



prayer life!

Weekly Prayer Focus

December 2, 2018

The First Sunday of Advent: The Difference Hope Makes

And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.” —Acts 1:11

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. —Titus 2:11-14

Have you noticed it's getting darker? No, it's not the time change and the sun going down earlier. There's an increase in spiritual darkness—like the growing preference for Halloween over Christmas. The Christian faith has gone from passé to being suspect, as American culture increasingly defines freedom as doing what I want without interference, rather than the right to govern myself. Individual desires and drives are being unleashed and taking control—forces that undermine life, vitality, and true freedom.

The world is not pretty much okay—maybe in need of an adjustment here and there but not too far off. That delusion needs to have some light shined on it—true light, harsh but revealing—to help the world know just how dark things really are. We need the light of truth, righteousness, but above all hope.

That's where we come in. When Jesus said, *You are the light of the world* (Matthew 5:14), He was calling His people out and giving us an assignment. He put us on a lampstand so we can shine. His words, *You are the salt of the earth* (Matthew 5:13), echo the same idea of penetrating distinctness. God's people are different to make a difference. We're in the world but not of it. We penetrate and illuminate.

So what's the difference? Hope.

Christians show the world that sin does not have to be in control. *The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age* (Titus 2:11). The Holy Spirit is working in every believer, empowering righteousness, purity, and holiness.

God not only tells us how to be pure. He enables us to live as we should. His grace gives hope by making holiness “doable” for the believer. God calls Christians to holiness, so the world can see what holiness is like and that in Christ it's possible.

While the world has given in to sin and given up fighting the evil within us, Christians bring the hope of holiness. We make a difference by being different. *At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.* We shine the light of holiness and hope when we walk as children of light (Ephesians 5:8).

Two thousand years ago, God revealed His righteousness in Christ. Jesus' life displayed the perfect standard by which God will judge everyone on earth. But His grace appeared to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works (Titus 2:14). God now reveals His righteousness in us.

When Christ entered our world the first time, it pined in the same darkness we face today. As we anticipate the coming Christmas holiday and prepare to celebrate that first Christmas, we shine the light of hope. The Baby in the manger will come again to reign on earth and make the world the way it should be, to the praise of His glory.

Prayer for Today

Ask God to send revival. Pray that it will be deep, making the love of God the fountain of everything that Christians desire. Ask God to make the coming revival wide, extending to Christians all around the world. Pray that it will be high, exalting Christ above all the leaders and powers of the earth. Pray for it to last long and shape world history for centuries to come.

Pray also for revival to come to Northpoint, moving each person in our body to seek Christ in prayer and the study of God's Word. Ask God to draw us to Himself and into the world, serving His kingdom by the power of the Holy Spirit.

And pray for this revival to take effect, not only in our church leaders, but in us as a congregation as well. Pray for ...

1. **Our Pastors and Directors:** Scott Williams, Tony Chute, Terilyn Brown, Geoff Grant, Taylor Mendoza, and Marti Wiegman.
2. **Our Lay Elders:** Tim East, Steve Flood, Mark Kiker, Mike Russell, and Vinoj Zechariah.
3. **Our Church Staff:** Michelle Balga, Bob Brown, Andria Brucks, Jacob Williams, Carolee Jefferson, Amber McEwen, Mark Norland, Corie Saunders, and Teri Vaughn.

Praise Record

Note when and how God answers your prayers. It will help you to see that He really is paying attention.

Date	Request	Date	Answer

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

—1st Peter 2:9