

Jeremiah 33:1-3, 14-16
Hope Is Not Passive
WRCoB 12.3.23

If I just hope for an A in science class
Will I have a better chance at getting one
Then if I didn't hope for it?

Yes!

Why? Because hoping for an A
Will motivate me to study a little harder.

Hope produces motivation.

For hope is a vision for the future
That works on changing the present.

It is a major main theme in the Bible.

Biblical hope does not sit idly by
With fingers-crossed
Wishfully thinking and passively waiting
For something good to happen.

Biblical hope is not passive
It is a change-maker!

Some definitions define hope as an emotion.

A "feeling" of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen. It denotes a passive approach to a desired outcome.

This way hope is synonymous with the word wish.

Wishing is passive.

As I've heard ever since I was a child

If wishes were horses, beggars would ride.

However, Biblical hope is not wishful thinking

It is active

It is confident

It is powerful!

Biblical hope motivates change.

Like the missionary William Carey once preached

- *Biblical hope expects great things from God*
- *And attempts great things for God*

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As in all the major prophets' preachings

As they witnessed the self-destructive behavior

In their beloved society

Their response was the same.

They called people to repent.

2 Chronicles 7:14 NIV if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

Jeremiah did his own share of preaching

On how ugly, how wayward

How utterly ungodlike Judah had become

But smack dab in the middle of all the gloom and doom
Jeremiah gives a message of hope.

He writes in chapters 29-33

What commentators call the Book of Consolation
Or simply the Book of Hope.

It includes Shontell's beloved passage

That she ends every radio broadcast she does.

Jeremiah 29:11 NIV

**“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord,
“plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give
you hope and a future.**

Indeed, the prophet Jeremiah had a ministry of hope.

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From the very beginning, God called Jeremiah to ministry.

Jeremiah 1:5 NIV

**“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before
you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a
prophet to the nations.”**

Now forty-some years later, Jeremiah is under arrest

King Zedekiah incarcerated him for being unpatriotic
For speaking out against the authorities.

The king would rather listen to the false prophets
Who swept the problems of Judah under the rug.

They preached optimism.

Things would only get better, just you wait and see.

But things didn't get better, but got a whole lot worse.

In the year 587 BC

The Babylonian army surrounded Jerusalem

They set up a siege on the city

So that nothing or no one could get in

And nothing or no one could get out.

Not unlike what is currently happening in Gaza.

Water and food became so scarce

People succumbed to cannibalism.

Terrible, terrible times!

It is right in the midst of all this

Jeremiah shares a message of hope

When things seem at their worst

Hope envisions a better future

And the motivation to change the present.

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In today's beginning verses, God approaches Jeremiah.

This One who made the heavens and the earth

This Creator who established the great cosmos

This LORD they call YHWH speaks

"Call to me, and I will answer!"

And I will tell you great and hidden things

That you have not known!"

Biblical hope begins from a season of prayer.

For how do we know the plans God has for us
If we aren't in communion with God?

God assures Jeremiah that God has not forgotten them.

God tells Jeremiah to call on him.

Because when we call on the Lord, we acknowledge
We can't do it without help from the Lord.

Biblical hope expects great things from God.

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No, God is not done with Jeremiah
Nor is God not done with Jerusalem

God will fulfill his promises to Judah and Israel.

God's seed of hope germinates
Even within the midst of this great tragedy.

Look at it this way
If hope is a vision of good things to come
And everyone is fat and sassy

Hope won't have much of a chance to grow
Nor willing to change the status quo.

But when things are at its worst
When the darkness is at its darkest
When things couldn't get worse
But they do anyway

God's plants a seed of hope.

God says to Jeremiah.

“The days are surely coming.”

“When I will fulfill the promise
I made to the houses of Israel and Judah.”

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Biblical hope is about a promise.

It is about a promise made to Abraham and Sarah

A promise that God would use them
To be a blessing to all nations

Biblical hope is about a promise made to all people
Whether they know it or not

That God will never leave nor forsake them
To the ends of the earth.

It's about a promise
That an heir to King David
A branch sprung from the root of Jesse

Will come to execute justice and righteousness

A promise that since God so loved the world
God will send his only Son as a savior.

Biblical hope's promise is that God can do in our lives
That God can do in our world
That God can do for eternity

Great and hidden things that we have not known.

