

Hope in the Son of Man

Matthew 24:36-44

Introduction

When the pandemic hit in the spring of 2020, we were told that the lockdowns and restrictions imposed upon us by the government would only last a short time, maybe just weeks. When these lockdowns and restrictions had done their job and taken care of the virus (as we were led to believe they would), things would open up and we could get back to normal. Instead, they had a far greater negative impact on our physical, psychological, and emotional health, and the economy of our country and the world, and little effect on the virus. Now, we find ourselves living in a “new normal.” We have a new thing to fear, and in some cases, build our lives around it. What we need is hope.

Hope Defined

Hope is the favorable and confident expectation of the unseen future. To hope is to look to the future positively, to expect it to be good or better than the present. It is a certainty, not to be confused with wishful thinking. The difference between hope and wishful thinking is that hope has a basis, it is grounded in something or someone that is reliable and trustworthy. Wishful thinking has no basis or is based on false premises. Our hope during the lockdowns was really wishful thinking, as it was based on what our government said, which proved to be unreliable.

A “New” Hope

Hope can never be separated from its basis. *Star Wars IV* is called **A New Hope**. The hope for the Rebel Alliance is the young Luke Skywalker, as he begins his hero’s journey. He is their hope and the basis for their hope. Our Hope for this life is Jesus Christ. Jesus often refers to Himself as the Son of Man, especially when talking about His second coming. “Son of Man” had become a title referring to the Messiah, the conquering Son of David. He was to be the military leader who would *rule with a rod of iron (Psalm 2:9)*. The church saw how this applied to Jesus (Read **Revelation 19:15**). Our hope is in the Son of Man and the victory He will bring when He comes, the victory of good over evil.

A Decisive Hope

He is coming with judgment. He will judge between the righteous and the unrighteous. **Verses 40 and 41** say, *“Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left.”* This shows the decisiveness of the judgment. When He comes there will not be any chance to repent or change. The ones who are ready will be taken; the rest will be left to face the destruction that is to come.

The Righteous Defined

But who are the righteous? St. Paul says in **Romans 3** that *no one is righteous (Romans 3:10)*. In ourselves, there is no righteousness. But on the cross, Jesus exchanged His righteousness for our sinfulness. The righteous are those who are clothed in Christ’s righteousness. These are not “good people”, but those who have *washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7:14)*, receiving salvation through faith.

An Unexpected Hope

It's an unexpected hope. *"As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man"* (**v. 37-39**). Life will be going on as usual. People will be oblivious to His coming. And He will come as a thief in the night. This is a call for us to be ready. We are saved by faith, but it is possible to lose our faith. If we deprive ourselves of things like Word and Sacrament, prayer, and fellowship with other believers, we starve our faith. Those who are ready will be those who endure in faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of Man.

A Certain Hope

We don't know *when* the Son of Man will return, but we do know He *will* return. Our hope is certain because it is grounded in the One who is *Faithful and True* (**Revelation 3:14**). Grounded in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we look to the future with the sure and certain hope that He will return and remake this world. He will judge all people and establish His kingdom in power and glory forever. We access this hope in Word and Sacrament. As we receive His body and blood in Holy Communion, we have a foretaste of the marriage supper of the Lamb that is to come. As we partake of this meal, we *proclaim the Lord's death until He comes* (**1 Corinthians 11:26**). This is what gets us through this life – our *Hope in the Son of Man*.

*And the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
