

12/1/24 - Luke 4:16-21 - "Hope Between Two Advents"

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[0 : 00] Luke chapter 4, if you wanted to go ahead and open up your Bibles, we're going to be reading from 16 through 21. Let's read.

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day. And he stood up to read.

And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind. To set at liberty those who are oppressed.

To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down.

[1 : 05] And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Praise the Lord for his word, even if it is in Matthew or Luke. Amen.

And it is great to be here today as Carmen, our newly appointed pastor and elder. Indicated my name is Brent.

I serve here as the lead pastor. And I'm honored to serve you today in the ministry of the word. And guide us through a new series, an Advent series.

And so today is the first day of Advent. And I thought it would be appropriate this morning to enter into a fictional story between a campfire and dispersed and exiled Israel from 500 B.C.

[2 : 18] Let's reflect on this story. The night air wrapped around me like a shroud. A heavy shroud as I sat near the embers of the dying fire.

The cries of my people echoing in my ears. The Assyrians had left us broken. Our walls in ruins. Our families scattered.

Our hope hanging on by a thread. My hands shook, but not from the cold, but just from the weight of it all. Well, we were supposed to be His chosen.

Weren't we? How could this be? And the words of the prophet Isaiah echoed in my mind. Words that my father used to whisper to me before he was taken.

Where he said, For unto us a child is born. Unto us a son is given. And the government shall be upon his shoulders. But where is he?

[3 : 31] Where was this son? This king who would carry the weight of all things. Crush the yoke of our enemies. All in his shoulders.

I clenched my fists until my nails dug into my palms. Every day I heard stories and promises of old. Of Moses who split the sea. Joshua who brought down walls with a shout. Of David who defeated a giant with a stone.

But we are not in the days of David. We are in days of darkness. And the throne of Zion is a shadow of what it was.

The elders said to wait. To trust that the Holy One would act in His own time. But my patience is wearing thin. The Assyrians didn't wait to desecrate our temple or enslave our people.

[4 : 33] The injustice clawed at my soul. And yet deep within I still longed for Him. The one who would bring justice and peace.

I didn't know His name. I didn't know His face. But the cry of my heart became my prayer. Come, O King. Tear open the heavens and descend.

Let the mountains quake at Your presence. Set us free. And the wind shifted. Carrying the faint scent of cedar and myrrh.

I closed my eyes. Imagining Him riding on the clouds. His banner unfurled. His sword gleaming with the vengeance of God. In my heart I could almost see Him.

A King unlike any other. Reigning in righteousness. And restoring what was lost. But when I opened my eyes. It was just me.

[5 : 33] And the fire. The silence pressing down like a weight. Still the longing remains. The tension between what is and what could be.

Between despair and hope. Perhaps that was faith. This restless ache for a king. We could not see. But so desperately needed. And so I whispered into the night. Come quickly. O Lord. Church with this.

Single fictional story. That describes a time. A possible time. Long ago. When. The Israelites had everything against them.

They didn't look like a chosen nation. Anymore. Completely dispersed. Assyrians have come. It's around 500 BC. And this single fictional story.

[6 : 34] Describes a longing heart. In that time period. With nothing to hold on to. Other than that which has already been said. Nothing to hold on to. Other than what has been said.

And it is here that. We also. Find ourselves. Isn't it? Right? Between. Two promises. The first advent of Jesus Christ.

At His birth. And. The second advent of. His. One day. Return. The sermon title today is. Hope. Between.

Two. Advents. And by the end of our time today. We will see. That hope sustains us. In the tension. Between Christ's inauguration. And. Consummation. As we see that. Today. Let's pray. And unpack. What was read this morning. And read even more.

[7 : 32] In depth of that promise. Let's pray. Father. Thank you for. Giving us a time. Today. To sing. To observe.

Your. Your. Supper. To remember. You. To remember each other. To reflect. Upon. Upon. Upon. Upon. Upon. How. Salvation.

Has. Changed. Our lives. To be reminded. Even though we might not feel. Saved. And forgiven. We know. We're saved. And forgiven. By.

By. The promise. Of your word. And the assurance. Of your word. And by the continual. Perpetual. Remembrance. Of the Lord's Supper. Thank you for all these things Lord. And. We come to you now.

Between two advents. And. We just ask for you to. Help us to. Hope. Well. In our day today. We praise. In Jesus name. Amen.

