

Scripture Reading: Mark 1:4-11

Hope is being able to see that there is light, despite all the darkness.
—Archbishop Desmond Tutu.



What kept us going in 2020? For many, it was ... *hope*. Next year will be better, we thought. It has to be.

We watched a lot of movies and TV in 2020, including reruns. Perhaps you watched some episodes of the crime drama, “Monk,” a show infused with a lot of humor. Tony Shalhoub plays the lead character, a detective, Adrian Monk. A germaphobe, Monk’s work is complicated by obsessive habits and a variety of phobias.

This is why he sees a psychiatrist several times a week. In Season 5, Episode 7, while investigating the murder of a cleaning lady in the office of his psychiatrist, Dr. Kroger, Monk happens to see his own file that Kroger has compiled. He’s only able to get a quick glance at it. But he is shocked by what he sees in the margin near the bottom of a page: *No Hope*. Monk is understandably distressed, believing that his shrink has come to a professional diagnosis that there is no hope for him. A confrontation ensues:

KROGER: And you read your file?

MONK: I couldn’t help it. I happened to glance down. And I saw something. Two words. “No hope.”

KROGER: “No hope?”

MONK: Is that what you think?

KROGER: Oh, Adrian, I would never say that about anyone, especially about you.

Kroger went on to explain that Monk in his haste had read “No hope,” when what it really said was, “N. Hope,” a reference to New Hope, Pennsylvania, where Monk’s father lived.

It’s a terrible thing to live without hope. So, as we peer into the year before, it’s hard not to have some feeling of hope for the coming year. Hope is so important that it is enshrined in culture as the middle of the three virtues: Faith, Hope and Love. And although the apostle Paul declared Love to be the greatest of the three, without Hope, Love cannot live and breathe.

Nurture the hope within you, the hope God has given you — a hope that rests solidly on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For if hope could shine even in the darkness of Calvary, then it can shine anywhere.

—Timothy Merrill

Thank you, God, for not only giving me hope, but for rewarding my patience, as I watch all things work together according to your infinite wisdom. Amen.

Daily Bible Readings

- Sunday:** Genesis 37-39
- Monday:** Genesis 40-42
- Tuesday:** Genesis 43-46
- Wednesday:** Genesis 47-50
- Thursday:** Matthew 1-4
- Friday:** Matthew 5-7
- Saturday:** Psalms 1-3

Verse to Remember

Happy are those ... [whose] delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law they meditate day and night. They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. —Psalm 1:1-3

MIXED MESSAGE

DIRECTIONS: Write a word to fit each definition. Then, transfer the letters to the numbered boxes.

A large, dangerous sea creature with a fin on its back

15 20 5 23 3

A place to shop

8 7 1 16

A red vegetable

9 4 14 21

To work hard, sweating

10 11 2 6

A shack

13 18 12

To grow old

17 19 22

THE BEATITUDES

S W B I N R U O M H Y C U N X
 W D L D N C O M F O R T E D D
 N E V A E H Z T E S D R O O P
 L R E A B L E S S E D G K V M
 X U U Z N K L R M L K O N W I
 B P X D B P E I I K Q Z Y I I
 Z M Z Z D G B H F T E R N V K
 L M M Y N F C T Y B S T Z W O
 V K H U N H C R B W M B V Z I
 H D H M A B Q A Q T N P A X H
 O J J S H S A E V Y W P F O X
 W L W E V J Z H L J E X F Z Y
 S I A Q M B Y S B C U S L W E
 T A I H C M W E H Q H J M S I
 V W S F T L E R E A C Y J P E

Directions: Look for these words from the Matthew 5 reading listed above: blessed, children, comforted, earth, filled, God, heart, heaven, hunger, inherit, kingdom, meek, mourn, poor, pure, thirst.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
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Answers:
 shark,
 mall,
 beet,
 toil,
 hut,
 age.
 Like a
 lamb to
 the
 slaughter.

