**Hope**

***5****Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* **2***Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3**Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4**and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5**and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.* (Romans 5:1-5, ESV)

 Faith that is based on Jesus will never put us to shame.

 Greetings to you dear brothers and sisters as we begin our Advent journey toward Christ’s Birth and Epiphany. Our themes for the next four Sundays are hope, peace, joy and love. Today we’re talking about the hope that is founded on the person of Jesus and His life. The Apostle Paul says, *“hope does not put us to shame, because the love of God has been poured into hour hearts…”* through the Spirit. So, what it that hope, and how to we apply the awareness of it in our daily lives? Again, a faith that is based on Jesus will never be put to shame. (Let’s move to our topic, then).

 The justification that God brought about gives us the hope of Christ’s Return. First and foremost, that justification happened when Jesus’ self-sacrifice and Resurrection were done. However, these two things are only effective for us because we accepted them as saving acts, received by our faith in them. Jesus’ saving deed was the Father’s hand extended to us, so that we could say “yes” to him or take hold of His hand and be lifted up from our spiritually dead life. When we believed in Christ, accepted Him, and devoted our lives to Him, Paul says, in effect, *“we not only have peace, but also the hope of the Glory of God.”* This latter term, the “glory of God”, is to be understood as Jesus’ Second Coming to this world. In other words, the Kingdom of Heaven, which is the object of our hope (also called the Kingdom of God), will not “put us to shame”, says the Apostle. Our hope is completely on the return of our Lord Jesus, since this world, even with all its joys and beautiful moments, is still an imperfect, broken, and eventually decaying and dying reality.

 A ship that has no anchor is always in danger when a storm arises at sea. However, when it does have one, even in the worst circumstances, the sailors can lower the anchor and calm the boat from its chaotic movements. When all else fails, the anchor is the hope of those on the ship.

 Today our hope of salvation is Jesus and His Return to judge and renew this world. Since we have faith in Him, we are called to have hope. Since we’ve trusted our final spiritual status to Jesus, we have hope in the good outcome of His Return, which is also simultaneous with our final resurrection and eternal life with Him.

 No matter what we are going through, Jesus’ Second Coming (or Return), which is remembered in this season as we get ready for His First Arrival in His Birth, is our most solid, and powerful hope. We know that Jesus’ Return stands against disease, pain, impossible situations, even death – because it is God’s Glory, eternal life for all of us believers. Therefore, come and let down your burdens from your shoulders, and begin to hope in Jesus’ Return. Let your hope be in God’s Final Judgment, and not in people, kings, doctors, or material resources.

 In this life, the only trustworthy anchor we have is Jesus’ Return, both in His Presence every day, but especially in His Return. This is so important that the Bible finishes with the prayer, “Amen, Come Lord Jesus,” before the final blessing.

 So, let us recognize our hope, Jesus Himself, and especially His Return, to judge and to renew all of us. Remember, faith that is based on Jesus will never put us to shame. The Lord Bless You All, Amen.