[8 : 26] Amen. So I'm going to break. The sermon up into. Two sections today. And. Let's look at the. Inauguration. Of. His kingdom.

In the first section. We'll be looking at. The chapter that was. Read this morning from. Luke. And not Matthew. And John. And not Matthew. I switched some things up.

Thanks Carmen. And so. Just as it was. Read. By Pastor. Carmen. In Luke 4. He came to Nazareth.

Where he had been. Had been brought up. So he's in his hometown. And. As was a custom. In the synagogue. On the Sabbath day. He stood up to read. Nothing unusual here.

The scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Was given to him. Specifically. Is this. Part of the scroll. Where we see. In Isaiah 61. And so. The scroll. Of the prophet Isaiah.

[9 : 25] Was given to him. And he unrolled it. And. Found a place where. It was written. Verse 18. The spirit of the Lord. Is upon me. Because he. Has anointed. Me.

To proclaim the good news. To the poor. He has sent me. To proclaim liberty. To the captives. And recovering the sight. To the blind. To set at liberty. Those who are oppressed.

To proclaim the year. Of the Lord's. Favor. Forever. And he rolled up the scroll. I'm sure he got some amens. In that synagogue. Right?

Rolled the scroll up. Gave it back to the attendant. Sat down. Everyone else is looking around at him. Eyes. All eyes were on him.

In the synagogue. They were fixed on him. In verse 21. Something changed. And he began to say. To them. Today. This.

[10:20] Scripture. Has been fulfilled. In your hearing. This declaration. Of Jesus Christ. Makes a profound. Reality.

To longing. People. That through the person. Of Jesus Christ. God's word. Is fulfilling. His promises. Through the person.

Of Jesus Christ. Especially in the Old Testament. Especially in Isaiah 61. Now Isaiah 61. Is interesting. Because if you. We were to turn back.

And expound upon that chapter. And maybe even start back. At some earlier chapters. In verse 40 to 55. We would see that there. Are promises. To historic.

Nation of Israel. The historic nation of Israel. Of restoration. Revelation. And. It's often. Referred to as a book of comfort.

[11:18] As God's longing. People find hope. In God's promise. To redeem. His promise. To restore. And establish them. As a light to the nations. Now.

Comforting a troubled soul. Is no easy work. Right? Every husband. Has the. The great inspiration. To just tell their wives.

Well. Don't worry about it. Right? Just. Magical words. Are supposed to just. Remove all of her worries. Right? That'll get a slap. On the back of the head.

No. I'm just kidding. I'm not. Condoning abuse. You get the sentiment? It's. Yeah. We have.

We have. Marital counseling. Available to everyone. As well. If needed. So. My wife does not smack me. No.

[12:15] So. We'll just leave it at that. And. That only reinforces the point. Right? That comforting a troubled soul.

Is no easy work. Men. We see it with our wives. And even. Even children with their parents. They just don't understand. They don't see. And value the perspective often. Of. Of. Why there's.

A need to worry. Why we're acting the way we're acting. And. In this post-exilic setting. Isaiah 61. Was a reflection of Israel. Within the context.

Of. The Babylonian exile. Where God's people. Were like. Lost. Dispersed. And. Even the temple was destroyed.

They had nothing. They had nothing. And so. With that setting in mind. And moving. To. A synagogue.

[13:12] Now. A half a century later. Jesus finds himself. Within this synagogue. And. God's people. Have. A new temple. Things are looking up now. Right?

Right? Not only that. But just as Isaiah 61. Captivates this initiative. To liberty. To the captives.

And those who are oppressed. Right? Well. The temple has benevolent systems. In the court of women. And they have all of these things in place. And they probably thought.

Amen. God is good. All the time. And all the time. Whatever y'all are doing. Right? They probably thought. That they are good.

That everything is okay. Now. I would argue. That many of us today. Whether we want to admit it or not. We may even think today.

[14:08] That we are good. We're good. Right? Yeah. We're longing. But it's not like the forefront of our minds. I mean.

Things aren't too bad. Church has been quite encouraging. Carmen's been pleasant. Right? I mean. After all. Isn't it encouraging that we have a warm building?

We have a geographic location. Fixed on the corner of Wick and McGuffey. That if you need to find hope. If the world's looking for hope. We're open at 1030. For the exposition of God's word.

