



Hope

*Sunday
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Becoming Flesh

Hope



St Peter's by the Lake
PAYNESVILLE
Anglican Diocese of Gippsland



Breaking Open the Word

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INTRODUCTION

READINGS

Jeremiah 33.14-16

Psalm 25.1-9

1 Thessalonians 3.9-13

Luke 21.25-36

Book of Common Prayer (1662) Collect

Introduction

Reflection

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Five Days of Meditation and Prayer

Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious Majesty, to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal: through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever.

In this paper titled "Hope in the Light of a Troubled World," Dennis emphasises the profound nature of hope as a guiding

force amid chaos and despair. Drawing from the lectionary texts of Jeremiah, Psalm 25, 1 Thessalonians, and Luke, he defines hope not merely as a passive expectation but as an active commitment to love, justice, and community.

Jeremiah's promise of a righteous Redeemer instils confidence in God's faithfulness.

At the same time, Psalm 25 highlights the importance of trust in God's guidance, encouraging believers to foster a supportive community rooted in mercy and love.

Dennis further illustrates how hope compels action, as expressed in Paul's heartfelt prayers for the Thessalonians to grow in love, demonstrating that true hope is relational and transformative.

Additionally, Dennis reflects on Luke's call for vigilance during adversity, urging believers to maintain hope as they navigate life's challenges. He presents hope as a joyous longing that inspires individual faith and mobilises communities to serve, seek peace, and embody joy despite difficulties.

Dennis concludes that this hope is foundational to understanding humanity's mission as bearers of God's love, inviting believers into active participation in his redemptive work.

Through acts of service, peacemaking, and a joyful witness, believers can reflect the enduring light of hope, guiding themselves and others toward a future of renewal and divine promise.

Prayer

- Reflect on how this week's message challenges you to show love and grace to others in your daily interactions.
- Think about specific situations where you can practice forgiveness this week, both towards yourself and others.
- You can pray for the strength to be a light in your community, seeking opportunities to share kindness and support.
- Could you ask for it? In aligning your actions with your faith so that your choices reflect the teachings you received in the guidance

God of Creation, breathe into us, made of clay,
your gift of life so that we, made in your image
may become your eyes, ears, hands and voice.

Hope in the Light of a Troubled World

Hope is a profound and joyous longing, a beacon that shines amid the darkest circumstances. In a world of turmoil—conflicts, inequalities, and personal struggles—hope provides an anchor for the soul, calling humanity to embody love, peace, and joy. The lectionary texts of Jeremiah 33:14–16, Psalm 25:1–9, 1 Thessalonians 3:9–13, and Luke 21:25–36 serve as a theological and spiritual foundation for understanding hope as not only a promise of better days but also a call to action. They inspire believers to reach out to others, becoming agents of divine love and reconciliation.

Jeremiah 33:14–16: A Promise of Redemption

The prophet Jeremiah speaks to a people in exile grappling with despair and uncertainty. Yet, in Jeremiah 33:14–16, God declares:
“The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at

that time, I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.” (Jeremiah 33:14–15, NRSV)
This promise is a testament to God’s faithfulness. Despite the chaos of their present reality, God assures the Israelites that a time of justice and righteousness will come. This “righteous Branch” prefigures the coming of Christ, whose life and ministry fulfil the hope for redemption.

In light of this, hope is not passive waiting but active trust in God’s unfolding plan. It encourages humanity to strive for justice and righteousness in the here and now, reflecting the character of the promised Redeemer. Today, as individuals and communities face systemic injustices, Jeremiah’s words challenge believers to embody God’s promise, advocating for fairness and extending compassion to the oppressed.

Psalm 25:1–9: Trust as the Foundation of Hope

Psalm 25 is a heartfelt plea for guidance and mercy:
“To you, O Lord, I lift my soul. O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me.” (Psalm 25:1–2, NRSV)

The psalmist links hope with trust, a deep reliance on God’s steadfast love and faithfulness. This trust allows believers to look beyond present struggles, confident in God’s ability to lead and transform. Verses 8–9 emphasise God’s guidance for the humble, underlining that hope often requires humility and openness to divine direction.

The psalm invites reflection on the communal aspect of hope. Just as the psalmist relies on God’s mercy, believers are called to extend mercy to others. This means cultivating a hopeful community where forgiveness, encouragement, and mutual support flourish in a troubled world. Such a community becomes a tangible expression of God’s covenant love, offering a glimpse of the world as it should be.

1 Thessalonians 3:9–13: Hope as a Call to Love

In 1 Thessalonians 3:9–13, Paul

writes with gratitude and longing for the Thessalonian believers, expressing his prayer:

“May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and all, just as we abound in love for you.” (1 Thessalonians 3:12, NRSV)

Paul’s words highlight love as the outgrowth of hope. The Thessalonians are encouraged to await Christ’s return and grow in love and holiness as they do so. Their hope in Christ’s coming is not static; it compels them to action, deepening their relationships and commitment to one another.