Biblical hope relies on these assurances.

Biblical hope is also about a person.

This descendant of David, this righteous branch
This LORD of righteousness
Comes in the form of a person

Jesus, the one the prophets of old spoke of.

The promises of God is fulfilled in the person of Jesus

Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One
Immanuel, God with us
Who comes to us as a babe born in a manger.

Our hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

Biblical hope is about a promise fulfilled in a person

His name is Jesus!

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Hope, then, becomes the motivator for change
Within ourselves
And within the society around us.

Hope is the fuel and faith the fire
That changes us from what we are to what we can be.

Hope is the vision for the future
That works on changing the present
Not only personally but in the world around us.

Jesus call us to be the light in the darkness
To be yeast
To be salt

To be an influence in our surroundings.

Because we all are people of God
 Make in God's image
 Unbelievably loved and valued by God

Change begins within each of us
 But it doesn't stop there
 But moves out to the neighborhood.

Because every city is Jerusalem
 And every nation is Judah
 And every person is a person loved by God.

Hope is not waiting around
 Wishfully thinking God is going to take care of things.

Hope expects great things from God
 But also attempts great things for God.

Richmond is our Jerusalem
 And our hope in its future
 Relies on our full participation as her citizens.

Jeremiah 29:7 NIV “. . . seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.”

Biblical hope envisions transformed hearts and minds
 And a just and equitable society for all inhabitants.

Hope is the hands and feet that seeks a better world.

Ephesians 2:10 CEV God planned for us to do good things and to live as he has always wanted us to live. This is why he sent Christ to make us what we are.

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They say Advent is the season of waiting.

But I want to challenge us to consider the word waiting

As with the word hope, waiting is not just a passive word.

It can be viewed as active.

Like the way we use it

When we say “waiting on tables.”

To wait on someone, means to serve them.

Since we believe that Jesus came to initiate

A new covenant based on love and grace

Then why do we wait for a king who already reigns?

Or for a kingdom that’s already been inaugurated?

Why wait to become what we already are?

For an age we’re already in?

For a victory already won?

Why wait to do what we should be doing all along?

Biblical hope does not sit idly by

With fingers-crossed

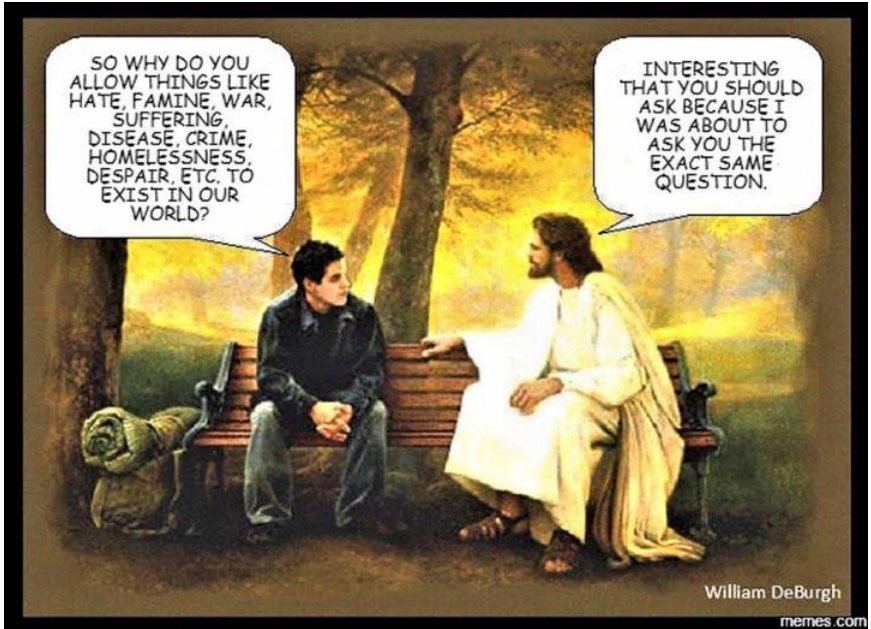
Wishfully thinking and passively waiting

For something good to happen.

Biblical hope is not passive.

Hope has hands and feet.

And so, this Advent Season
Expect great things from God
But attempt great things for God.



And so, this Advent Season

Let us have the hope that continues the work of Jesus
Peacefully, simply and together.