

Pastor Andrew's Weekly Thought

Hope gives us courage.

Isaiah 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

The prophecy above talks about a Davidic line of a king whose reign would keep on increasing. Of course, no earthly king can accomplish this, and this prophecy refers to Christ who fulfilled this prophecy in establishing the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God has come, but first it comes like in the Parable of the Mustard Seed – small and humble beginning. But the small mustard seed will take root and the plant will grow to a substantial tree and birds will come to rest on it. From 2000 years of Christian history, we have the hindsight to see how the Kingdom of God has grown. It is amazing that from one solitary life in King Jesus, this Kingdom has today claimed up to 1/3 of the world population.

But of course, we do see setback of large scale abandoning of the Christian faith as in Europe; we do see lethargy in the spread of the Kingdom in many nominal churches, we do see threats from other isms around the world. Yet despite all these happenings as foretold in the Parable of the Weeds, we do see the steady increase of “his government and peace.” The Kingdom of God through its church is still advancing!

How are we to understand and respond to this prophesy? Does it mean that because in the end God's Kingdom is going to advance anyway, I can relax and do nothing? Not at all! When God's Word is given to us, it is always to rouse us, not to douse us. How does it do that?

As citizens of the Kingdom, we are to engage in the world. We are to spread its peace and righteousness through the proclamation of the gospel and through her life of righteousness. The consummation of the Kingdom at the end of time, instead of dousing us, should be rousing us to action precisely because of the hope we have in Christ. While we do this there will be opposition as there has been in the last 2000 years. Because of the hope we have, we find courage to continue to do battle with all the evils around us.

The hope we have is not liken to opium that lulls us to do nothing. The hope we have makes us realists. With one eye, we are focused on the battles in the world. With the other eye, we are focused on the coming of Christ. Christian hope always stirs us; it gives us strength and courage to face the challenges of life here and now.

So during this Advent season, whatever challenges and difficulties you may have, let the hope of Advent gives you strength and courage to face them. We are people of hope. We are more than conquerors through Him who loves us.

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for the hope I have in You – hope of the future that gives me the strength and courage to face the present.