

The Gift of Hope

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-20

November 29, 2020

Restore us, God Almighty; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved. (Psalm 80:7)

Unwrapping the gifts of Christmas evokes images of children rushing to the tree Christmas morning, eager to find their packages and experience the joy of surprise and discovery. How different is it, to dwell for a moment on a verse or passage from the Bible, and find within it a gift waiting to be discovered. Perhaps a gift of insight, grace, forgiveness or even hope.

In this verse from Psalm 80, God is an active participant in relationship with each of us. The prayer asks God to take an action, “make your face shine on us”. But the action is actually within ourselves. When we seek guidance and believe that God has provided for our needs we find hope. In the language of the verse, we are saved.

Writing in this advent season imbues a special meaning to hope. With cancelled family gatherings, the isolation of our elders in senior living facilities, and the myriad hardships impacting vulnerable individuals and communities, our collective hopes and dreams seem more challenged than ever. We may wonder how to respond to these new circumstances. So much seems to be going wrong, how do we maintain hope?

The promise of our faith is that our lives are never beyond the reach of hope. This is a profound promise, truly superhuman. As we continue new challenges and obstacles, we can remember that in the short dark days of winter, hope is a gift of our faith. And, like a child opening a Christmas present, we can too can savor this gift today and every day through the advent.

Prayer: God, in our hour of darkness, remind us of your promise of peace, that we may kindle our hearts with hope and humility to continue to seek your heaven on Earth this advent.

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