This passage reframes hope as relational. In a divided and hurting world, hope takes root when people love generously, transcending race, class, and creed barriers. Such love is transformational, reflecting the nature of God and pointing toward the ultimate reconciliation of all things in Christ. This call to abound in love reminds modern believers that hope is inseparable from our responsibility to care for one another and work for a more just and compassionate society.

Luke 21:25–36: Vigilant Hope in the Face of Adversity

In Luke 21:25–36, Jesus speaks of cosmic upheaval and the coming of the Son of Man:

“Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in a cloud’ with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads because your redemption is drawing near.” (Luke 21:27–28, NRSV)

This passage, often associated with apocalyptic imagery, underscores the tension between present suffering and future redemption. Jesus calls for vigilance, urging His followers to stay awake and pray for strength. In this context, hope is not naïve optimism but a courageous stance in adversity.

The imagery of the fig tree (vv. 29–31) reinforces this point. Just as the budding leaves signal summer’s approach, the signs of the times point to the certainty of God’s kingdom. Believers are reminded to discern grace’s movements amid chaos and stand firm in the promise of redemption.

For the modern world, where natural disasters, political instability, and personal crises abound, Luke’s message is both challenging and reassuring. It invites believers to hold fast to hope, not as an escape from

reality but as a lens through which to view and engage the world’s brokenness. This vigilant hope motivates action, calling us to be signs of God’s kingdom through acts of love, peace, and justice.

Hope as a Joyous Longing and a Call to Action

As illuminated by these Scriptures, hope is both a joyous longing and a transformative force. It inspires individuals and communities to look beyond themselves and address the world’s needs with compassion and purpose. This hope is deeply intertwined with humanity’s identity as image-bearers of God, entrusted with the mission of reflecting divine love.

In a practical sense, hope finds expression in countless ways:

- 1. Acts of Service: Reaching out to the marginalised, feeding the hungry, and advocating for the oppressed are tangible manifestations of hope.
- 2. Peacemaking: Hope calls believers to build bridges and seek reconciliation and understanding in a fractured world.
- 3. Joyful Witness: By embodying joy and gratitude, even in the face of hardship, believers testify to the power of hope rooted in God’s promises.

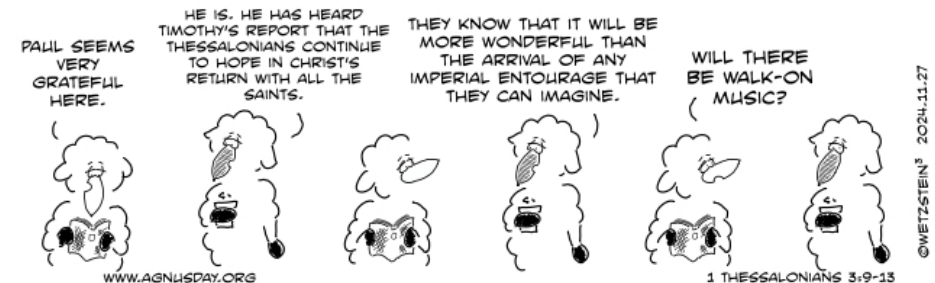
Conclusion

The lectionary readings remind us that hope is not merely wishful thinking; it is a dynamic force rooted in the character and promises of God. Jeremiah points to the fulfilment of divine justice; the psalmist models trust and humility; Paul calls for love that overflows; and Jesus teaches vigilant perseverance. Together, they weave a portrait of hope deeply relevant to a troubled world.

This hope, a joyous longing for a renewed creation, invites believers to participate actively in God’s redemptive work. It challenges us to embrace our role as agents of love, peace, and joy, reaching out to those in need and embodying the hope we profess. In doing so, we become living witnesses to the truth that even in the darkest times, the light of hope endures, guiding us toward the promised day when all things will be made new.

Sources:

- Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version
- Insights into the lectionary texts draw on theological reflections and contextual understandings of the Scriptures.



Discussion Questions

1. How does the promise of redemption in Jeremiah 33:14–16 help us understand the concept of hope during challenging times?
 - This passage from Jeremiah speaks of a 'righteous Branch' that brings justice and righteousness, reminding us that hope is not just about waiting for better days but believing in God's faithful promises.
 - Can you think of a situation in your life where you had to hold onto hope despite your challenges? How did you find strength in that hope?
2. In Psalm 25, the psalmist emphasises trusting in God. How can trust in God be a foundation for hope in our lives?
 - The psalmist links hope with trust and encourages relying on God's guidance and mercy. Thus, the psalmist shows us hope requires humility and a willingness to seek God.
 - Could you reflect on a moment when you feel unsure about something? How can trust in God's plan change your perspective in similar situations?
3. What does Paul mean when he talks about love in 1 Thessalonians 3:9–13, and how does that relate to hope?
 - Paul expresses that hope leads to love and action, indicating that our faith and hope in Christ's return should inspire us to care for and love one another.
 - How can you show love to those around you this week? How can this act of love be tied to your sense of hope?
4. How does Jesus' message in Luke 21:25–36 challenge us to be vigilant and hopeful in a complicated world?
 - Jesus talks about the signs of times and encourages His followers to stay awake and hopeful, suggesting that we must remain active in our faith, even amid challenges.
 - What steps can you take to remain hopeful and vigilant in your faith when facing difficult circumstances?
5. Why must communities embody hope, as described in the sermon, and how can we create such environments?
 - The sermon highlights that hope is best expressed in a community where mutual support, encouragement, and acts of service can flourish and reflect God's love.
 - Think about your school or social environment. How can you contribute to creating a more hopeful atmosphere for your peers?