You can find us all over the world. Somebody can just Google. Find a church in Youngstown. And here we are. You know. Maybe things aren't too bad. And even we have benevolence enterprises. We're adopting children for Christmas. We got all of these initiatives. And here we are. It's not too bad. Right? Well.

[15:05] Jesus is saying this for those within the synagogue. And for those of us today. Who may feel a sense of eased ambition.

Due to easy times. That when we look around. Just as those in this temple. In the synagogue. When this reading was taking place.

As Jesus had that scroll. That synagogue. Will not last. It will pass away. Has anybody been to visit the church in Corinth? It's not around.

Anymore. This building will not last. This pulpit. Will fall apart one day. My body. Will not always look like this.

Will die. And I will be dead. And decay. No one's going to know my name in a hundred years. I will be forgotten. We will all be forgotten. And so. None of that will last.

[16:06] In all of our worship then. Everything we do. Is theologically defined. In the person of Jesus Christ. And all of the things that we've been given in this life.

Are to serve him. But it's all in Jesus Christ. Not in a building. Not in benevolence enterprises. But in Jesus Christ.

And that is the breaking point within the synagogue. Because you got a bunch of people that were a men in the reading of Isaiah 61. Who have forgotten.

That they have not arrived yet. And as it were in the early first century. Jesus stands up. He declares that apart from the temple and benevolence enterprises. The promise of Isaiah was intended to be fulfilled through a person.

Not a program. And these longing people failed to realize that they were still longing. Because shortly after this. When he was seated.

[17:03] They were trying to throw Jesus off of a cliff. The people who needed the message. Of longing for something to come.

Who thought that they had arrived. Rejected it. And wanted to throw Jesus off of a cliff. In their rejection. They have forgotten their longing. In church.

We must never lose this sense of longing either. Yes. Things in life that glorify God are comforting. Building is comforting. It's nice to have a building.

Amen. And that God has provided and we care for. And we spruce up for Christmas. Amen. It's comforting. Programs are comforting. We know that we're fulfilling the great commission.

Through our discipleship and our outreach. To go and make disciples. Right. These are comforting things. However, we find ourselves in a troubling conundrum of idolatry.

[17:58] At the thought of anything to come that would disrupt our status quo. In other words. What are we to be defined by without a building?

What's going to define us without all of this stuff and amenities. And things that we have that are nice. Comfy chairs. Right.

Right. That's where we find ourselves facing a troubling conundrum of idolatry. And this is where the nation of Israel was in this first century time period.

When Jesus read that scroll. When Jesus read that scroll and said, Y'all haven't made it yet. Because it's all through me. Of which all of these things will be fulfilled.

You see, the inauguration of Jesus Christ's kingdom through his first advent informs us to never lose the sense of our longing for change.

[19:00] For something else to come. For something else to come. To not misprioritize and overemphasize the things that we have and miss the whole substance and objective of all of the things that we have.

To never settle down in our faith. Even when we experience the blessings of God in this life. Our longing must still remain. You get that?

In other words, there's more than all of this. As great as some things can be. There's more than all of this. If you have young kids, it seems like they're most inquisitive about some robust theology than at bedtime.

When mom and dad are at their wits end trying to get those kiddos to sleep. And they're asking about the problem of evil in the world. And with that just being a natural part of children in general. I would imagine back 500 BC. There were children exhausting their mom and dad. Nothing's new under the sun.

[20:19] And them asking their mom. When will the Messiah come? Or do you really think God is going to send us a great king?

Are things ever going to change, mom? Are we ever going to have our family back? Church, what a blessing to see.

That through the person and the work of Jesus Christ. The king of the Jews has come. Amen. He has come.

And not only is he the king of the Jews. He's the king of kings. He's the lord of lords. The whole world. And how this king would reign would be like nothing that the world would ever expect. Especially the nation of Israel. The most common mark of earthly success is power. Right? Stature. Strength. Everybody wants a Saul.

[21 : 26] They don't want a David. Right? They want popularity. But as Jesus Christ said in his final days to Pilate. Before his crucifixion. He answered Pilate.

My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world. My servants would have been fighting. That I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world. This king would inaugurate his kingdom through humility of laying his life down for others. Servanthood and grace.

And through solely the person and work of Jesus Christ is the kingdom of God at hand. According to Matthew chapter 3 verse 2. And what tension we are experiencing today.

