

# ADVENT AND THE HEART

## “*A Mature Heart*”

Scripture Reading: ROMANS 5:1-5

- ) **SLIDES 1-6.** Bible Jeopardy!
- ) Today and for the next three weeks we will be taking a break from our expository study of the Book of GALATIANS. I say we need to end 2020 here at BGCC with good news. Amen? We will be focusing on the season of Advent and a short series I have titled “*Advent and the Heart.*”
- ) **SLIDE 7-8.** With that in mind, let’s read today’s Scripture text.
- ) **SLIDE 9.** According to Christian tradition, the four Sundays leading up to Christmas day is called the season of Advent. Webster defines the word “*advent*” as “*a coming into being or use.*”
- ) So, what is coming into being? As Christians, we eagerly anticipate celebrating the birth of the Savior to this world. The Messiah. And His name is Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ.
- ) **SLIDE 10.** This Savior does something to the human heart. And each week we will look at what that something is. I have titled today’s message “*A Mature Heart.*”
- ) **SLIDE 11.** Each Sunday in Advent is given a word to identify that Sunday. Today’s word is “*hope.*” The word “*hope*” or some form of that word is used 137 times in the NASB.
- ) In 21<sup>st</sup> century America we use the word “*hope*” almost exclusively as a verb. We will say, “*I hope this happens*” or “*I hope she has a safe trip.*” But when the Bible uses the word “*hope*”, in most cases and as we see here in ROMANS 5, it is a noun. So, what is hope (the noun)?

- ) **SLIDE 12.** Webster defines the verb “*hope*” as: “*to desire with expectation of obtainment.*” Webster then defines the noun “*hope*” as: “*Someone or something on which hopes are centered.*” Putting the 2 together we could say this: “*hope is the object that I expect to obtain.*”
- ) For the Christian, hope would be knowing all of our sins have been forgiven. Hope would be the assurance of eternal life. Hope would be knowing we will one day meet the Savior who saved us and gave us hope. And Biblically speaking, I expect to obtain these things, not because I earned them or deserve them, but because I have been promised them.
- ) Here in ROMANS 5:1-5, the Apostle Paul tells us that there are steps that make that hope in our Christian walk come to maturity. Yes, a new believer in Christ has hope, but that hope gets deep-rooted in our hearts as we mature in our Christian walk. So, how does hope help mature our hearts?
- ) Before we continue, may I add that the hope in which I will be speaking is only for believers. The unbeliever has no hope. Not Biblical hope. Perhaps a hope in a COVID vaccine. Let’s go through these 5 steps in ROMANS with that in mind.
- ) **SLIDE 13.** ROMANS 5:1-2. Read.
- ) **SLIDE 14.** The believer will be **JUSTIFIED** by faith and faith alone. We have been talking about justification in our study in GALATIANS. Believers are justified. That means we are “*made right*” in the sight of God by our faith.
- ) Our sin had us separated from God. But now a person is justified and that relationship with the Father has been restored or made right. Again, hope is only for the believer.
- ) **SLIDE 15.** What is the next step in maturing our hearts in hope? ROMANS 5:3a. Read.
- ) **SLIDE 16.** The believer will experience trials and **TRIBULATION** in life.

- ) Tribulation (trials) in the life of a believer is not a maybe. It's a certainty. It will happen. If you are a human being walking on this planet, you will have trials and tribulation.
- ) **SLIDE 17**. HEBREWS 2:10. God wants to perfect us towards hope, so He allows some trials and suffering.
- ) **SLIDE 18**. Read 1PETER 1:6,7. When we suffer in our trials, we are blessed and should rejoice. Not only should we rejoice, we should praise God while going through it. That is a very easy thing for me to say but is a very difficult thing to live.
- ) **SLIDE 19**. Every true believer on their journey to have a mature heart will 1) be justified by faith, 2) experience trials and tribulation in life.
- ) **SLIDE 20**. ROMANS 5:3. Read.
- ) **SLIDE 21**. The believer will **PERSEVERE** through those trials.
- ) **SLIDE 22**. JAMES 1:2-4. Explain.
- ) When God allows trials, tribulation, and suffering it separates the wheat from the tares. It separates the sheep from the goats. The possessor of real faith stands strong through the storm like a house built on a rock. But the professor of a false faith crashes in the storm like a house built on sinking sand.
- ) **SLIDE 23**. In the parable of the sower and the seed in MATTHEW 13, Jesus tells us that many will fall away. They are tested and fail the test. Why? They fall away due to 1) the worries of life, 2) the deceitfulness of wealth, 3) trouble, or 4) persecution because of the Word.
- ) JOHN 6:66 tells us that many of His disciples turned back and no longer followed Him. Why? The teaching got tough. These followers had a false faith.
- ) **SLIDE 24**. Every true believer on their journey to have a mature heart will 1) be justified by faith, 2) experience trials and tribulation in life, 3) persevere through those trials.

- ) **SLIDE 25.** ROMANS 5:3. Read.
- ) **SLIDE 26.** The believer will demonstrate proven **CHARACTER** as a result of that faith.
- ) **SLIDE 27.** Webster defines “*character*” as “*moral excellence and firmness.*”
- ) **SLIDE 28.** ACTS 17:11. Explain their noble character.
- ) **SLIDE 29.** PHILIPPIANS 2:19-22. Read. A person with proven character is not self-serving but delights in serving others. They exhibit moral excellence and are firm and consistent in their Christlike behavior.
- ) **SLIDE 30.** Every true believer on their journey to have a mature heart will 1) be justified by faith, 2) experience trials and tribulation in life, 3) persevere through those trials, 4) demonstrate character as a result of that faith.
- ) **SLIDE 31.** ROMANS 5:4-5. Read.
- ) **SLIDE 32.** Here’s where we come to the end of this journey. The mature believer will have hope and hope does not **DISAPPOINT** us. Why? Because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
- ) **SLIDE 33.** This season of Christmas promises us hope—hope of a Savior because He promises He will save His people from their sins. That’s the best hope anyone could ever have.
- ) **SLIDE 34.** So, what does the mature Christian heart look like? Read. The mature Christian heart has hope. Hope—the object I expect to obtain. Not because I earned it, but because I was promised it. And this hope will never disappoint us.

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