**The Hope-Filled Life (1 Peter 3:8-15)**

 The hope of Christ’s coming is a pillar of our spiritual life. Greetings to you dear brothers and sisters on this first Sunday of Advent, as we meditate on hope today. The arrival of our Lord Jesus to our world represents a huge change for us. With his first coming, the Lord caused a major spiritual revolution in the universe, completing both the act of salvation and the victory over death. Jesus’ first coming (in other words his birth), prepares us for his second coming, by giving us hope. Today we’re going to talk about that same hope, which drives us to a unique lifestyle. Again, the hope of Christ’s (final) coming is a pillar of our Christian faith-walk. Let’s speak, then, about a life that is filled with the hope of His coming.

 The life that is full of the hope of Christ’s Coming is the God-fearing life. The Apostle Peter’s advice to the believers is clear: they are to be united in mind, sympathetic, blessing people as an answer to being cursed, staying away from evil deeds, doing good things. Also, they are to be seekers of peace, not fearing the suffering that comes from doing what is right, worshipping God in their hearts, and always being ready to defend the faith humbly and with respect. All the above attitudes show a perfect trust in God. They show that our hope in the Second Coming of Christ keeps us in his will, since the God-fearing life live here is naturally connected to life there, where the Lord will bring us in to be with him forever.

 Think about this: if the Final Judgment was not going to happen, our final accounting of our life’s work would not take place. If there was no hope that Jesus was going to return, then we would not know our final state of justification beforehand – (in other words, there would be no assurance). However, because both of the above are going to happen simultaneously, the two realities of a reckoning and a renewal become causes to live a holy life and also to persevere in all manner of trials and tribulations.

 This is like a marathon runner who needs a reason or a hope to keep him or her moving forward. When they remember that their child has great hopes set on them and are waiting for them at the finish line, or when they remember that they are going to win a hundred thousand dollars if they win, their strength comes back to them and they continue the race with energy.

 We also, in turn, have a reason to live a God-fearing, holy life. Our hope is the return of the Lord. Whether it is by remembering his birth, which is his first coming, or whether it is when we gather as a church and feel his immediate arrival in the form of the tangible touch of the Holy Spirit on our bodies, or whether we remember the hope of Christ’s return in our moment of hardship and the hope of being vindicated. Whether we bear all kinds of injustices, knowing that the Lord will give each person what they deserve, even if we don’t see that justice in our lifetime, through it all, we hope in the return of Jesus Christ. Since he is coming both to judge and to vindicate us, we live a holy life, patiently journeying through this sin-corrupted world. A life that hopes in Christ’s return is called to live a God-fearing life.

 Therefore, let us be patient in our trials and tribulations. Let us rejoice in Christ and the hope of his return. Because the Lord is the one that will punish evil justly, as well as vindicating each of us who has devoted themselves to and followed him. The hope of Christ’s coming is a pillar of our spiritual life. May the Lord Bless You All – Amen.