That creates this childlike longing of 500 BC. What tension are we experiencing today? Because yes, well, our faith informs us that Jesus has inaugurated the kingdom.

[22 : 29] Jesus has come. Amen to that. The whispers of our heart cry when we watch the news. When we see unrest between Russia and Ukraine.

When we see these headlines that are just so disturbing. When we are experiencing our own troubles and our own sorrows and our own pains.

Many of them being chronic pain in these frail, broken bodies of ours. The whispers of our heart cry with the child.

How long, O Lord? Come, Lord Jesus, come. And here, church, we find much in common with longing Israel at 500 BC.

There by the campfire. Right? However, Israel had hope in the inauguration of the kingdom of God. But we have a different type of hope.

[23 : 32] Not in the inauguration, but of the consummation of the kingdom of God. The second advent of Jesus Christ. And I want to think about this further in the next point. Which is the inauguration of the king.

Or the consummation of the kingdom. And that's looking at Matthew 24. Here we are in Matthew 24. And then also looking towards the ends of the Bible.

Revelation 19. And so Matthew 24. Thinking about the consummation of this kingdom. Taking with us this longing commonality between us and the nation of Israel.

From 500 BC. And being corrected by the synagogue. Seems to have arrived. But needed to be longing still.

We see in Matthew 24 and verse 29. Immediately after the tribulation of those days. The sun will be darkened. And the moon will not give its light.

[24 : 35] And the stars will fall from heaven. And the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then, in verse 30. Will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man.

Then all the tribes of the earth will mourn. And they will see the Son of Man. Coming on the clouds of heaven. With power and great glory.

And he will send out his angels. With a loud trumpet call. And they will gather his elect. From the four winds. From one end of heaven. To the other.

Here in the Olivet Discourse. Jesus answers his disciples' questions. It reminds me of just the inquiring child at bedtime.

They're wondering as well. When is the destruction of the temple going to happen? When will the end times happen? What's it going to look like?

[25 : 34] And so Jesus provides them with a mixture of prophetic warnings. And apocalyptic imagery. Here. And. They're desiring what it's going to look like.

At the end. In verse 1 through 3. And so to the disciples' dismay though. Jesus didn't offer much relief. Did you notice that? Jesus didn't offer much of relief.

Even back in verse 8. Because he said. The end times. Would actually be. More. Likable to. Child birth.

Birth pains. Now. Sitting next to my wife. Through all of her pregnancies. And in that time period. I'm not going to say.

That I know anything about that pain. At all. Unless I be slapped. I'm just kidding. But. It seemed to me. Through all of those experiences.

[26 : 35] That contractions get worse. That. With every contraction that comes. It's just incrementally getting worse.

And there seems to be a time. Where you can read on your mom. Your wife's face. Like. Make this end. Just baby.

Come on out. I'm done. Right? And so here. Jesus is providing the signs. That each decade that passes by. Will experience more intense.

Birth pains. Contractions. And greater than the last. And the longing. For the end to come. Will only grow. And intensify.

In proportion. To the increasing. Pain. Until the end comes. Maybe our theology of suffering. Can then be rightly informed.

[27 : 31] That it should draw us closer to God. As things get more intense. Longing for him. To bring it to an end. And he can.

And he will. Amen. Amen. This. Is precisely the tension of our day. That's unique to our day. Because we remain a longing people.

To have faith in God's promises. That everything that he said he was going to do. He would do. And it will all be fulfilled. And we sit in this longing.

We long for that image. That if you take Matthew 24. And apply it. And look over to Revelation 19. Go ahead and turn to Revelation 19 verse 11.

I want you to see what John saw. In this revelation of Jesus Christ. Revelation 19 verse 11. I'll read slow so you can catch up once you find it.

[28 : 33] Verse 11 says. Then I saw. John saw. Something here. Heaven opened. And behold. A white horse.

And the one sitting on it. Is called faithful and true. And in righteousness. He judges. And makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire.

And on his head are many diadems. Which are like crowns. And he has a name written. That no one knows. But himself. Chapter 19 verse 11.

And he is clothed. In a robe. Dipped in blood. And the name by which he is called. Is the word of God. Verse 14.

And the armies of heaven. Arrayed in fine linen. White and pure. Were following him on white horses. From his mouth.

[29 : 37] Comes a sharp sword. With which to strike down the nations. And he will rule them.

