



HOPE

HOPE AND ANTICIPATION

By: Bailey Buhrman

Even without looking at the calendar, you can feel the holidays approaching. The air crisps as the dust from the harvest has left with the wind. The twinkling lights refresh each neighborhood fighting the early sunset. November rushes into December and all of a sudden, it's time! Time for parties and traditions. Cookies and gifts. Christmas villages and letters to Santa. You walk around just about to sing loud enough for all to hear, and for some, it is so tangible they really do just go around spreading Christmas cheer. We are ripe with anticipation for what is to come.

Christmas is exciting! For believers everywhere, we know **the Messiah was born!**

Luke 2:10-11 "And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

Fear not for there is **good news!** Jesus has arrived. And just like when anyone you love has a birthday coming up, it is time to prepare to celebrate!

Some families are all-out types of celebrators. You know them, you love them – *even if you don't* – because they are the perfect embodiment of the Christmas spirit. They've got the traditions locked in and make it downright magical to be around during the full month of December. There's a sense deep inside of us – *whether from Hallmark or the Holy Spirit* – **that miracles are possible, especially during Christmas time.** That is worth preparing our hearts for. We will find love. The money will come in. Travel will be smooth. The prodigal will return. The timing will be perfect. We have hope to believe it just will, because Jesus already conquered the things of this world! But where does this extra sense of hope come from? Do all of our needs wait for December to pile up? Is there a spiritual significance to the power of the holidays? Or maybe, **is hope a part of our holiday tradition?**

These sentiments within themselves are not necessarily incorrect, especially as faith-filled believers. We have seen hope fulfilled time and again! The surprise bonus was exactly enough. Healing occurred before our eyes. Relationships were restored. The perfect Christmas arrived. The

Lord of all things can and will provide for us, will restore what has been broken, and will do it in His timing. But why does this hope spike specifically around this time of year?

If we go back to the roots of Christmas, this celebration of the arrival of Jesus to the earth, the first announcement to the shepherds was to *fear not* for there is *good news*. This command to *fear not* sounds a lot like they were being called to *have hope*. The *good news* in question is packed full of history, prophecy, and all kinds of anticipation. The people who heard this message would have immediately understood it to be the arrival of the one they had been hoping for all this time. The fulfillment of all their hopes was winding anticipation tighter. The hope of the world began His journey – a lifetime process beginning with a sweet, silent infant.

I believe that this season leads us to the end of the year celebration and remembrance of the arrival of the Savior of the world. It places us right in the perfect position to have hope stirring in our hearts. The days grow shorter. The breeze gets colder, shutting us in for those long nights. Nature is queuing us up to slow down and reflect on all the year has been, prepare for the present, and anticipate all that is ahead. Within this beautifully woven season, what better message to be ringing in the cheer than, “*Fear not* for there is *good news*.” What better time than now to have hope.

Psalm 71:14 But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.

Questions:

1. Take a moment to reflect on the *good news* over your life.
2. Where has the presence of Jesus in your past inspired your ability to hope for the future?
3. What are you anticipating in this season?