

November 29, 2020

**“God Is Our Hope, We Are God’s Hope”
Sermon by Rev. Susan Drake**

Scripture Readings:

Isaiah 64:1-3, 8-9

*O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—
as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil—
to make your name known to your adversaries,
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!
When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.*

*Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD,
and do not remember iniquity forever.
Now consider, we are all your people.*

Psalms 80:1-3

*Shepherd of Israel, listen!
You, the one who leads Joseph
as if he were a sheep.
You, who are enthroned
upon the winged heavenly creatures.
Show yourself before Ephraim,
Benjamin, and Manasseh!
Wake up your power!
Come to save us!
Restore us, God!
Make your face shine
so that we can be saved!*

SERMON: “God Is Our Hope, We Are God’s Hope”

Oh that God would tear open the heavens and come down and save us. How many times have we wished this? How many times have we hoped and prayed that God would somehow intervene in human events and set us back on course toward a more just and loving world?

Save us from our climate change, from racial inequity, from the pandemic, from all of it. I don’t need to recite the litany of humanitie’s problems.

But so many of those problems are of humanities own making. So even though God may not rip open heaven and come save us like Isaiah pleaded, God is still our hope.

But the way God comes to us is so much different than that image of Almighty God violently tearing open heavens. It is in the form of a tiny little, vulnerable baby, conceived out of wedlock, born to a poor and at that time homeless, migrant couple.

Not what we would have expected, and not what we would have hoped or prayed for. Yet the course of human events were forever changed when love came down that day. God with us, Immanuel.

The scriptures often tell us to put our hope in the Lord, then we can trust that God will find solutions for us, but those solutions will often be us.

God is from where our hope comes but we are God’s hope. God gives us what we need to be the change, to be the answer to other’s prayers, to be the healers and to be hope fulfilled in this time and place.

One of my all time favorite quotes about hope is appropriately from Jonas Salk the inventor of the polio vaccine. “Hope lies in dreams, in imagination, and in the courage of those who dare to make dreams into reality.”

God is the potter, who shaped us for moments, just like this, when you think we would fall apart, we don’t because we are born a hopeful people.

Emily Dickinson wrote “Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul and sings the tune without the words and never stops at all.”

Hope finds a way to keep us hanging on and moving forward if we are open to it, if we let it in even when we are down and despairing, cynical and or resentful.

There have only been a few times in my life when I have been without hope, but it didn’t take long before a song would grab me, or a sermon, a movie, or a person that would inspire me, listen to me and help me find that little spark, that little light that could rekindle that hope within me. It never came in a way I expected or could have predicted but it has always come.

I encourage you, especially if you are feeling hopeless, to get quiet, surrender yourself in prayer and think back to a moment in your life that was really hard and ask yourself what was it that brought you through, that restored hope in you.

One of my favorite authors Barbara Kingsolver wrote this about hope “The very least you can do in your life is figure out what you hope for. And the most you can do is live inside that hope. Not admire it from a distance but live right in it, under it’s roof.

Hope is one of strongest gifts that God gives us to cope with the struggles in this life. It can pull us through anything. Just in this moment we have abundant hope. Hope in science and a vaccine, hope that though this Christmas will be hard, next Christmas will be better. We have hope that the divides between us may begin to heal.

And we also have this hope that someday we will rest in hope with our potter, we will live in a place free of the struggles, the distress, disease, the judgments, the shame, the conflict and just rest in God’s hope and love. Until then let’s keep trying to make this world a little more loving, a little more kind and a little more hopeful. AMEN

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