

THEME: *“Attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ”*
DATE/TIME: December 5, 2007 – 9:30 -10:15 a.m. and 7:40-8:10 PM
SPEAKER: Dr. Alan Lyke – Stowe Professor of Pastoral Care and Chaplain
TITLE /TEXT: “When Is a Root a Reason to Hope?” – Isaiah 11:1-10

Prelude - CD

Welcome: **Second Advent Service - “Hope in the Lord”**

Candle Ceremony: Advent is a time of contemplation and anticipation. We remember the first coming of Jesus Christ, and we look forward to His coming again. And while we use candles and carols to celebrate the season, the definitive celebration of Jesus’ coming is how we live our lives. So, we lit the first candle to remind us to “**Live for the Lord,**” and we’ll light this second candle to remind us to “**Hope in the Lord**” because He came to our world and He’s coming again.

O Come, O Come Emmanuel – sheet music – (Dm) - 2 stanzas with refrain

Gospel Scripture Reading: Matthew 3:1-12
AM Reader: Marlene Jones
PM Reader: Jeff Duddek

Reflection on the text – Dr. Alan Lyke

O Come, O Come Emmanuel – sheet music – (Dm) - 2 stanzas with refrain

NT Scripture Reading: Romans 15:4-13
AM Reader: Bart Renfro
PM Reader: Zoe Mills

Reflection on the text – Dr. Alan Lyke

O Come, O Come Emmanuel – sheet music – (Em) - 2 stanzas with refrain

OT Scripture Reading: Isaiah 11:1-10
AM Reader: Shelly Grimes
PM Reader: Ray Long

Reflection on the text – Dr. Alan Lyke

O Come, O Come Emmanuel – sheet music – (Em) - 2 stanzas with refrain; end with major chord

Psalms Scripture Reading: Psalm 72:1-7; 18-19
Unison Reading

Reflection on the text – Dr. Alan Lyke

“Welcome to Our World” – solo (with accompaniment CD track) – Jack Garcia

Benediction – Dr. Alan Lyke

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice!

*Emmanuel shall come to thee,
O Israel.*

O come, thou Wisdom from on high,
who orders all things
far and wide;
to us the path of knowledge show,
and teach us in her ways to go. *Rejoice! Rejoice!*
*Emmanuel shall come to thee,
O Israel.*

Gospel Lesson

Matthew 3:1-12

“When Is a Root a Reason to Hope?”

Matthew 3:1-12

Well, tidings of comfort and joy! The images in this passage are not quite Christmas trees and candlelight, are they?

- Christmas cards with an ax on the front?
- Inflatable lawn decorations that look like John the Baptist?
- Gifts of locust and wild honey for those on our Christmas lists?

But this is the Gospel Lesson for the Second Advent Service. The theme of our service is, “Hope In the Lord.” If we listen a little more closely to the text, we can hear the hearts of people looking for a reason to hope.

Their situation is bleak.

- They’re living under the iron rule of the Roman Empire.
- Their religious leaders are vipers.
- Their spiritual advisors are known for their bad fruit.
- Their society and culture are so clogged with refuse that they need a good cleaning.

The people and the place are a mess. They have to be wondering, “Will our situation ever change? What kind of hope can we have? Who will get us out of this mess?”

John the Baptist’s preaching answers those questions loud and clear:

“Get ready. You haven’t been forgotten. Someone is on the way.

- He will rearrange your hearts.
- He will rearrange your lives.
- He will rearrange your world.

Because when He arrives, He's going to clean house!"

Well, who is He? John the Baptist doesn't give us his name here, but the coming one is known as the Root in other places.

So, when is a root a reason for hope? When the root is sent by God to clean house.

O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free
thine own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell thy people save,
and give them victory o'er the grave.

Rejoice! Rejoice!

*Emmanuel shall come to thee,
O Israel.*

O come, thou Dayspring,
come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows
put to flight.

Rejoice! Rejoice!

*Emmanuel shall come to thee,
O Israel.*

New Testament Lesson

Romans 15:4-13

Romans 15:4-13

Some 25-30 years later, the people of God are in need of some hope again. Listen again to how Paul prays for the Christians in Rome. He prays for: endurance, encouragement, and unity. And then he admonishes them to accept one another.

Hmmm . . . not very Christmas-y, is it? Probably not the kinds of sentiment you'd find in a Hallmark card:

To the Church at Rome:
At this time of year
It's good to remember
Hang in there, have courage,
Be nice to each member.

But consider their situation. The believers living in 1st century Rome are living in hostile territory. They are small minority of the population, a small clique of misunderstood folks who are misunderstood and not trusted. They are suspected of being guilty of any number of crimes - from cannibalism to sedition to treason. And their community is diverse - Jews and Gentiles of a variety of stripes - trying together to pursue their faith, but being stymied by their preferences and differences.

