

Advent 2017 Hope

Romans 15.8-13

We have HOPE because God keeps His promises

God's promises are true

- Even when it looks like He can't (Abraham)
- Even when it looks like He isn't (Silence)
- Jesus is confirmation of His promises
 - Isaiah 7.14 – virgin born
 - Isaiah 9.6-7 – what kind of ruler is coming
 - Micah 5.2 – born in Bethlehem
 - Deuteronomy 18.15 – a prophet that's better than Moses
 - 2 Samuel 7.16 – one from David's house on an everlasting throne

God's promises are for all His people

- Jesus fulfilled the Law for us
 - This is why He had to come as a human and as a Jew (Galatians 4.4)
 - Not part of the Law – all of it (Law, Writings, Prophets all quoted here)
- Jesus opens the storehouse of mercy
 - Otherwise we're on the outside of God's promises looking in (Ephesians 2.11ff)
 - We didn't deserve it – God did it because that's who He is
 - How terrible to be so close and have no part of it (Kaepa's)
 - Jesus came so that wouldn't be the case

God's promises are for good in the world

- Our hope is found in His rule
 - Anyone think that humans are qualified to run the place?
 - His rule – in our hearts, not our govt – is the only path forward for dealing with what we face (race issue in Rome is the context)
- His outcomes are always good
 - Joy – peace – faith – abounding in hope
 - Following Him may not be easy, but it's good (and good for us)

Questions for Discussion:

1. What's your favorite Christmas memory? What's the best Christmas tradition your family had or has?
2. In the sermon, we argued that God's promises are true even when it looks like He can't fulfill them (like with Abraham) or isn't fulfilling them (like with the 400 years of silence between the Old and New Testaments). In your walk with God, which have you had more a struggle with – thinking He can't or that He isn't? How has that expressed itself? Are there particular areas of life that you struggle with more than others?
3. Read Romans 15.8-9 again and then 2 Corinthians 1.20. Both of these talk about how Jesus fulfills the promises of God. How does Jesus function as the "Yes" to all of God's promises?
4. When was a time you were on the outside looking in? What emotions, frustrations, or struggles accompanied that situation? Reread Romans 15.9-12. Applying that spiritually, do you understand how important it was for Jesus to make a way for Gentiles (like us) to be right with God? How does this undercut spiritual pride?
5. If God answered Paul's prayer in Romans 15.13 in your life, what would that look like? In your spiritual life? Family? Neighborhood? Workplace?