

Advent 2018

Thrill of Hope

Psalm 33

Reading the Psalms – they only make sense if God really is the greatest good

- Narcissism? No, because what He commands is always good
 - For Him to command praising something else would make both me and Him an idol-worshipper
- What He gives is Himself (nearness is our good – Ps 73, enthroned on praises of His people Ps 22)
 - God meets our greatest need with the greatest good – Himself
 - Will God give Himself to ME? He has – and does – and will
- SO SING – for Him, for those around you, and your kids

We have hope because we are seen (v.18)

- Visceral reaction when this is really grasped – OH NO or THANK YOU
- If God is not watching, we have no hope
- Our question: what is God thinking when He sees us?
 - He desires for you to live for His glory and is wants to ravish you with His love so that you do so willingly and with delight

We have hope because of God's love (v.18-19)

- *Chesed* – steadfast love, faithful care – used throughout OT for how God relates to His people
- What kind of love (aka why hope in this love)?
 - His love calls you to mind (25.7)
 - His love saves you (31.16)
 - His love surrounds you (32.10)
 - His love fills the earth (33.5)
 - His love extends to the heavens (36.5)
 - His love is precious (36.7)
 - His love is better than life (63.3)
 - His love satisfies us (90.14)
 - His love endures forever (100.5)
 - His love crowns us (103.4)
- But we still hope in war horses (v.17) – what I can marshal that I think will meet my deepest need
 - Relationship (infatuation only lasts 12-18 mos)
 - Approval (as if social media has the last word over my life)
 - Wealth (there will always be problems money cannot solve)

- Knowledge (how sure are you that you're right? Will it change tomorrow?)
- Appearance (it changes – Tyler “so this is what it does to you...”)
- He watches over us to deliver us from death and keep us alive in famine (greatest fears, real and projected)

We have hope as we wait for the Lord (v.20-22)

- The opposite of hopeful waiting is panicked action
 - Destroys families, business, and relationships
 - Opposite witness of the Kingdom – “don't worry...God clothes and feeds...don't be like the Gentiles...”
- Not inaction – remember last week – what do I *KNOW* I'm supposed to be doing? Do that
 - He is your help and shield, your heart can be glad in Him because of your trust in Him, He will continue to shower His love on you in Niagara style as you hope in Him (v.20-22)

Questions for Discussion

1. What's your favorite Christmas memory?
2. When you hear “God sees me,” what is your typical first reaction? Reread v.13-18 and notice all the times that the psalmist mentions God seeing you. Now think about your week. If you had lived with the reality that God sees you, what would have changed about your week?
3. Being seen by God is the foundation of hope because He sees us and *still* loves us. Reread over the notes above that describe the steadfast love (*chesed*) of the Lord in the Psalms. Which one most sticks out? Which one do you need most in light of your week? Which one does your spouse / child / family member need most? How will you share it with and show it to them?
4. Out of the 5 “War Horses” listed above (relationship, approval, wealth, knowledge, or appearance) which is the most tempting for you personally? How do you fight it?
5. What does hopeful waiting look like for you? What about panicked action? Which one are you most naturally prone to? In what situation or sphere of life is God prompting you to wait on Him? What does that look like? What do you *know* you're supposed to be doing actively that will be a part of that waiting on the Lord?