

Reflection for Tuesday 22 December 2020

### Hope for Life

The Advent challenge this week is sharing the gift of hope and today's reading comes from Isaiah 51:1-8. As I reflect on the concept of hope I am struck by the complexity of the word "hope" and how we use it today. On one hand, we talk about hope as hoping for good weather or hoping that your birthday is wonderful. Both perfectly fine uses of the concept of hope, yet more superficial. Sure, we want good weather but if the weather does not cooperate it certainly is not a devastating issue. We work around it as best we can and move forward with our lives.

The hope that Isaiah talks about is a hope that really is life or death. A hope that matters for us today and tomorrow and all the days that follow. This is the hope that we receive in the gift of a tiny baby born over two thousand years ago. On this hope we build our lives. On this hope rests everything. We who seek the Lord know the story, the humble birth, the ministry that turns the values of the world upside down, the complete humiliation of the crucifixion, and then the miracle of Resurrection.

As we move through these final days of Advent, we look for hope in our Savior who is born to us. A baby born to save us, to redeem us, to love us. The hope we share in Jesus is life or death. It is the most significant hope of all lives.

The difficulty for me is to keep this hope when I see so much pain around me. There is more pain that we can articulate related to the pandemic. Each of us has pain that we share, or we keep hidden. There is no shortage of pain in our world.

And yet we of faith, put our hope in the Christmas Story, we put our hope in knowing the whole story, and knowing that God became human for us. That is hope that we can hang onto with all our might because that is true and everlasting hope. In the words of Isaiah God will deliver us, will comfort us, will enable us to be a light for the nations, mercy and justice are coming, and this salvation lasts forever.

And so, once again, we are called to look intentionally at the world around us for if we do, we see that hope abounds. A member of our community of faith who is a front-line health care worker was vaccinated for Covid-19 today. More vaccine is being produced daily. That is a sign of hope amid the pandemic.

I saw the joy in the faces of young and old as we gathered to sing Christmas Carols on the lawn of Light of Christ. The joy in the faces of the children and youth playing in the snow and singing. The joy in the faces of older members and friends who drove by to hear the familiar songs of Christmas.

Yes, hope is very much alive and available to us. My prayer for this week is that we would be opened to seeing the signs of hope that are around us. And in seeing hope we would be comforted and assured that God indeed is with us every moment of every day, forever.

In Peace,

Pastor Suzanne