Title: Titus 2:11-3:7
Series: 2026 One-Off Sermon
Speaker: Joshua Parrish
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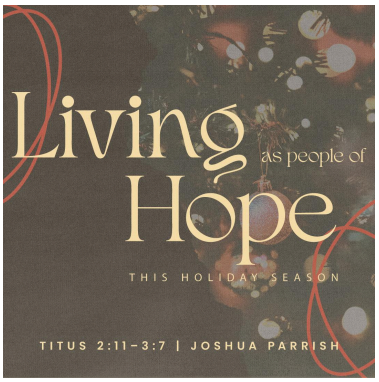

Key Texts: Titus 2:11-3:7, Lamentations 3:19-26, Romans 8:22-25

Introduction: Advent is a season of waiting, and Josh reminded us that real hope is honest about what we are waiting for, and what we cannot fix on our own. Bonhoeffer, writing from prison, said it's like waiting for a door only someone outside can open. In his letter to Titus, Paul reminds us that we, too, have been bound, enslaved to our own addictions, idols, thought patterns, and struggles. We couldn't find a way out until Jesus appeared, opening the door and giving us a freedom we could never earn. In Advent, we remember that we live in the tension of hope, already free because Christ has come, and yet still waiting for Him to come again. This hope frees us to remember that rather than settling in as if this life were our permanent home, we are a people on a journey toward something better - free to hold our comforts loosely and love others well along the way.

Icebreaker: Think of a memorable holiday trip or journey home, whether a long road trip, a delayed flight, or a drive to see family. What made the waiting along the way bearable (or unbearable), and was the arrival worth it?

Discussion Questions

1. Read **Titus 2:11-3:7** aloud as a group. What words or phrases stand out to you? In addition, what words or phrases stood out to you from the sermon, as Josh briefly walked us through the entire letter?

2. Bonhoeffer compared life in a prison cell to Advent: "the door is shut, and can only be opened from the outside." Josh asked, "Is life in a prison cell all that foreign to me?" We tend to look around and think we aren't like others, becoming puffed up and impressed with ourselves, and we can miss our own poverty. Read Titus 3:3. Why do you think it is so hard to see our own poverty and brokenness? Has there been a time when coming face to face with your own need or brokenness became the very place you experienced God's hope and freedom?

3. Read **Lamentations 3:19-26**. Josh noted that these are not words that simply sound optimistic or nice. They are words from the wilderness, spoken by people waiting to be found. Yet they bring relief, peace, and joy: "His compassions never fail. They are new every morning." When have you experienced God's faithfulness in a wilderness season? Where are you waiting to be found right now?

4. Titus 2:14 says Jesus gave Himself "to purify for himself a people that are his very own." Josh reminded us that Jesus treasures us, and righteous living (being self-controlled, upright, and godly) flows from being His treasured possession, not the other way around. Freedom is not earned or deserved but freely and undeservedly given. How does it feel to think of yourself as treasured by Jesus? Where might you still be trying to earn what has already been given?

5. *We live from Christ's arrival*: when we put our faith in Christ, our cell door was opened, so we live as free people because we are. *We hope in Christ's return*: our slavery has been dealt with, but we have not yet arrived, and the Holy Spirit leads us as we live in the tension of hope (Romans 8:22–25). Josh said the temptation is to make this life a permanent dwelling, building it around comfort and security instead of journeying toward what is better. Which of these two truths do you most need to lean into this season? Where do you notice yourself settling in, holding on tightly to comfort or security?

6. Titus 3:14 says, "Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives." Josh reminded us that we don't have to hold so tightly to what we have; this season is more about who we love and how we love them. In pairs or triads, share: Who is God putting on your heart this holiday season, and what is one urgent need you could help meet? What would it look like to live as a reflection of the One who arrived to save us? Close by praying for one another.

Key Takeaways

- **Hope begins with honesty.** Seeing our own need and brokenness, rather than comparing ourselves to others, is where hope starts.
- **Freedom is a gift.** God came to us in Jesus and set us free, not because we earned it, but because of His mercy (Titus 3:5).
- **We live from Christ's arrival; we hope in Christ's return.** We are already free, yet still waiting, living in the tension of hope.
- **We are a journeying people.** This life isn't our permanent home, so we hold our comforts loosely, devote ourselves to doing good, and love others well (Titus 3:14).

Practice: Waiting with Hope

This week, set aside 10 minutes each morning to wait with God. Slowly read Lamentations 3:21–24, then name one place where you need Him to open a door and one way His compassion has been new for you. Close by asking: Where am I holding too tightly to comfort? Who can I love well today? Then look for one concrete way to meet someone's need this week.