This five-day devotional will be taking a deeper dive into the sermon from this weekend. We will explore themes of hope, unity, and God's eternal love as we remember those who have gone before us and look forward to the promise of resurrection in Christ.



Day 1 Jeremiah 33:14–16

In times of uncertainty and despair, the promise of God's righteousness shines brightly. As we reflect on Jeremiah's words, we are reminded that our hope is rooted not in our circumstances but God's faithfulness. The "righteous Branch" symbolises the future hope for redemption through Christ, reminding us that hope is characterised by an active trust in God's unfolding plans. This encourages us to be advocates for justice and compassion in our communities, mirroring the character of Christ.

Hope calls us to act, work for justice, and embrace a promising future. As we reflect on this passage, let us examine how we can embody this divine hope in our daily lives and extend it to those oppressed and marginalised.

- What does it mean to actively embody hope in your life?
- In what ways can you advocate for justice in your community?
- How can you remind yourself of God's promises during troubled times? - Pray for the strength to be a beacon of hope in your community.
- Reflect on areas where you can trust God more deeply.



Day 2 Psalm 25:1–9

The psalmist's plea for guidance is a profound reminder of the relationship between trust and hope. Trusting in God's steadfast love gives us the confidence to navigate our struggles, knowing we are not alone. Through this passage, we unlock the communal aspect of hope, which calls us to extend the mercy we receive from God to others, fostering a community of support, forgiveness, and love.

As believers, we are invited to create spaces where encouragement and mutual upliftment thrive. Let us reflect on how our collective trust in God can help us build a hopeful community that embodies his covenant love.

- How can you extend mercy and guidance to those around you?
- What role does community play in your sense of hope?
- How can humility enhance your relationship with God?
- Pray for a heart that recognises and acts on opportunities for compassion.
- Reflect on how you can contribute to a hopeful and supportive community.

Day 3 1 Thessalonians 3:9–13

Paul's heartfelt words to the Thessalonians serve as a reminder that love is the natural outgrowth of hope. Our anticipation for Christ's return should propel us toward deeper relationships and a more significant commitment to one another. This day encourages us to examine the love birthed out of our hope and how it compels us to act, especially in the face of division and hurt within our communities.

Reflecting on this passage, we recognise that true hope requires action, driving us to love without boundaries and fostering reconciliation and understanding across divides. Let's remember that our relationships reflect the nature of God and the hope we find in Him.

- In what ways can you deepen your relationships with others?
 - How does your hope in Christ influence your interactions with people?
 - What barriers can you address in your community to promote love?
 - Pray for the capacity to love generously and authentically.
- Reflect on someone to whom you can extend love today

Day 4 Luke 21:25–36

Jesus' words remind us that hope is not merely a passive wish but an active stance against despair. Amid cosmic upheaval, hope encourages vigilance and prayer, keeping us alert to the movements of grace in chaotic times. This call to discernment challenges us to view our struggles through hope, transforming our experiences into opportunities for growth and action.

As we hold on to hope, we engage with the world as agents of love and justice. Let us reflect on how we can remain vigilant in our faith, actively participating in the work of God's kingdom during both the quiet and tumultuous times of our lives.

- How can you practice vigilance in your spiritual journey? -
- What does hope look like when faced with adversity? -
- How can you remain steadfast in prayer amidst uncertainty? -
- Pray for a spirit of discernment and strength during challenging times. -
- Reflect on an area where you can invite God's redemption.

Day 5 Conclusion

As we conclude this devotional journey, we are reminded that hope is both a joyous longing and a transformative force within our communities. The Scriptures we've explored compel us to move beyond wishful thinking; they call us into action, inviting us to embody the hope we profess. This hope is our anchor in troubled times and propels us towards acts of service, peacemaking, and joyful witness.

Let's carry this hope into our lives, reaching out to others in love and embodying the divine joy from trusting God's promises. May we become living testimonies of hope, pointing toward the day when all things will be made new. -

- How can you carry the lessons of hope into your daily life?
 - How can you continue to serve and reach out to others?
 - How does your understanding of hope shape your future actions?
 - Pray for a joyful heart that reflects hope in all circumstances. -
 - Reflect on how you can actively participate in God's redemptive work.

End notes and further reading

Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of Luke (St Paul's Press)

The Worship Cloud: articles by N.T. Wright and Jane Williams

Andrew's Version: <https://substack.com/@abmcg>



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This is produced on
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