

SERMON - EVENSONG - 2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY IN ADVENT - 6 DECEMBER 2009

St. John's Anglican Church, Greensboro, North Carolina

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## HOPE ETERNAL

*Isaiah 11:1-2 (KJV)*

*And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: [2] And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;*

The world, as we know it today, is a pretty bad mess. It is a world of darkness, a world of evil, a world of danger and threat. Across the globe that we call Earth, we find wars, discord, and hatred. Here at home there is divisiveness, distrust and animosity among the populace.

We, in this country, are engaged in two wars and several other less publicized conflicts around the world, our economy is in the tank, unemployment nationally is at least ten percent and about one in nine homes are in foreclosure.

It's enough to make a person discouraged and depressed.

In some ways, in many ways, it is good that we are gathered here this evening on this Second Sunday in Advent. It is good that we can gather here. It is good that we can gather here and hear those words of hope, eternal hope, that Isaiah wrote so many years ago.

Paul tells us that there is Faith, Hope and Charity. Tonight, let's talk about Hope.

We know that Faith is described as Hebrews 11:1 (KJV) says, *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

We hear that Charity 1 Cor. 13:8 (KJV) *Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.*

But what about hope? Paul tells us in Romans 8:24-25 (KJV) *For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? [25] But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*

And, again, Paul tells us in Galatians 5:5 (KJV) *For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.*

Tonight, we heard the words of Isaiah predicting the coming, the birth of Jesus Christ. *Isaiah 11:1-2 (KJV) And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: [2] And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;*

We hear the words of Hope that arise from the reign of Christ, Isaiah 11:6-9 (KJV) *The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. [7] And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. [8] And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. [9] They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*

To me, these are comforting words, maybe because they remind me of my Grandmother who used to often quote this passage. She was one of the great Adventists, She, truly, was waiting and living her life in the Hope of the redemption of Israel, in the Second Coming.

In the quiet stillness of Advent, as differentiated from the commercial frenzy of the “Holiday Season,” we can hear the still quiet voice of God telling us that there is Hope. Hope in a world where there can be peace, where there can be love, where the darkness of this present world will disappear and where the Father and the Lamb will provide the Light. Hope in a world where there are no tears, no pain, no illness.

Jesus Christ came to give us Hope, Hope in eternal life. Jesus Christ will come again to realize that Hope.

That is the message of Advent.

Amen.