



ZECHARIAH 9:9- 12

If you were to complete this sentence, what would you say? I hope for_____.

We can hope for a new cat, a new electronic gadget, a good Sunday lunch or even world peace. Everybody has hopes.

Our Hopes have a lot to do with what's going to happen in the future.

We really don't know what might happen an hour from now.

We have lots of hope for what it might be.

That's what we're thinking about today in worship. What gives us hope for the future?

God also has hopes for us.

God hopes that we'll become the kind of people who live in hope because we trust God.

God hopes that we will live boldly and with confidence because He is with us.

That's what the prophet Zechariah was trying to teach God's people.

They had returned from the Babylonian captivity in 538 BC full of hope.

They would rebuild the temple and revive the worship of the one true God.

After 70 years of captivity – a punishment for their idolatry – God had promised to be with them and bless them if they returned to Him.

They got as far as building the foundations for the temple in their effort to renew, restore, and revive the vibrant worship life of God's people.

Twenty years on their enthusiasm had been replaced by discouragement.

Powerful opposition to their efforts had drained them of all hope of ever experiencing renewal, restoration and revival.

They began to question whether God was in fact still with them.

God sent his prophet Zechariah to assure them that he was still with them and for them.

Listen to the heavenly conversation in Zechariah 1:8-17.

God is watching all that transpires in their midst. He is jealous for His people.

When the time is right he will act decisively to renew, restore and revive his people and their commitment to Him.

When the time is right he will destroy all opposition and hostility and bring peace to his people.

This would happen when Messiah comes.

When he came he would take care of the flock and provide for them.

He would cleanse them from their iniquities.

The hope of the coming Messiah was their anchor when life seemed to be overwhelming them.

Read Zechariah 9:9-12.

The words of our text would have been a promise from the promise keeping God that the people could hold on to; for us to hold on to.

God's word of promise would have been an anchor in the storm tossed tempest of their lives; and for our lives also.

God's word of promise would have been like the first rays of hope as they endured the sleepless dark night of discouragement.

As we look back, our hopes are rekindled knowing that verse nine was fulfilled at Jesus first coming.

If that is true we can have a confident hope that the promises of verse ten, yet to be fulfilled, will come to pass when Jesus comes again.

If those believers 2500 years ago looked forward with renewed hope to the Messiahs first advent, surely we can look forward to His second advent.

Listen to what John says about that time yet to come.

Read Revelation 21:1-7

It is clear from the second half of the book of Zechariah that God's people continued to face difficult circumstances.

Our situation is no different today.

We live in a world that is still broken because it continues to live in rebellion against God.

But we need not despair. God has made a covenant with us in blood; the saviour's blood shed for us on Calvary.

In these first decades of the 21st century our country, indeed our world seems totally besieged by the forces of evil.

God's people seem helpless in the face of evil's onslaught. Secular humanism seems hell bent on destroying Christian morality and Christian belief in this country.

In the face of this seemingly unstoppable relentless onslaught by Satan (we fight against the powers and principalities) it is often hard for us not to become cynical about others and one another.

It is often hard not to become pessimistic about the future.

It is often hard not to become callous about the needs of our world.

We would do well to take on board Zechariah's message of hope.

No matter what we see happening around us ultimate victory belongs to God and His Messiah.

We are on the winning side my friends.

We have good news to share; the Messiah has come and overcome and he will come again to finally overcome every last vestige of opposition.

Abundant life is ours through his victory over sin and death.

That's the basis of our hope.

Friend do you have a tendency to become cynical about others, or pessimistic about the future or callous about the needs of the world?

Zechariah wants us to know that God is in control.

God's son governs the course of history not political parties or special interest groups.

At His second advent Jesus will purge the world of all evil. Until then let him carry the burden if it overwhelms you.

Take a moment to read Matthew 11:25-30.

Cynicism, Pessimism and Callousness are heavy loads to carry.

Lay those loads down at the feet of Jesus.

Take His yoke.

Trust that he is in control

The dark night of the soul will finally yield to a morning brighter than any other.

God invites us to take hold of hope and in taking hold of hope, discovering joy.

If we will hold on to that hope, anchored in the sure promises of our promises keeping God we will be enabled to face the future with quite confidence.

That holds true even when it seems we will be overwhelmed by life itself.

We have a God who is with us and for us; who is coming again to take us home. In Him we have a sure hope.

(Pastor Kevin Spilsbury)