



# The Hopefuls and the Melancholies

Eighth Grade Church School – Hanging of the Greens

Mark 13:24-37

December 3, 2017

## Scene i (the Hopes)

(Both Dads (Hope and Melancholys) are on stage fixing and setting up for dinner. Both Freeze when the Narrator starts talking.)

Narrator: (from the pulpit) Welcome to this first week of Advent. We invite you into the homes of the Hopes and the Melancholys. Both Dads have recently lost their jobs. The kids are arriving home from their afternoon activities and both families are preparing for their busy evening ahead. Please join us as we take a look into their lives. And remember - Stay alert, you don't know when the time is coming.

Dad Hope - (mixing up some mac n cheese and opening a bag of bread). Wow, I hope the family is not too upset about Mac n cheese again. (continues fixing food)

(Kids come running on stage loudly talking with coats on.)

Dillon: Yeah I had a Geography test today. I sure hope I did well. Hey Faith! Mom told me Grandma and Grandpa are coming to our house for Christmas this year.

(walk up stage stairs take off coats and put them on the coat tree. Put down their backpacks)

Faith: Wow that's great. I hope Grandpa knits me another sweater. The one I got last year is so warm and cozy.

Dillon: Yeah they always bring such nice gifts. They are always so thoughtful.

(Mom arrives into the space with her work bag on her shoulder and coat on.)

Mom: Hey guys how's it going?

Dillon & Faith: (together) Hey mom.

Mom: Wow what a day. Traffic was so CRAZY!! Driving during the first snowfall of the year is always wild. But I made it home.

(Everyone takes their place at the table)

Dad: I'm glad you made it safe and sound. -- Hey, now that we're all here, it's the first week of advent. Let's light the advent candle. I'm hoping this year we will actually keep up on our advent lighting. Let's watch out that we keep up on doing it before every dinner every night. (pause) Who wants be the first one to light it?

Dillon & Faith: Me! Me!

Dillon: Can I please do it today? I'm not very good at it, but we've been practicing lighting matches in church school.

Faith: Then can I read the scripture?

Dad: Sure then we'll switch each day. We've got plenty of time to keep watch before Christmas...

Dillon: (tries to strike the match and it breaks, tries again - no luck) Give me a second, I've got this.

Mom: Yeah, sorry. I bought the cheap matches. (Pause while he tries) You'll get one to light.

Dillon: (he strikes again and it works). Thanks mom!

Faith: A message of Hope - Mark 13:28-31 -" Learn a lesson from the fig tree. As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things happening, you know that the end is near. It is right at the door. What I'm about to tell you is true. The people living now will certainly not pass away until all those things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away. But my words will never pass away."

Mom: Thanks Faith. (praying) God, thank you for our family, thank you for the warm food and our cozy home, and thanks especially for the hope that you give us.

Start eating and FREEZE

### **Scene i (the Melancholies)**

Dad: (mixing up the dinner clanging on pots.) Can't wait to hear the kids complain about this mac n cheese again! Every night it's blah blah blah blah blah. Not that I can blame them.

(Kids come bounding in with coats on and backpacks they throw them on the ground)

Junior: Yeah I had a Geography test today. How much do you want to bet I bombed it. Hey, Mom told me Grandma and Grandpa are coming to our house for Christmas this year.

Nancy: (with sarcasm) Wow - I hope they don't give us another useless gift. The sweater was the only decent thing we've gotten from them in years.

(walk up stage stairs take off coats and put them on the floor. Throw down their backpacks)

Junior: I know, right, they've given us lame gifts so many times. My friend Josh said his Grandparents gave him an iPhone 7 last year. We won't get anything like that.

(Mom arrives into the space with her work bag on her shoulder and coat on.)

Mom (exhausted): Hey guys how's it going?

Junior & Nancy:(mumbling) Hi mom. (without much excitement)

Mom: Wow, what a day. Traffic was CRAZY!! It seems like they'll give a license to anyone these days. It will only get worse as winter keeps coming. The drive will get longer and longer.

