



Hope
November 29, 2020
Mark 13:24-37

Connect:

- Christmas decorations went up in stores and homes across the world much earlier than usual this year. People are desperate for the hope that comes in, and through, Christmas. How have you (*or will you*) decorate for Christmas this year? Do you have any traditions when it comes to preparing your home?

Engage

- Read **Mark 13:24-37**. This apocalyptic (*revealing* or *uncovering*) story told by Jesus is full of several different ideas. Pick one of the movements within this text that raises the most questions or curiosities in you. What stands out about that particular idea? Why?
- On this first Sunday of Advent, we wonder again just what the season is all about. The word “*Advent*” itself comes from the Latin word for “*coming*.” As Christmas, it is a season of watching and waiting for the coming of Christ – the movement of God in the world and in our lives. When it comes to your faith, what are you watching and waiting for right now? Why?
- Mark’s gospel, the earliest of the four canonical gospels, was written during a time of chaos. The Jewish temple had been destroyed and religious folks were searching for what they had seen as the loss of their sacred heart. Jesus’ word, in the midst of such a time, says, “*Keep alert*.” How often do you feel like your life of faith, or your life in general, is on autopilot? What does it mean to “*keep alert*” during times of chaos – much like we’re living through in 2020?
- Preaching great, Fred Craddock, dropped some wisdom when he said, “*Many people are obsessed with the second coming because, deep down, they were really disappointed in the first one.*” People expected a warrior and got a non-violent Jesus instead. What are your expectations of Jesus? How do you consider the idea of his second coming?
- Many people have spent many hours of study trying to predict the *how’s* or *when’s* or *what’s* exactly as it pertains to the “*Master’s return*” as Jesus names it in this story. Yet even Jesus is quick to say, “*No one knows the day or hour, not even me.*” Instead of predicting things outside of our control, what are we to be doing with our time?

Next Steps:

- Hope should never end with us. Hope is meant for everyone. Imagine this week how you might be a conduit of hope. Find tangible ways to share your hope with someone feeling less-than-hopeful right now. Take note of how you share and the impact of passing hope on to another.

Pray:

- “*In our quest for meaning, we search everywhere. Often times, when asked, “Have you found it?” the answer is “Not so far.” Your hope, God, is different. It is always close. Help us see it, feel it, and claim it as so. Amen.*”