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| Isaiah 64:1-9  Mark 13:24-37 | Advent 1 – Motivation - Hope | Pinelands – 9am – 01/12/2024  Thornton – 10:30am – 01/12/2024 |

**Despair** is a devastating thing…

**It Can…** Drive people into *Depression*

Cause people to *take their own lives*

Develop a very *Cynical outlook on life*

Too often today we hear words of Despair and Cynicism…

Our world in in a mess

What is the use of carrying on

It is never going to get better

There is… **NO HOPE**

That is why we need **ADVENT** and the message it Proclaims.

**ADVENT –** reminds us… GOD is COMING

RESTORATION is at hand

TODAY’S Message is all about **HOPE.** And what **Motivates us to HOPE**

**Sometimes Movies express things really well.**

You might remember a movie **“Shawshank Redemption”**

*(one of my favourite and one of the few*

*I have watched a couple of times.)*

**Story Line:**

ANDY played by **Tim Robbins** and RED played by **Morgan Freeman.**

ANDY finds himself in prison for a crime he did not commit

He befriends RED and their relationship grows.

In the following video clip ANDY locks himself in the Warden’s Office

And starts to play a record of Mozart’s Music through the public address system…

The result is he ends up in **“the Hole”** Solitary Confinement.

**WATCH THE VIDEO CLIP –** *“Shawshank Redemption – Hope”(5min)*

The Music / HOPE gets ANDY through 2 weeks of “The HOLE”

**Where is the HOPE? In our *Hearts and our Heads.***

**Without denying** the brokenness and Evil in our World

Without pretending that there is not a lot of healing that needs to happen

**ADVENT reminds us** that despite…

All the Evil and Chaos of World,

All our Struggles and Despair,

All our Cynicism and Negativity

**THERE IS HOPE**

Both **Isaiah and Mark** remind us of this ***HOPE***

**ISAIAH…** pleads with God…

Saying… You have acted in the past…

***WHY not NOW?***

You have shown your presence in the past…

***WHY not NOW?***

**Then verse 4**… ***“No one has ever seen or heard of a God like you,***

***Who does such deeds for those who put their***

***HOPE in you.”***

**Isaiah** goes on to say… Despite our sinfulness…

**You are** Merciful

Despite our Wickedness…

**You are** Gracious

**THAT… is HOPE.**

**In Union with our Great GOD… We have HOPE**

**MARK …** speaks of a Vision of the Future… A Vision of **Hope.**

Despite the evil and trouble around…

***when the sun grows dark*** *(verse 24)*

Despite the state of the world…

***“The Son of Man will come on the clouds of Glory”***

A quote from the prophet Daniel *(Dan 7:13)*

The illustration of the Fig Tree…

When the leaves turn green… Summer is Coming

**Jesus is Coming… THAT is… HOPE**

The **Prophet Habakkuk…**

Deeply disturbed by the violence surrounding God’s people

Complains to God…

***“Why are you silent?”*** he asks

Then at the end of his book he writes…

**Habakkuk 3:17-19…**

*“Even though the fig trees have no fruit*

*and no grapes grow on the vines,*

*even though the olive crop fails*

*and the fields produce no corn,*

*even though the sheep all die*

*and the cattle stalls are empty,*

*I will still be joyful and glad,*

*because the Lord God is my Saviour.*

*The Sovereign Lord gives me strength.*

*He makes me sure footed as a deer,*

*and keeps me safe on the mountains.”*

**IN GOD…** We have… **HOPE**

The Season of ADVENT… Gives us **HOPE**

God Chooses to **COME…**

In the midst of the world’s CHAOS…

**Not with** Judgement and Destruction…

***BUT WITH…*** **GRACE and RESTORATION**

Even though we wrestle with the issues of our times…

The traumatic and depressing realities of our world

The Despair and Cynicism of life

We are called to **HOPE…** In God’s Coming

In God’s Grace and Restoration

In God’s WORK in our World.

Mark reminds us ***WHAT*** we need to do…

**STAY ALERT…** ***WATCH…***

**FOR…** The Activity of God

The Signs of God’s Grace and Restoration

**Tony Compolo writes…**

*“There are those who* ***will not*** *believe the incredibly Good News of Christ and hence become cynically laid back at this exciting juncture in the human adventure. They scoff at us and say, “Who are you kidding? The world will always be in a mess. You cannot change things. There is no hope for this world.” To those pseudo-sophisticated cynics I reply,*

***“I’ve been reading the bible.***

***I’ve peeked at the last chapter to see how it ends…***

***…and Jesus wins!”***

*(From book "It's Friday, but Sunday's comin'")*

**We** **HOLD HOPE** in our…

***HEARTS…*** and in our… ***HEADS***

**This ADVENT Season…**

***the challenge…*** as Christians

**BE BEARERS OF HOPE…**

to others, to the world.

Hear these words from **Romans 8…**

***“I consider that what we suffer at this present time***

***cannot be compared at all with the glory that is***

***going to be revealed to us.”***

***“for it was by hope that we were saved.”***

Every **Christmas** we are reminded of this hope…

The Spirit of Giving, Good will, Good cheer,

In communion we Celebrate our **HOPE in CHRIST**

**We are the bearers of HOPE…** to others, to the world.

**It happens often…**

Community rallies around a need… that is hope.

**Meals** for the sick, **visits** to the lonely,

**Prayers** for the injured, **gifts** for the needy,

***The list goes on….***

**We** **HOLD HOPE** in our…

***HEARTS…*** and in our… ***HEADS***

***LET US BE*** ***BEARERS*** of **THAT HOPE**

**Isaiah 64:1-9**

Why don't you tear the sky open and come down? The mountains would see you and shake with fear. They would tremble like water boiling over a hot fire. Come and reveal your power to your enemies, and make the nations tremble at your presence! There was a time when you came and did terrifying things that we did not expect; the mountains saw you and shook with fear. No one has ever seen or heard of a God like you, who does such deeds for those who put their hope in him. You welcome those who find joy in doing what is right, those who remember how you want them to live. You were angry with us, but we went on sinning; in spite of your great anger we have continued to do wrong since ancient times. All of us have been sinful; even our best actions are filthy through and through. Because of our sins we are like leaves that wither and are blown away by the wind. No one turns to you in prayer; no one goes to you for help. You have hidden yourself from us and have abandoned us because of our sins.

But you are our father, Lord. We are like clay, and you are like the potter. You created us, so do not be too angry with us or hold our sins against us forever. We are your people; be merciful to us.

**Mark 13:24-37** **The Coming of the Son of Man**

“In the days after that time of trouble the sun will grow dark, the moon will no longer shine, the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers in space will be driven from their courses. Then the Son of Man will appear, coming in the clouds with great power and glory. He will send the angels out to the four corners of the earth to gather God's chosen people from one end of the world to the other.

**The Lesson of the Fig Tree**

“Let the fig tree teach you a lesson. When its branches become green and tender and it starts putting out leaves, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things happening, you will know that the time is near, ready to begin. Remember that all these things will happen before the people now living have all died. 31 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

**No One Knows the Day or Hour**

“No one knows, however, when that day or hour will come—neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son; only the Father knows. Be on watch, be alert, for you do not know when the time will come. It will be like a man who goes away from home on a trip and leaves his servants in charge, after giving to each one his own work to do and after telling the doorkeeper to keep watch. Watch, then, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming—it might be in the evening or at midnight or before dawn or at sunrise. If he comes suddenly, he must not find you asleep. What I say to you, then, I say to all: Watch!”