

✠ On earth as it is in heaven

- *There's a famous passage in Matthew chapter six- in some Christian traditions it is recited every week. It's what we call the Lord's Prayer, when Jesus taught his disciples to pray. This is often taken out of it's context in the Gospels, and can cause some confusion, but right now just want to focus now on the first thing Jesus prays... You know it...*

Matthew 6:9-10 *"This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."*

- *Think about that... Jesus prays, Father... may your KINGDOM COME, and your WILL BE DONE, on earth, as it is in heaven.*
- *There is some debate over exactly what Jesus means here, but humbly, this seems clear.*
- *God's kingdom and will... what is that?*
 - *God's authority. The way things will be when God is being fully obeyed... God's desire, his best, his plan for humanity, for his people.*
 - *In heaven, this is the way things are. 100%. And so, Jesus teaches us ... the way things are in heaven, pray that this would be the way things are here on earth as well.*
- *Now, that's not the case. It won't fully be the case until Christ returns. BUT, Jesus teaches us to pray that it WILL BE THE CASE... WHICH MEANS, with one small step of interpretation... THAT GOD IS WORKING TO BRING ABOUT HIS KINGDOM, HIS WILL- not just in heaven when we die, but RIGHT NOW, right here on earth.*
- *We are taught to pray that one step of faith at a time, one relationship at a time, people would come to know and experience the goodness, presence, and Lordship of God, NOW.*
- *That night when the angels appeared to the shepherds to announce the birth of Christ, they said this: (from Luke 2)*

"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people."

- *At the risk of doing a little interpretation, in light of the message of the New Testament, the angels message was "DON'T BE AFRAID! I bring you good news that will cause Great Joy for all people- as they live their lives now. This GOOD NEWS will bring GREAT JOY because people are going to be invited to know and experience the righteousness, the goodness of God, NOW, IN THIS EARTH, just as it is in heaven.*
- *This advent season- next four Sundays- we are going to explore this miracle through the lens of the four traditional themes of the advent season. HOPE, PEACE, JOY, and LOVE.*
- *This is the miracle that IN CHRIST, God is working- by His Holy Spirit- for us to know and experience these great gifts of God today, in the midst of life as it really is. We are going to start with the gift of HOPE.*
- *Start with an illustration....*

✠ Wisdom from a pot of coffee

- *Like all metaphors, this one is limited (smile), so track with me here.*
- *Let's say I have a coffee pot. In this case, it's my French press. Elegant device that turns water and coffee beans into a hot cup of simple joy.*
- *NOW, I can own this FP. I can have knowledge about it, understand how it works... I might legitimately derive some joy just from looking at it, having it there.*

- **BUT, if that's as far as I go, I'm missing the point. To really experience my FP, I need to put it to use. Actually make coffee. THIS IS GOOD. I'm thankful.**
- **But there's one more thing that can make my experience of my FP even better. That's when I get to share it with another person. I LOVE MAKING COFFEE... but just as much, I love helping someone else experience the Joy of a great cup of coffee**
- **CHURCH- Far more than the gift of coffee... In Christ, we have received God's gifts for Life. By that I mean things like forgiveness, identity, courage, fruit of the spirit, and of course, H,P,J,L.**
- **My assertion this advent season is this:**
- **WE COME TO KNOW and EXPERIENCE God's gifts for life as we extend those gifts to OTHERS.**
 - o **As we receive these gifts by FAITH.**
 - **Know what is true. Believe. Live in the good of what is true. (I am FORGIVEN)**
 - o **Respond with GRATITUDE to God**
 - o **KEY!! SHARE these gifts with others.**
 - **This becomes powerful, I appreciate it more, thankful more, as I extend sincere forgiveness.**
- **You see, when it comes to virtually every command of scripture we can find, every matter of obedience, and every gift of goodness God provides... these take on meaning and significance in the context of our relationships. It's difficult to find an example of obedience to God that doesn't involve how we relate to other people. Greatest example... LOVE GOD... how do we do that? BY LOVING PEOPLE. (Matt 22)**
- **SO- HOPE! By faith, we choose to receive, the HOPE God provides to all believers. Hear. Understand. Believe it! We'll get to that.**
- **As I come to grasp this hope, what it means, I respond to God with Gratitude.**
- **I COME TO PROFOUNDLY EXPERIENCE God's hope as He uses me to extend that hope into the lives of other people.**

✠ **The gift of hope**

- **We use this word all the time, but what do we mean? Few levels of hope...**

SIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A desire for something to happen. - I hope it snows.
PERCEIVED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An optimistic state of mind based on an expectation of a positive outcome. - This early snow gives me hope we'll have a good winter.

