



LINKS PLAYERS DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Links Players

Hope

Now may God, the source of hope, fill you with abundant joy and shalom by believing [in Him], in order that you will be overflowing with hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13, Hebrew Heritage Bible Newer Testament)

While the southern states are enjoying full access to their golf courses, the outdoor golf season in the Midwest is officially closed.

Many golfers welcome the “off” season, but others will satiate their zest for golf by moving indoors to golf simulators.

I like having an off-season. Matter of fact, most of my golf life has included a four- to six-week break during the holiday season.

Too often, however, during this rest period from golf, I get caught up in the hustle of the holiday season.

My intentions are good, but ultimately, I am distracted from the spiritual reflection I desire in preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ on Christmas morning.

Many Christian traditions call the four weeks leading up to Christmas the Advent season. Advent is about celebrating Jesus’ birth and waiting in expectation for his future return.

Typically, the first theme of Advent is hope. Hope is a feeling of anticipation for something in the future.

Biblical hope, according to BibleProject, “is based on a person, which makes it different from optimism.”

Optimism is directly connected to circumstances. “Biblical hope isn’t focused on circumstances.

In fact, hopeful people in the Bible often recognize there’s no evidence things will get better, but you choose to hope anyway (BibleProject).”

The object of our Biblical hope is Jesus; he is our living hope. His life, death, and resurrection brought hope to all people by offering a way to be forgiven and a renewed relationship with the Creator God of the universe.

But before we get to Resurrection Sunday, we must contemplate that this living hope first came in the form of a vulnerable baby. It is why we celebrate Christmas.

Has hope been within reach for you? Or is hope a shadow in your imagination?

If we don't minimize our pain or suffering, how might we invite hope to participate in the Christmas story this season?

The Hebrew words most often used for biblical hope are yakhal and qavah. They both bring the meaning to wait, even if there is tension in the waiting.

As we consider this first week of the Advent season, the source of our hope (God) wants to fill us with joy and shalom (peace), so that this same hope can overflow out onto others.

Today, let us ponder how we are waiting with expectation in new and surprising ways for living hope this Christmas season.

Prayer: Lord, lead me to your living hope this week so that I may drink from the deep waters of scripture. Thank you for being our source of hope.

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Tracy Hanson

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