

Advent Devotional December 7, 2024

Weekly theme: Hope

Scripture

Isaiah 4:2-6

2 On that day the branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and glory of the survivors of Israel. 3 Whoever is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem, 4 once the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning. 5 Then the LORD will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over its places of assembly a cloud by day and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night. Indeed over all the glory there will be a canopy. 6 It will serve as a pavilion, a shade by day from the heat, and a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain.

Devotion

Margaret Heidenreich '24

The Advent season is often called a season of anticipation. During this season, we are imagining what it might have been like to be waiting for our savior. We can only imagine it because we've already had the ending spoiled for us. This season is also one that is often marked by busyness. If you are working for a church, it's a season for worship services, bulletins, and special events. If you are a student, it's often a season of exams and final papers. Along with all of the other responsibilities of daily life come the extra responsibilities. Suddenly, on top of work, you're asked to attend the holiday party for your office. Suddenly, on top of work, you want to join a bible study. Suddenly, on top of work, you are trying to buy gifts for your family and decorate to host your friends for a Christmas party. In the chaos of life, the hope of the season can suddenly be lost completely.

This passage points us back to God's provision for Israel during the Exodus, reminding us that God is present even when it seems that there is no sense of God. The world is scary and lonely at times. Yet God invites us into this season of hope. Some people say that hope is an intrinsic force that is within each of us and that hope cannot be lost but will simply change as life changes. We can put hope and trust in God whose salvific work will heal all nations. If we hope in the never-changing God who has been a canopy of shelter and shade over us from the very beginning, we have no reason to feel hopeless. Perhaps this season, like this passage, is a reminder of God's faithfulness that we can put our hope in. God is a refuge when we feel afraid. God is a refuge when we feel helpless. Hopeless. God continues to be faithful even in our waiting. While everything around us changes, God remains constant and faithful.

During this season of Advent that is busy and stressful, be reminded that God is faithful, and place your hope in God's provision over your life.

Prayer

Gracious and loving God, in this season of anticipation, help me to set aside a moment to be reminded of the hope of this season. Help me to honor this season with joy—joy which I know in your salvation and love over my life. Help me to bring that joy and hope with me into every moment, that I might feel you present within the busyness of this season. Amen.