

The Power of Hope

Series: Inbreaking: The Kingdom Come at Christmas

Luke 1:38-45 (1727)

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Advent *The arrival, appearance, emergence of a notable person, thing, or event.*

Luke 1:38-45 NIV ³⁸“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her. ³⁹At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth.⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴²In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!” ⁴³But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!”

I. What is to be the church’s relationship to power?

a. The church has misunderstood its power for centuries

1 Peter 1:1; 2:11 NIV *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to God’s elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces ...as foreigners and exiles*

b. The church has struggled to cope with the reality of 21st century life

c. The Power of Hope in the context of Jesus coming to earth

James Davison Hunter *It may be that the healthiest course of action for Christians is to be silent for a season and learn how to enact their faith in public through acts of shalom rather than to try again to represent it publically through law, policy and political mobilization. [It would not be withdraw but rather] a season to learn how to engage the world in public differently and better.*

II. So how do we engage the world with the power of hope in Jesus?

a. Make peace with our status as foreigners and exiles in the world

Jeremiah 29:4-7 ESV ⁴“Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. ⁶Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do

not decrease. ⁷ But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

Jerimiah 29:10-11 NIV ¹⁰ *This is what the Lord says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*

James Davison Hunter *The church will not flourish in itself nor serve well the common good if it isolates itself from the larger culture, fails to understand its nature and inner logic, and is incapable of working within it—critically affirming and strengthening its healthy qualities and humbly criticizing and subverting its most destructive tendencies.*

b. Learn to practice "faithful presence" in our world

James Davison Hunter *Only by being fully present to God as a worshipping community and as adoring followers can we be faithfully present in the world. This plays out in three critical ways. ...Being fully present to each other... being fully present and committed to our daily tasks... and being fully present and committed in our spheres of influence.*

c. Acknowledge and address the tensions we live with as believers