

Sermon Title: **Hope - The Son of Man is Coming**

Bible: Matthew 24:36-44 (& Isaiah 2:2-5)

Where & When: First Sunday of Advent Service at Gilroy UMC on Dec. 1st, 2019

Audience: about 33 English-speaking Church Members

Opening Prayer

Gracious God, we are waiting for you. We are waiting for your day and your kingdom. We are waiting for your healing, your love, and your grace. Please be with my lips in your love and grace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

1. Lectionary Year A and Advent Wreath in 2019 Advent

Do you remember what the Advent theme was for 2018? It was "Blue Christmas." I still pray that our church and our community are being healed, even in times when we feel blue at Christmas. This year, with the help of the worship team, I decided to follow Lectionary Year A and the meaning of the Advent Candles.

	Old Testament	Psalm	New Testament Letter	Gospel
12/01	Isaiah 2:1-5	Psalm 122	Romans 13:11-14	Matthew 24:36-44
12/08	Isaiah 11:1-10	Psalm 72:1-7,18-19	Romans 15:4-13	Matthew 3:1-12
12/15	Isaiah 35:1-10	Psalm 146:5-10	James 5:7-10	Matthew 11:2-11
12/22	Isaiah 7:10-16	Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19	Romans 1:1-7	Matthew 1:18-25
12/24	Isaiah 9:2-7	Psalm 96	Titus 2:11-14	Luke 2:1-20

Have you heard of the lectionary? The lectionary is a listing made up of a collection of scripture readings. Christianity has a long history of lectionaries, more than fifteen hundred years. There are many lectionaries. Not all, but many protestant churches use the revised common lectionary, because it leads us to cover most parts of the Bible. Each Sunday, there are four scripture readings; first a reading from the Old Testament, a response reading from Psalms, a second reading from the New Testament Letters, and a Gospel Reading. It has a three-year cycle: Year A is based on the Gospel of Matthew, Year B on the Gospel of Mark, and Year C on the Gospel of Luke. The Gospel of John is read during special seasons like Lent. So, generally speaking, if we follow the lectionary for three years, we can cover most parts of the Bible in a balanced and organized way. It begins on the first Sunday of Advent. And this year is Year A.

	Meaning	Color	Old Testament	Gospel
12/01	Hope	Purple	Isaiah 2:2-5	Matthew 24:36-44
12/08	Peace	Purple	Isaiah 11:6-9	Matthew 3:1-12
12/15	Joy	Pink	Isaiah 35:3-10	Matthew 11:2-11
12/22	Love	Purple	Isaiah 7:10-14	Matthew 1:18-25
12/24	Christ	White	Isaiah 9:6-7	Luke 2:1-20

Please look around at our Advent Candle Banners. Now let us look at this Advent Wreath.

This is another beautiful Christian tradition for Christmas. Each candle has a meaning and a color. Among four scripture readings in the lectionary, we will use two scripture readings: Old Testament and Gospel. Our Candle Lighting teams will read some parts from the Prophet Isaiah. I will give the message about the Gospel readings, according to the meaning of each

Advent candle. I hope that now all of you understand what made me choose what might seem like somewhat strange scripture readings during Advent.

2. What image comes to mind when you read today's scripture?

When we read the Gospel of Matthew, what image comes to you? Is it appropriate to read this reading during the Christmas season? Can we find hope? I wonder how our ancestors of faith would have read this scripture with hope? To me, when I read this scripture, one particular movie came to me. I am not sure if you have seen the movie, "Left Behind." In this movie, literally, one person is taken and one is left. The people who are left behind are in panic and scared. The end of the world begins. When I saw this movie, I really enjoyed it at that time. But when I prepare a message of hope, something bothers me. I keep asking myself: where is my hope? What made me follow Jesus? Am I afraid? Or am I loved? On which is my faith built, fear or love? I know that fear is powerful and works well, but it does not last long. Love can look like weakness, but love is strong, and love remains. I believe that our belief is not based on fear or hatred, but based on the love and grace of God. Then, how can I read this scripture with hope?

3. Even The Son of Man Does Not Know

Our mission is to make disciples for the transformation of the world. Every Sunday, we say, "God's kingdom come." I believe that God's kingdom has come already, because we have Jesus, and we have this church. But I believe that God's kingdom is not completed yet. When I see violence and war, when I see people who are marginalized, and when I see the homeless, I

am still waiting for God's kingdom. But, only God knows the day. Even the Son does not know the day. Ironically, this gives me hope. Jesus does not know everything. Likewise, Jesus does not do everything. We cannot solve every problem. But we can do something. Into the fields, into the kitchen, into our workplaces, into our homes, into our normal lives, we can bring our God's love and grace. We do not need to be disappointed that we cannot do everything. We cannot feed all of the homeless all over the world. But we can feed the homeless in Gilroy. We cannot provide houses to the homeless. But we can think of how to get there and take actions. We might not break the cycle of hatred or many discriminations. But, we can help to stop the violence in Gilroy, the States, and war in the world. We can welcome the marginalized and stand up with them. Yes, we can make the world better, and we can taste God's kingdom.

4. The Son of Man Is Coming

English is my second language. When I learned English, I was confused with the use of two verbs "go" and "come." Please educate me. Which one is correct, "She went to the church" or "She came to the church"? I can use both depending on the situation, right? Which one is correct, "I go to church" or "I come to church"? "I come to church" is incorrect. So, I thought that I should say "I am going," instead of "I am coming." But I know that I should say, "I am coming" in many cases.

The "Advent" means "coming" from the Latin word. We are waiting for the coming of Jesus. We will be ready for the day here and now. But we cannot do everything. We are weak and broken. We are not going to God's kingdom. God's kingdom is coming to us, even though we

are not perfect, even though we make mistakes and faults. God will use our strength and our love. And God will also use our weakness and brokenness. God uses us and needs us. However, God's kingdom does not depend on us, but God. With the authority of grace and love, God's kingdom come! God will finish our mission that God had started. God's kingdom will be completed. This is my hope! What an unexpected hope! The Son of Man is coming to wherever we are.

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, thank you so much for your coming towards us as Jesus. You keep pouring out your love and grace towards us. Use us and lead us to your kingdom. We are waiting for your coming. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Questions.

1. What is faith built on, fear or love?
2. What gives you hope?