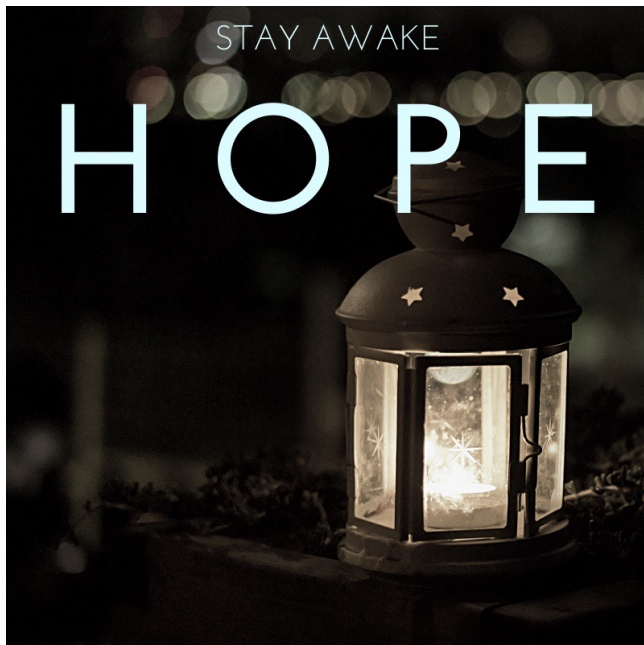




Welcome to 'Hope Sunday' - the First Sunday in Advent!

This week's Revd. Morris' message: **How do we see the future opening before us? With Hope, Fear ...or something else?**



In today's Gospel, we find Jesus in the Temple just before Passover, His death and passion. In answering the Disciples question concerning Jesus' prophecy of the destruction of the Temple, Jesus appears to conflate the Temple's destruction in 70 AD with the end of the age and his Second coming. [You will recall we touched on these important matters on Sunday 17th November when we considered the 'Olivet Discourse' of Mark 13: 1-11.]

The end of the world as we know it? That doesn't sound like a suitable reading for 'Hope Sunday'! Or, does it?

Jesus, in Luke's Gospel version of His discourse, appears to address a key question of those to whom the Gospel was addressed ... the 'Gentile Church' based throughout the Roman Empire. This Gospel was written long after Mark's account and probably also after the fall of Jerusalem. So Luke is here addressing the question of ... **How do we live faithful lives now that the Temple has fallen?** The earth shattering disastrous events foretold have happened - the Temple has fallen, the nation has been smashed by the might of Rome and scattered .. *and Jesus' second coming has not arrived!?* Luke has Jesus explaining that *'the time of the Gentiles must first be fulfilled'* [v. 24] So, don't let yourselves be deceived by those who say *'The time has drawn near'* [v. 8]

Jesus counsels the Disciples [and the early church] to ... **Watch, Pray and to keep diligently following God's will so as to be ready and fruitful when Jesus does come again.**[v34].

Well, what does this mean for us today?

The same question of the early church is as relevant for us now in our time as it was for them in theirs. Jesus still calls his church today **to be found faithful, fruitful and ready for His return.**

But what has this all got to do with Hope? Hope as a Christian Virtue is to possess a 'confident expectation that God will keep His promises'. [Hebrews 6:8] It's not just a wish that all will be OK - it's a **firm assurance that God will do what He says He will do** in Scripture and in His promises to us. Without that hope or assurance, we perceive our lives, and ourselves, to potentially be the subject of random acts of chance and our own

or others will[s] - indeed, in fact, we would become **hopeless**.

Our gospel reading today outlines what will happen when Jesus returns again and also to reassure His faithful ones that no matter how it may look at times : **He is in control of it all, it is all unfolding as it should and, notwithstanding the suffering and tragedies we see or endure, our souls remain safely in His hands, all will be put to rights and in the end we will safely 'stand before Him' ... joyously revelling in His presence.**



So, this Christian Hope drives away our fears for the future ... since, what could be more secure than to be in His hands? [Romans 8:31-39]
As the Bishop intones at the end of each daily Pilgrim Mass at the conclusion of the Camino Pilgrimage in Santiago De Compostela : 'Keep the Pilgrim Spirit always. Now, go and live your lives without fear'.

I wonder what we all would do with our lives if we didn't have a fear of the future?

Gospel reading: Luke 21:25-38 Some resources to dig deeper: <https://www.gotquestions.org/hope-Bible.html> ; <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revise-common-lectionary/first-sunday-of-advent-3/commentary-on-luke-2125-36-2>

Upcoming Parish Activities: Midweek service : Wednesday 10:30 a.m; **Regis Service** 11:15 am ; **Meditation** 6:30 pm; **Mens Breakfast** Thursday 5th @ 7am @ Lady Marmalade **Every Sunday Guitars and Ukulele lessons** at 3 p.m; **Bible Study** Wednesday at 7 pm and Friday at 10:30 am; **NB AGM Part 1 will be held after today's service.**

Readings for Next Sunday: Malachi 3:1-14; For the Psalm: The Song of Zechariah [The Benedictus - Luke 1:68-79] ; Philipians 1:1-11; Luke 3:1-6.

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Tipper's Treasure's Facebook site: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61559040358754>

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY:

We acknowledge and pay respect to the Turrbal and Jagera Peoples, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather today. We acknowledge their continued spiritual connection to country and surrounding land, sky and water. We pay our respect to their Elders, past present and emerging and pray that we may continue to learn from and nurture one another in the spirit of Reconciliation.