- **What is the basis of this concept of hope? (blanks)**
- **Hope based on my perception- not good- and external circumstances, which I can't control. NOT MUCH HOPE!**

- **In contrast, we have the concept of HOPE from scripture**

FAITH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mindset of peace, security, and grounded optimism resulting from a positive certainty about both the future and the present.
REVEALED	

- **THIS is a hope that is by FAITH. This hope isn't based on what we can see/perceive, it is a hope based on the TRUTH that God has REVEALED.**
- **SO, by faith, what is source of hope we know, for CERTAIN, about both our future and our present?**
 - **Future: We are forgiven, accepted, whole, free from brokenness of this world, live in present reality of eternity with God.**
- **As we saw last week in Rev 21:....**

"Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."
- **But our certainty of hope isn't just about our eternal future, it is what we know to be true in our PRESENT.**
 - **Present: We are forgiven, accepted, right with God, new creations, being made whole, present reality of union with Christ, full assurance of eternity with God.**
- **Our hope in Christ is our absolute certainty of what WILL BE FULLY TRUE.. AND, until that future Hope is fulfilled, we live in the certain hope of WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST, our identity and security that cannot be changed. WE ARE NO LONGER WRETCHES... we are precious, the workmanship of God, created for purpose and meaning, holy and dearly loved.**
- **AND BECAUSE THIS IS TRUE... we may live in HOPE that is REAL.**

† **Real hope!**

- **The concept of hope is a huge area of study in psychology. I want to give framework I've adapted from some of this study... Four frames of hope.**

Wishful	Grounded
False Hope <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hopeful outlook - Distorted reality 	Real Hope <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hopeful outlook - Accurate Reality
No Hope <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hopeless outlook - Distorted reality 	Lost Hope <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hopeless outlook - Accurate reality

- **Regardless of the changing nature of this life, our reality is rooted – by FAITH- in our certainty of what is true about both our future and our present.**
- **And so hope we have- hopeful outlook - is NOT contingent on the uncertainty of this life and things that are beyond our control. RATHER, our HOPE is something we bring INTO our circumstances, not something we try to derive FROM our circumstances.**
- **THIS IS POWERFUL!**

Hebrews 6:17-19 **Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. ¹⁸ God did this so that, by two unchangeable things (his purpose and promise) in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. ¹⁹ We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.**

- **In Christ, there is the hope of what will be fully true in eternity... and there is the hope of what is fully true right now. We have this hope as an anchor for our soul, firm and secure.**

† **BECAUSE of the** **The hope we have...** **few thoughts**

- **We don't have to pretend when life is hard. We don't have to root our hope in wishful thinking. We can have the courage to engage the reality of life because we possess the ULTIMATE HOPE that this life is not all there is, and the PRESENT HOPE of whose we are, and the HOPE of God's presence- we are not alone.**
- **Because we don't have to pretend, HOPE gives us the resource to be an OBJECTIVE OPTIMIST. We look for the best, but are able to respond to reality with wisdom, and trust God with the outcome.**
- **Hope brings forth gratitude... thus it is a powerful antidote to navel gazing. HOPE leads us to look around rather than just looking down. Hope leads us to look for the good, rather than expecting the bad.**
- **Could go on. CONSIDER.. how, by faith, you recognize and are blessed, strengthened, encouraged, comforted... by the HOPE that is yours In Christ.**
- **NOW, going back to where we started... CHURCH, If we truly desire to grow in our EXPERIENCE of the HOPE that we have, let us have open eyes and open hearts to the HOPE God will lead us to GIVE.**

† **The hope we give...**

- **HOW will God use you to be a giver of hope?**
- **By being a friend. By being an authentic positive presence to a person who needs to be encouraged.**
- **By meeting a need. Look for opportunities to show someone that the world is not only full of selfish people.**
- **Hope gives the courage to walk alongside another person in their pain.**
- **There are times when life hits a person so hard they just can't see hope. In such times, God may lead you to carry their hope for them. Check in. Listen. Be a voice of objectivity. Be a practical servant. Pray with someone. Be wise and sensitive to the Spirits leadership about what a person needs, but don't be afraid to join them in their pain. They may need your hope.**
- **Finally, we give hope, we carry hope, when we are comforters. A presence that is calm and kind. That listens without the need to correct. Perhaps a presence to cry with, to laugh with... or just to be present.**

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 **Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.**

- **Expect God to provide an opportunity to give the reason for the hope that you have**

1 Peter 3:15 **But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.**