

Sunday, December 31

Scripture Reading: Job 11: 13-18

Text for Today: Colossians 1: 23 and 27

*But you must stay deeply rooted and firm in your faith. You must not give up the **hope** you received when you heard the good news. It was preached to everyone on earth.*

*God did this because he wanted you to understand his wonderful and glorious mystery. And the mystery is that Christ lives in you and he is your **hope** of sharing in God's glory.*

Every year I love to watch old holiday movies. "It's a Wonderful Life" is always a favorite. In the movie, Jimmy Stewart loses everything, especially **hope**, and in a **hopeless** moment, wishes he had never been born. In the course of the movie he is shown what an important part he has played in the lives of others and how difficult life would have been for his family and friends if he had never existed.

Christmas is a reminder that we need never feel **hopeless**. Bright lights on homes and Christmas trees are reminders of the light of **hope** that Jesus' birth brought to the world, and it continues to shine brightly and chase any shadows of doubt away. It lights the depths of our hearts when darkness threatens and our faith is challenged. **Hope** is our confident anticipation of the good things to come. In Hebrews 11:1 we read, "Now faith is the assurance of things **hoped** for, the conviction of things not seen." If we nourish **hope** in our hearts, it supports us in the present and moves us to the future of the good things God has in store for us.

As one year comes to a close and another approaches, it's easy to become anxious about what is ahead for us. Changes are inevitable and scary, but our faith and **hope** remind us of the possibilities and blessings beyond what we can imagine that God has planned for us. After all, he sent his son to live and die among us just so we might be saved and join him someday in paradise.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for your unbelievable gift, Jesus. If we are tempted to lose **hope** or faith, remind us of all you have done for us. You are truly the only **hope** we ever need. Keep us faithful to your word and steadfast in our **hope** of everlasting life through Jesus Christ, your son. Amen

Mary Jane Oliver

