

Beloved Brothers and Sisters, we live in unprecedented times due to the COVID19 pandemic, the Black Lives Matter debate and the issues of Climate Change and Social and Racial injustice in our nation and world.

Opening Prayer - May I speak to the glory of God the Father, in the power of the Spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Introduction

After a while, the village Baker came to suspect that the village Farmer from whom he bought his butter was serving him short in the weight on his order. So for an entire week he carefully weighed the butter at home, and sure enough his suspicions were confirmed. The Irate Baker had the farmer arrested. A hearing was scheduled without delay.

“I assume you use the standard weights when measuring out your goods?” the Judge asked the Farmer sternly.

“As a matter of fact, I don’t, my Lord,” responded the Farmer calmly.

“Well, then. How do you do your measuring?” said the Judge.

“You see, your Honour, when the Baker began buying butter from me, I decided to buy his bread,” explained the Farmer. “And I measure out his butter by placing his one pound loaf of bread on the other side of the scale.” (From *A Bucket of Surprises* by J. John & M. Stibbe – pg 96)

* Advent is the season of watching and waiting with expectation for the second coming of Jesus Christ, the Messiah and also the preparation for Christmas, the feast of the celebration of the his first coming as the Baby of Bethlehem, Mary’s Boy Child spoken about by the prophets to bring Salvation and a lasting Hope to our fallen world of sinners in need of God’s love and redemption.

The Prophets and their Hope of the Messiah

* On the second Sunday of Advent, we celebrate the Prophets and their Hope of the coming Messiah, as we light the 2nd Advent candle.

* The Old Testament Prophets spoke about this 'Hope' that was to be born in a Manger, as Mary's Boy Child, wrapped in swaddling clothes in Bethlehem of Judea. That Baby boy, Jesus, was born to be the 'Hope of all Humanity,' God's Messiah and Saviour for all. The Prophets also described Christ's four thrones of Majesty, as Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. The government will be on his shoulders and there will be no end to it. (Is 9:1-7)

* Jesus Christ also spoke to his disciple about the *parousia*, the appearing of the Messiah, the coming judgement and the new kingdom that was to come – the Kingdom of God.

* The head of the Kingdom is Jesus Christ, God's Messiah who fulfils the religious yearnings of all the peoples of the world through faith in his finished work on Calvary's cross. He will put an end to all religions created by human beings in their search for God, because, "He is the Way, the Truth and the Life", And, no one would need to worship according to ancient ways or in modern temples of idolatry, because salvation has come through Jesus Christ. (Acts 4:12)

* In Christ, the true Light has come according to the narratives of the Gospel of John in chapter 1:4-5, and his life is the light of all mankind. And all humanity can find their way out of the darkness of sin and rebellion to God, through Jesus Christ, the Light of the world.

* The Disciple's sense of observance was to live as people with a 'Hope' of the Coming Kingdom as a present reality and a reality of the future hope. They were not to be preoccupied with rumours about his coming or the timings of the events of his coming to the point of distraction. Theirs

was the responsibility of living the life as they talked the talk - The announcement of the coming Kingdom, the declaration of God's love and forgiveness to all humanity through his work on Calvary's cross.

* A free gift of God's grace to a fallen world, through the ministry of the Anointed Messiah. (Luke 4:18f)

* Paul wrote about the same theme in his letter to the Thessalonians and encourages them to live worthy of God and his Kingdom. This kingdom is both a present reality and a future hope. He called them to live 'lives worthy both of their dignity now and of their destiny at the end in the *parousia*, his second coming. (1 Thess. 5:5-10)

Conclusions

* As we wait for the Advent of the Son in His coming Kingdom, our way of living is to be put under scrutiny and be rid of all forms of sin and idolatry. We are to turn our backs on the Idols that take the place of importance of the true God such as greed, selfishness, individualism, indifference to the plight of fellow human suffering, social and racial injustice and sexual immorality, racism and the works of the flesh.

* As the village baker learnt from his experience, it will be dealt to us in the same measure we deal it to others.

* The call to us today is to live lives worthy of our present hope in Jesus Christ, our Saviour. To hold on to the hope of the Prophets, with an expectation of our destiny for the future that is only truly secure in Jesus Christ the Coming King in whose kingdom there shall be no end.

* Finally, as Apostle Paul put it in his letter to the Roman Church, "I beseech you brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God to present yourselves as living sacrifices - Holy, Pleasing and Acceptable to God. This is your reasonable act of worship." (Romans 12 vs 1-2)