) So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. **While you have the light**, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.” When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them.

⁵ Isaiah 5:20-21 (ESV) Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put **darkness for light and light for darkness**, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!

⁶ σοφός (sophos). adj. wise, skillful. Describes one who is experienced or practiced in a particular skill or possesses knowledge or education.

⁷ Hebrews 12:29 (ESV) for our God is a consuming fire.

⁸ 2 Corinthians 5:6–11a (ESV): 6 So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 9 So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. 10 For **we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ**, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether **good or evil**. 11 Therefore, knowing **the fear of the Lord**, we persuade others...