

The Second Sunday in Advent

Hymns: 64, 74, 313, 70

The INTROIT

(Is.62:11; 30:29,30; Ps.80:1)

P: Daughter of Zion:

C: behold, thy Salvation cometh.

P: The Lord shall cause His glorious voice to be heard:

C: and ye shall have gladness of heart.

P: Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel:

C: Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock.

(The "Gloria in Excelsis" is omitted during the Penitential Season of Advent)

The COLLECT

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Thine only-begotten Son, so that by His coming we may be enabled to serve Thee with pure minds; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth, and reigneth, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

The FIRST LESSON

Micah 4:1-7 (NKJV)

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the Lord's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion the law shall go forth, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, And rebuke strong nations afar off; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war any more. But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, And no one shall make them afraid; For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.

For all people walk each in the name of his god, But we will walk in the name of the LORD our God Forever and ever.

"In that day," says the LORD, "I will assemble the lame, I will gather the outcast And those whom I have afflicted; I will make the lame a remnant, And the outcast a strong nation; So the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion From now on, even forever.

The GRADUAL

(Ps.50:2-5; Luke 21:26-27)

P: Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined;

C: our God shall come.

P: Gather My saints together unto Me,

C: those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice. Alleluia! Alleluia!

P: The powers of heaven shall be shaken,

C: and then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Alleluia!

The EPISTLE

Romans 15:4-13 (NKJV)

For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written:

“For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, And sing to Your name.”

And again he says: *“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!”*

And again: *“Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!”*

And again, Isaiah says: *“There shall be a root of Jesse; And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, In Him the Gentiles shall hope.”*

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The SENTENCE for the Season

(Psalm 25:6)

P: Hallelujah! Remember, O Lord, Thy tender mercies:

C: for they have been ever of old. Hallelujah!

The HOLY GOSPEL

St. Luke 21:25-36 (NKJV)

“And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken.

“Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. “Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”

Then He spoke to them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near.

“Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

“But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

Romans 15:4-13 — “That the Hope We Should Have”

4. For whatsoever were fore-written, into our instruction were fore-written, that through the steadfastness (perseverance) and the calling-with (encouragement; comfort; *parakleseos*) of the Scriptures the hope we should have.
5. Now the God of the steadfastness and the calling-with (encouragement; comfort; *parakleseos*) grant you’ all the same to think in one another according to Christ Jesus.

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Romans 15:4-13 — “That the Hope We Should Have”

INTRODUCTION

- I. THAT THE HOPE WE SHOULD HAVE
- II. NOW THE GOD OF THE STEADFASTNESS AND THE CALLING-WITH
- III. GRANT YOU’ ALL THE SAME TO THINK IN ONE ANOTHER

CONCLUSION

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Romans 15:4-13 — “That the Hope We Should Have”

Grace, mercy, and peace to you all from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The sermon text is the Epistle reading appointed for the Second Sunday in Advent,
Romans 15:4-13:

For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written:

“For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, And sing to Your name.”

And again he says: “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!”

And again: “Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!”

And again, Isaiah says: “There shall be a root of Jesse; And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, In Him the Gentiles shall hope.”

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

The first two verses of our text will be our primary focus today.

For whatsoever were fore-written, into our instruction were fore-written, that through the steadfastness (perseverance) and the calling-with (encouragement; comfort; *parakleseos*) of the Scriptures the hope we should have.

Now the God of the steadfastness and the calling-with (encouragement; comfort; *parakleseos*) grant you’ all the same to think in one another according to Christ Jesus.

These verses follow upon St. Paul’s admonition, **“We are under obligation therefore, the empowered ones, the scruples of the not-empowered ones to lift off, and not ourselves to please. For let each of us the neighbor please (accommodate) into the good toward edification. For even Christ not Himself pleased, but just as it is written, “The reproach of the ones reproaching You fell upon Me.”**

Then in the verses of today's text we hear how this is possible for us.

I. THAT THE HOPE WE SHOULD HAVE

For whatsoever were fore-written, into our instruction were fore-written, that through the steadfastness and the calling-with of the Scriptures the hope we should have.

Wow! How amazingly differently the apostle speaks from what we are accustomed to thinking, saying, and doing. He says that the Scriptures were fore-written so that the hope we should have. How do we usually approach the Scriptures? How do we generally think of the purpose of the Scriptures? St. Paul says that they were fore-written so that we should have the hope. He does not merely say that we should have hope, but that we should have The Hope.

This hope is far greater than the vague notions of hope that we conjure up for ourselves. This hope is not hope that we produce by positive thinking or by dreaming of better days and better things. This hope comes from a source that is beyond us. This hope is clearly defined and steadfast. This is the hope that God has provided through the absolute and unchanging declarations of the His Holy Scriptures. This is the hope that does not fail. This is the hope that comes to us not only from former ages, but even from eternity. This hope is established upon a sure and unfailing foundation.

This hope is produced among us through the instruction that is provided in what has already been written and recorded for us. This hope is produced through the steadfastness and the calling-with of the Scriptures that God has made certain are preserved for us. These Scriptures supply us with the hope that God has established. This hope is ours through the steadfastness and the calling-with of the Scriptures.

The message of the Scriptures is truly a steadfast message. It never changes. From the very first writings of Moses through to the final words of the Revelation given by Jesus to John, the message has not changed. The hope declared in the Scriptures has been the same from the very beginning to the very end. That hope was and is and ever shall be the one who is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. That steadfast hope is Jesus.

