

Sermon Notes – Advent Sunday 29th November

'Hope in times of trouble'

Ever since God judged Adam and Eve for their sin, death has plagued humanity. It snatches those we love and looms over all our lives like a menacing spirit. The Bible calls death our final enemy. We hate death for the desolation it causes to our closest and deepest relationships and the trail of grief it leaves in its wake.

In John 11 we see how Jesus reaches out to a family struggling with the pain of death and shows us why we need never fear death again offering Living Hope to all who place their trust and confidence in Him. If we can be confident in our hope when faced with death, how much more can we be confident when facing times of trouble?

Read John 11:1-44,15,

Often in the NT those who die in the faith of Christ are described as 'falling asleep' (v11, Acts 7:60, 13:36, 1 Cor 11:30, 15:6,18,20, 1Thess 4:13,14, 5:6,10).

- How does the idea of 'falling asleep' help you to prepare for your own death and not be fearful?
- What evidence of Hope is there in Martha's greeting of Jesus (11:21-22)?
- How does Jesus stretch Martha's faith in this brief encounter (v21-27)?
- What do you think Martha is hinting at in this remark? (v22)
- Recall occasions when you have prayed 'Even now' prayers (v22) when a situation might have appeared hopeless.
- What was the outcome?
- How does Jesus' statement (v25,26) encourage you when faced with the death of a loved one or your own death.
- In what ways will this chapter change the way you respond to personal difficulty or the apparent delay of God?

Pray for one another in your group that each person may be encouraged in faith to be a people of hope, filled with the Holy Spirit.