

Walking in Hope

Romans 13:11-14

Introduction

“Advent” means “coming.” The color is **blue**, which stands for **royalty** and **sky**. During Advent, we’re looking up, expecting the coming of Christ, the King. It’s a season of **preparation**. As we expect His coming, we’re **preparing** ourselves for it, just as an expectant couple prepares themselves for the coming of their baby. Expecting and preparing for Christ comes in three forms: 1) for His coming **as a Babe in Bethlehem**. 2) for His coming **afresh and anew into our hearts**. 3) for His coming **at the end of time**. Each week we’ll look at these comings through a different lens, so to speak: **Hope, Peace, Joy** and **Love**. Looking through the lens of **Hope**, we focus on His second coming.

The Second Coming Can be Scary

Sometimes we get uncomfortable thinking about the second coming of Jesus. Yes, it’ll be a great and glorious day, but there are uncertainties. Sometimes we think about those who won’t make it, because they don’t have faith in Jesus, and some of those are friends and family members. This **is** sad, and the only thing we can do about that is be the **witness** of the Gospel to them and **pray** the Holy Spirit gives them the faith to believe. However, we may have other questions, because the future is so **uncertain**. I’ve had people tell me that they were afraid, because they didn’t know if they were good enough to get to heaven. My response is, “Don’t worry, you’re not.” **No one is**. That’s why Jesus died on the cross. We don’t get to heaven on **our** righteousness—it’s like filthy rags. We are saved because of the **righteousness of Jesus**. His sacrifice paid for **all** our sins.

Hope Is the Remedy

That’s where **Hope** comes in. Biblical **Hope** isn’t wishful thinking, like *I hope I get an A on the test*. (Read **Romans 8:22-25**; **Romans 5:1-5**). Paul says that this **Hope** is a **certainty of the future**. It will not put us to shame, because God works it in our lives. Hope is faith in the future, that **God will do what He says He will do**.

Walking in the Light

Jesus says that we must be ready for His second coming. If we want to be ready, what must we do? Isaiah says we are to **walk in the light**. Paul explains what walking in the light looks like.

Day and Night

The first thing to do is **wake up**. Night is gone and the day has come. The **night** is the time **before Christ**, the time of the **Old Testament**, the time of the **Law**. The **day** is the time **of Christ**, the time of the **New Testament**, the time of the **Gospel**. In the nighttime, we were ignorant. Now that the day has come, we have the knowledge of Christ. So, wake up and live in the Gospel. Martin Luther was so tortured as a monk, because he was trying to live by the Law. He woke up in his tower experience when he discovered that the *righteous shall live by faith* alone.

Armor of Light

The second step is to **put on the armor of light**. Very simply put, this is putting off the old man or sin nature and putting on the new man or new nature. This is done at the regeneration of Baptism. However, *Baptism indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever (Small Catechism, p. 25)*. Putting on the Armor of Light is a daily task.

Proper Conduct

We are to **walk as in the daylight**, because nighttime is when things like drunkenness and orgies take place. As Jesus said in **John 3:19**, *“And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.”* Or, as made popular by the show **How I Met Your Mother**: *Nothing good happens after 2 AM*. Walking as in the daylight means to **live properly and soberly**.

Conformed to Christ

Putting on Christ means to **conform to Christ**. (Read **1 John 5:1-7**). Walking in the light is having full knowledge of our sinfulness and relying on Christ’s righteousness to get us through, trusting Him to forgive us as He says He will. This leads to becoming more like Christ or conforming to Him.

Means of Grace

But, how can we, poor miserable sinners do this? It’s all an act of **grace** and God has given us the means of grace to be able to **wake up**, put on the **armor of light**, **live properly** and be **conformed to Christ**. This is what it means to expectantly await His second coming in **Hope**, or more simply, to **Walk in Hope**.

*May the peace of God,
Which passes all understanding,
Keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus*