These steadfast Scriptures have been fore-written for our instruction, so that through them we would hear the steadfast calling-with of the Scriptures. The Scriptures have been fore-written so that through them we would hear the never ending urging, **“Come child. Come with Me. I am your God and Savior. I am the one who truly loves you and cares for you. I am the one who provides for your every need of body and soul. I have redeemed you. I have taken your sins. I have provided for you the means of grace through which I am with you always to bless you and keep you. Come along child. I am here. Come with me.”**

Yes, truly the steadfast Scriptures never stop calling-with to us. They have been fore-written for our instruction, to instruct us regarding the Hope that God has given to the world. From Adam until John the Baptist this steadfastness and calling-with has been pronounced, and to guarantee that it would not stop, the Scriptures were fore-written for our instruction.

II. NOW THE GOD OF THE STEADFASTNESS AND THE CALLING-WITH

As the dear apostle proclaims to us, the Hope that is taught through the steadfastness and calling-with of the Scriptures is the Hope that God gives.

Now the God of the steadfastness and the calling-with grant you'all the same to think in one another according to Christ Jesus.

Truly, this steadfastness and this calling-with is of God. He is the steadfast one in whom all hope resides. He is the calling-with one, who never stops calling to us all to provide us with the hope that gives what is hoped for. It is to God our Savior that the Scriptures call us to be with. It is to God our Redeemer that the Scriptures direct our guilty consciences. It is to God our Comforter, our paraclete, our calling one, that the Scriptures teach us to know. The LORD our God is a God who stands steadfastly for us. He does not stand against us. It is we who oppose Him.

We are the ones who spurn our loving God. We are the ones who reject His goodness in our thoughts, words, and deeds. We are the ones who rebel against His good and gracious will for us. He commands what is good and we choose what is evil and then we suffer the evil that we have chosen. He commands life and we choose that which destroys. He commands repentance and we choose to resist and to accuse Him wrongfully.

Yet in His mercy, He has established even from eternity the Hope that continues according to His steadfastness, the Hope that continues to call us to be rejoined with Him in His Holy Communion.

This is the God of the Hope. This Hope was rekindled with the promise of the Seed that would bruise the head of the serpent. This Hope was declared continually throughout the Old Testament and recorded long ago and preserved for us so that this Hope would be Our Hope!

This is entirely God's doing. He does not require us to find this hope for ourselves. He does not leave us to fabricate such hope for ourselves from our own hearts and minds. He is the author of this Hope. He is the giver of this Hope. He is this Hope.

And He never stops calling us to be in communion with Him. He provides the Holy Communion. He calls us to be with Him in the Holy Communion. He stands steadfastly calling us to be reconciled with Him.

III. GRANT YOU'ALL THE SAME TO THINK IN ONE ANOTHER

Moreover, this reconciliation and this rebirth into His Holy Communion extends to those who are around us. First God calls us into His Holy Communion so that we ourselves actually receive and abide in the Hope that God has established for us. Then, empowered to live continually in this Hope ourselves, we think the same in one another that God thinks in us.

God comes to us. He does not demand that we come to Him. He comes to us. He has provided the fore-written Scriptures of steadfastness and calling-with for our instruction and our Hope. Through the proclamation and application of these fore-written Scriptures we hear the steadfastness and calling-with of the LORD our God. We hear how He has given His only-begotten Son for the sake of the entire world. We hear how God uses the proclamation of these Scriptures to create faith in sin-dead hearts so that we hear His gracious calling-with and respond by continuing in His grace, mercy, and peace. Empowered with this new life for ourselves we then look around us and see others who have also been approached by God through this proclamation of the Hope. Like us, these other ones continue to struggle. Some seem not to understand fully this Hope that God has given them. So those who are empowered by the Gospel with fuller understanding, lift the scruples from the struggling ones. Each us, empowered by the

Gospel, can look upon one another with the same thinking that God thinks in us.

For this God of steadfastness and calling-with has filled us with His everlasting presence through the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit. This God of steadfastness and calling-with has actually entered our hearts, minds, and souls and continually thinks His good message of the Hope that He has provided for us. He thinks for us what we cannot think for ourselves. His thinking changes our thinking so that we think what He thinks in us.

Since He has called us and others and continues to call us together with Himself, we find ourselves in the communion that He has established, together with all others whom He has called-with. The more that we hear His calling-with, the more that we think with His thinking. The more that we think with His thinking in us, the more that we think in each other with His thinking. Thus we lift one another up with His thinking. When we encounter our neighbors who are struggling with their own thoughts, we turn to them with the same steadfastness that God shows us and we call to them with the same calling-with that God calls-with us. And so the unity of the faith is built up among us by God's gracious working among us.

CONCLUSION

Truly this is an amazing message. Truly this is a message with clearly defined intentions. Truly this message is clear and without compromise. It is a message that gives The Hope. Amazingly this Hope is not one of tolerance, but of lifting up. While the world and the worldly minded continue to de-emphasize and minimize the specificity of the Gospel, the Scriptures continue in the steadfastness and the calling-with of a very specific instruction so that we should have the Hope that God gives. This Hope is unchanging. This Hope provides steadfastness. This Hope continues to come through the same means. The instruction of the Scriptures rules out all alternatives. The instruction of the Scriptures does not tolerate the scruples of those who are less empowered with the understanding that the Scriptures teach. Rather, the Scriptures continue to be of steadfastness and calling-with, the same steadfastness and calling-with of the God of the Hope, so that even as He has declared, we lift up from one another the scruples so that the absolute and unwavering instruction of the Scriptures may secure us in the Hope that God gives.

Therefore, we do not need to invent hope or seek hope, but rather, through the steadfastness and the calling-with of the Scriptures the Hope we do have. He is Jesus, and through the means that the Scriptures call us to partake of we do receive Jesus. He is our Hope. He is our life. In Him we are made to be one and preserved as one with God and with one another even forevermore. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus forever. Amen.