Lownes Free Church Sunday Morning – December 2, 2018

**Advent:**

**The Church Welcomes Christ**

HOPE: A Matter of Life and Death

Experiencing God’s Promise in Jesus

Romans 15:8–13 (NIV84)

 8 For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God’s truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs 9 so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, as it is written: “Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing hymns to your name.” 10 Again, it says, “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.” 11 And again, “Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and sing praises to him, all you peoples.” 12 And again, Isaiah says, “The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him.”

 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.

**Hope is first in the promise of God.**

 After Adam had sinned, God did not leave him hopeless. Death would not be the last word. God did not explain it all to Adam, but did promise, through a “seed,” to destroy the serpent, the messenger of death.

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and hers; He shall crush your head, and you shall strike his heel.” Genesis 3:15

“The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off–for all whom the Lord our God will call.” Acts 2:39

“If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Galatians 3:29

**Hope is fulfilled in the person of Christ.**

 God’s promises distill into one promise, the promise of Himself in the person of His Son. Hope is not a vague, ethereal thing, but rather the real presence and power of God Himself.

“The Scriptures does not say ‘and to seeds,’ meaning many people, but to ‘seed,’ meaning one person, who is Christ.” Galatians 3:16

“‘But we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. . .’ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.” Luke 24:21, 27

**Hope is finalized in the reality of the resurrection.**

 Without His death there would be no forgiveness, and without His resurrection, no hope. The Resurrection means the death of death.

“This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. . .” Acts 23:6

“I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. . .” Acts 26:7

***Biblical hope patiently awaits God’s Promise. Romans 8:22-25***

1. We lose hope when we trust in mankind’s governments and systems. Our eternal hope is in God’s promise, not politics, social programs, or technology.

2. We lose hope when we seek our joy in this present world, and try to find satisfaction here. Our eternal hope is in the resurrection, not this life.

3. We lose hope when we obsess over our failures and cover over our sins. Our eternal hope is in gospel grace, not our own good works and appearances.

4. We lose hope when we focus only upon what we see. Our eternal hope is for now, unseen, but perceived and assured through the eyes of faith.