Our scripture this morning comes from Titus 2:11-14. While you’re finding that, a couple from the city went to a Dude Ranch in Texas. The cowboy was preparing the horses and asked, “Do you want a Western or English saddle?” The couple asked, “What’s the difference?” “Well, one has a horn and one doesn’t.” The husband replied, " I’ll take the one without the horn. I don't expect we'll hit too much traffic." Some people approach Jesus this way – they’re not expecting hardship, sickness, loss, loneliness. “Preacher, give me that life without Jesus.” There’s no hope in this world without Jesus. It’s only too late when we reach the end of the trail – but which if us knows when our trail will end?.

**Titus 2:11-14 11For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works.**

Today, we light the Advent candle of Hope. What a beautiful word – Hope! We celebrate the Hope that Jesus brought when He died for us on the Cross during this time of Advent, but we also celebrate the expectation of His returning, looking with wide eyes toward the horizon each morning, knowing that our Christ could split the sky at any second, coming in the clouds, with great glory and honor, to take us to the place that He has prepared for us. We may never see Christmas, Jesus could come next week. We may never see tomorrow, Jesus might come today. We might not see the end of this sermon, Jesus might come in the next moment… are we ready?

There’s a song – On Christ the Solid Rock I Stand – I love that song. It starts out with this line – My hope is built on nothing less that Jesus blood and righteousness. The hope of every Christian must be built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness. It cannot be built on the hope in the pastor, the pastor is tired. It cannot be built on the hope that the church is always happy and no one gets upset, people say things they shouldn’t or we hear things they didn’t say. It cannot be built on our children or our neighbors or our family or the doctor or our health or our job… all of these are doomed to fail eventually! I had someone tell me the other day, “You never let me down.” Just give me time. Jesus is the only Hope we can safely build on – He is Christ the Solid Rock – all other ground is sinking sand… as the song says.

Advent is all about appreciating Christ’s first coming and waiting in Hope that our blessed Redeemer is on His way for a Second coming. Titus 2:11 says - **For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.** This is testimony of the first coming – in the next verse, we’re instructed on how to live in the period between the first coming and the second coming – between the time we commit to Jesus and the time we see Him face to face. Verse 12 - **we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.** Notice the personal responsibility here – it doesn’t say, be sure others live this way. It says – live this way… Live this way, even when someone upsets you, even when you didn’t like the sermon – Live to encourage others, edify others, be an example to others, while we wait expectantly with our eyes cast upward!

Verse 11 and 12 covered the first coming, now verse 13 takes on the second - **looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.** We have responsibility here too! Looking, searching the skies for that glorious appearing, and it will be glorious! My father used to say that there were two ways to wake in the morning – One is good morning Lord! And the other is Good Lord it’s morning. What do we choose? Do we wake and dash to the window thinking that today just may be the day that our Savior returns? We’ll see Him Face to face. I’d say that most Christian’s never really think about it at all. Their thoughts are on the commute or the presentation or the argument with the spouse or the mean coworker. Be careful what you treasure in your first thoughts of the day - For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Where is your Hope this morning? Is it built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness? Or is it built on the hopelessness of the world? Is your hope in the next doctor, the next job, the next love interest, the next self help book? Or is your hope in the Great Physician that redeemed you for Himself? Here at Christmas our Hope must be in Jesus. If you’ve never trusted Him, what a gift to give – give your heart to Him and He will give you eternal salvation! This is the morning and today is the day. We don’t know when He will appear… we only know that He will. Maybe you’re saved but you’ve slipped and you’re not really living a sober, righteous, godly life… you spend more time judging the fruit of others than producing fruit yourself – this day is a great day to come, repent of that, and become someone who encourages and edifies, zealous for the good works of the gospel. Regardless, Jesus invites you to come as we sing… take that first step and He will do the rest.