With a rod. Of iron. He will tread the wine press. Of his. Of the fury. Of the wrath of God. The almighty. In verse 16.

On his robe. And on his thigh. He has a name written. King of kings. Lord of lords. Such imagery. Encourages us today. To live. With expectant. Hope. Of that time. Just as it were. For dispersed Israel. Of 500 BC.

With the imagery. Of. Isaiah 61. We long. For that. We are not. There. There. Regardless of what we have. And how things are going.

[30 : 39] We are not. There. Fulfillment. Has not come. Through any earthly governments. Or legislation. But only through the biblical legislation.

Of God's word. Where the government will be. Not upon our soldiers. Or any man. But upon Jesus Christ's shoulders. In that day. Whose longing heart cries.

For hope. Today. What a reminder. For this period. Of birth pains. That we are in right now. Period of unrest. That it will.

End. One day. And the consummated kingdom. Will be marked. By justice. Will be marked. By. Perfect. Peace.

And righteousness. No more pain. No more suffering. No more death. What a glorious day. That will be. Who are we.

[31 : 38] Church. To ever. Misperceive our hope. In anything. In this world. And of this world. Yes. It would be quite lovely. To have world peace.

Right. And just as it would be quite lovely. To have. I'll say an eighth percent. Of Elon Musk's wealth. Right. Which. Mind you. Would be four million dollars.

I did the math. It's just not feasible. To hope. In something. That's outside. Of God's redemptive plan.

Yeah. Things can go well. But. We're not supposed to create idols. We're to be a longing. People. For the consummation. Of the coming kingdom. Right. Consummation. Is coming. And it will not happen. Before Christ's second. Coming. His second advent. And so. [32 : 35] As we're living between these two advents. In a period of time. That's kind of marked in the already. But not yet. The inaugurated. But not fully consummated.

We live in this tension. Don't we? Do you feel that tension? Just as it were. At 500 BC. When the nation of Israel. Longed for this inauguration. For the king to come. Well the king has come. And he's also coming again. Until we come to grips. That we are alienated.

From this world. Because of our adoption. To God. We will never find contentment. For our longing. From anything in this world.

So we long. We hope. We trust. We believe. That Jesus is coming. For his church. And what a glorious day that will be. Church. Those apart from Jesus Christ today.

[33 : 38] Have a reason to believe. Don't they? Maybe that's you today. That the answer. Maybe to the problem of evil. That's been. Kind of withholding. Your. Yourself.

From fully trusting in God. Because of. Some situation. That just seems like. God is not good. And you would never. Worship. And give your life. To an unfair. An unjust God.

Well I hope you see. That the answer. To the problem of evil. Is God's goodness. That we live. In a fallen world. That's corrupt. And God will one day.

Bring justice to it all. No matter how severe. Of a situation it was. And this tension. That we sense in our lives. Is meant to draw us. Closer to God. And so.

If you are apart. From Jesus Christ today. There is no hope. Apart from Jesus Christ. From placing your faith. In Jesus Christ. There is just no hope. You can't fool yourself.

[34 : 36] Forever. Don't misplace. Your hope today. And maybe your relationship. With your spouse. Or maybe your girlfriend. Don't place your hope. In work. Don't place your hope.

In money. Don't place your hope. In the fantasies. That you try to distract yourself with. Or maybe the pleasures of life. Whether through drugs. Or pornography. Or whatever medication.

Is your medicine. Wake up to the call. Of the gospel today. If you are not in Jesus Christ. Because the offer. Is available for you. And all of life's purpose.

Whether it's joy or pain. Is brought into meaning. Through your faith in Jesus Christ. It is central. To knowing Jesus Christ. Just as it were for 500 BC.

And for the church. The rest of us. Today. We must remain resilient. During this tension. Shouldn't we? Resilient. Keep our eyes fixed.

[35 : 34] On the consummation. Persevering in faith. And bringing as many people to faith. In Jesus Christ as possible. For that day. You see.

This hope. Sustains us. In the tension. Between Christ's inauguration. And his consummation. Revisiting the opening story. Of the longing.

Of exiled Israel. Sitting there by the campfire. We sit with them. In this longing. In this tension. Between the already and not yet.

We say with them. Come. O king. Tear open the heavens. And descend. Let the mountains quake. At your presence. Set us free. And we whisper with them. Into the night. Come. Quickly. O Lord. Let's pray.