

Barabra McGinn: 12/2/19
Advent Weekly – Hope

HOPE

Hebrews 10:23

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

The Israelites hoped He would come. Through many generations they waited while hope fueled their faith. Then the promised one came. Hope came. God was faithful.

Although this is a joyful time of year for many as we celebrate God's faithfulness in sending Jesus, this is a tender and sensitive time of year for others. My family is just one among us feeling sorrow because someone is no longer here to celebrate with us. Yet, because of God's faithfulness we have hope, and our hope fuels our faith. Our Living Hope sustains us, and gives us back our joy.

I Peter 1:3

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a *living hope* through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...

A living hope enables us to have both *sorrow* and *joy*. Our living hope is an inheritance achieved for us by Christ. - Timothy Keller

Both sorrow and joy? How can one find joy in the middle of grief and sorrow or suffering? Paul tells us to be joyful in hope.

Romans 12:12

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Recently, I read something interesting about the prophet Habakkuk. Did you know his somewhat strange name can be interpreted as meaning to wrestle and to embrace? Both. At the same time. How is that possible!

Notice in this short (true to his message) paraphrase how Habakkuk indeed *wrestles* with life, and yet *embraces* faith, hope, and even joy.

“Even though the fig tree does not bud and there are no animals in the barn, yet the Lord is in his holy temple. Even though it's going to get worse before it gets better, be still all the earth before him. The righteous will live by faith. God's word will be true. I will find my strength and my hope in the Lord my God, and he will take me to new heights.”

(Hope in the Dark - Craig Groeschel)

There is a hope that leads to the joy of “new heights,” even though...

Because of the joy set before him* Jesus endured and overcame the horrific, - and gave us great hope! Our faith and our hope are forever linked together in the promises that resulted from His obedience. The Holy Spirit came. Heaven is waiting. We have hope.

We have faith that is fueled by that hope. We have God's faithfulness that is fueled by his *great love*.

So, like Habakkuk's name implies, we *wrestle* with the pain, the loss, the gloom, the uncertainties of this life, but at the same time, we *embrace* the certainty of God's Word, His promises, and the hope He gives us through Jesus.

Jesus' name alone gives birth to hope. Back in Bethlehem, his actual birth brought hope to life!

II Corinthians 9:15

Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

Romans 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

(Hebrews 12:2) "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."