So, Paul writes the Roman Christians, reminding them that:

- The way things are are not the way they will always be.
- The promises of the Scriptures of the past apply to their present and future

- The God of the Jews is on the side of the Gentiles, too.

So much so, that He raised up a Root to reign over the nations.

Then Paul prays that the Christians in Rome be filled with joy and peace so that they will overflow with hope.

So, when is a Root a reason for hope? When He's raised up by the God of hope to rule the world.

O come, thou Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way
that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee,
O Israel.

O come, O come,
great Lord of might,
who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times once gave the law
in cloud and majesty and awe. *Rejoice! Rejoice!*
Emmanuel shall come to thee,
O Israel.

Old Testament Lesson

Isaiah 11:1-10

Isaiah 11:1-10

I was on my way out to my car Monday night when I saw a shooting star. I watched shoot toward the horizon of the eastern sky and disappear. Then I found myself thinking the following:

- I wonder what folks long ago thought when they saw a shooting star?
- Well, it's just a meteorite, or a piece of space junk re-entering the atmosphere. No big deal.
- It's unusual, explainable, but still wonderful.

And then I looked for a moment longer to see if I could see any more.

It's possible to treat a passage like this one the way I responded to the shooting star:

- I wonder what folks long ago thought when they first heard these words?
- Well, it's just a prophecy, and we know it came true. No big deal.
- It's unusual, explainable, but still wonderful.

Again, we have to listen closely to the text to hear the hearts of the people living some 500 years before Christ, people living under the imminent threat of Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, people living in a nation that has strayed for the ideals envisioned when they first reached the Promised Land.

In his prophecy, Isaiah promises them

The Spirit of wisdom and understanding.

So they're probably experiencing . . .

The Spirit of counsel and power.

So they're probably experiencing . . .

The Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord

So they're probably experiencing . . .

Isaiah promises Someone who will not judge with his eyes or decide with his ears, so they're probably experiencing . . .

Isaiah promises Someone who judges the needy and the poor with righteousness and justice, so they're probably experiencing . . .

Isaiah promises that natural enemies will be at peace with each other, so they're probably experiencing . . .

And the one person who will it all possible is the Root, the Root of Jesse.

And who is the root of Jesse?

⁶and Jesse the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife,

⁷Solomon the father of Rehoboam,

Rehoboam the father of Abijah,

Abijah the father of Asa,

⁸Asa the father of Jehoshaphat,

Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram,

Jehoram the father of Uzziah,

⁹Uzziah the father of Jotham,

Jotham the father of Ahaz,

Ahaz the father of Hezekiah,

¹⁰Hezekiah the father of Manasseh,

Manasseh the father of Amon,

Amon the father of Josiah,

¹¹and Josiah the father of Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.

¹²After the exile to Babylon:

Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel,

Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,

¹³Zerubbabel the father of Abiud,

Abiud the father of Eliakim,
Eliakim the father of Azor,
¹⁴Azor the father of Zadok,
Zadok the father of Akim,
Akim the father of Eliud,
¹⁵Eliud the father of Eleazar,
Eleazar the father of Matthan,
Matthan the father of Jacob,
¹⁶and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus,
who is called Christ. (Matthew 1:6-16)

When is a Root a reason to hope? When He's the Root of Jesse.

When He's Jesus the Christ. When He's the Root who came and
comes to set us free.

O come, thou Root of Jesse's tree,
an ensign of thy people be;
before thee rulers silent fall;
all peoples on thy mercy call.

Rejoice! Rejoice!

*Emmanuel shall come to thee,
O Israel.*

O come, Desire of nations, bind
in one the hearts of all mankind;
bid thou our sad divisions cease,
and be thyself our King of Peace. *Rejoice! Rejoice!*

*Emmanuel shall come to thee,
O Israel.*

Psalm Lesson

Psalm 72:1-7; 18-19

Psalm 72:1-7; 18-19

The final passage for this Second Advent can be understood as a prayer, a prophecy, and a promise.

- It's a prayer for the king (probably Solomon) who was ruling at the time.
- It's prophecy concerning the Messiah and the results of his coming.
- It's a promise concerning the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and the change He'll make when He returns.

So, one last time, when is a Root a reason to hope? When the Root who came to earth once is coming again.

Welcome To Our World

Tears are falling
Hearts are breaking
How we need to hear from God
You've been promised
We've been waiting
Welcome holy Child
Welcome holy Child

Hope that You don't mind our manger
How I wish we would have known
But long-awaited holy Stranger
Make Yourself at home
Please make Yourself at home

Bring Your peace
Into our violence
Bid our hungry souls be filled
Word now breaking heaven's silence
Welcome to our world
Welcome to our world

Fragile finger sent to heal us
Tender brow prepared for thorn
Tiny heart whose blood will save us
Unto us is born
Unto us is born

So wrap our injured flesh around You
Breathe our air and walk our sod
Rob our sin and make us holy
Perfect Son of God
Perfect Son of God
Welcome to our world