Dad - Ugh, that commute is going to be the death of you. -- Hey, now that we're all here, it's the first week of advent. It's time to light the advent candle. I'm sure we'll stop doing it in a couple days like we always do, but we can do it tonight, anyway. Who wants to light it tonight?

Junior & Nancy (shrug and blank stares)

Junior: Dad why don't you just do it

Dad: Junior, will you please pretend like you care and light it today. Nancy, I'd like you to do the reading

Nancy: oh fine...

Junior: We've been practicing lighting in church school but I'm not very good at it. (tries to strike the match and it breaks, tries again - no luck) This will never work.

Mom: Yeah, sorry I bought the cheap matches. Let's forget about it for tonight.

(Junior strikes again and throws the match to the ground). Thanks mom! (with sarcasm)

Mom: Dear God, thank you for the family, thank you for this dinner, please help us get through another day.

(Everyone starts eating - acting not pleased with dinner... Start eating and FREEZE)

## **Scene ii (Hopes)**

DAD: Yeah - by the way, thanks Nancy, your tip on getting food from the food pantry worked. I got in line by 8:30 and I was checked in and on my way in no time. Those people are so generous.

Faith: Dad, it stinks that you're out of work, but it's been fun having you around the house more often. And thanks for cooking -- I could eat this mac n cheese every day!

Dillon: Yeah, I like having you home so we can eat early.

Dad: Well, don't get used to it. I found a few promising job leads today. I'm going to spend a little time tonight getting my applications in. I've got to keep watch, You never know when the right job will come along.

Mom: You're doing such a great job of keeping your hopes up and being on the lookout for opportunities, even though I know it's not easy.

Dad : Well, it's hard on all of us. You know, I ran into Bob Melancholy at the food pantry last Saturday. I haven't seen him since we all got laid off. He seemed really down in the dumps. I'm so thankful for all of you supporting me through this.

George: <Knocks on the door>

Mom: I wonder who that could be? (peeks out the window) Oh! It's George our deacon from church! (opens door) Hi, George!

George: Hello, Joy. The deacons have baked cookies and we're taking them around to families during the Advent season - spreading Hope, Peace, Joy & Love. Here you are!

Mom: Thank you! Hey, everyone, George brought us some cookies!

Dillon, Faith, Dad: Thanks George!

George: You're welcome. Keep watch, you know - it's advent! (leaves)

Mom: Well, that was nice. How was school today, kids?

Faith: Guess what - I think I did really well on my science test today. But I'm still really stressed. Now I have a D in Spanish I need to work on.

Mom - So what's your plan? Is this one of those classes where you can retake the quiz and get some points back?

Faith: I hope so. I'm going in tomorrow morning to see the teacher before school. And tonight I'll skip playing video games and that will give me the extra time. I've got it, Mom.

Mom: Sounds like it. I know it's not your favorite subject, but you'll keep working hard on it.

Dillon: Yeah, that's how History was for me last year. Everyone's got their difficult subjects. I just needed to keep working on it.

Dad: Keep hoping and doing your best, Faith.

FREEZE

### **Scene ii (Melancholies)**

DAD: Yeah - by the way, Nancy, I went to the food pantry the other day like you suggested. I did get some food there. I guess this is going to be how our life is from now on. We have to depend on the charity of others to keep food on our table.

Nancy: Dad, it's been ok having you around the house more often, but I wish you had your job back. And can you cook something new? I used to like mac n cheese, but I'm getting tired of it really fast.

Junior: Yeah, I like having you home so we can eat early, but eating on a budget is really getting old.

Dad: Well, get used to it. (sigh) The economy around here is so lousy, I doubt I'll be able to find any work, even if I look hard. I barely have the energy to keep searching. It's so depressing.

Mom: I understand, honey. Don't waste your time when there's no hope. You're just making yourself sad.

Dad : Yeah, it all stinks. You know, I ran into Fred Hope last Saturday at the food pantry. I haven't seen him since we all got fired. He was really annoying and chipper, like he doesn't even realize how low we've sunk.

George: <Knocks on the door>

Mom: Oh, who could be bothering us during dinner?

Dad: Ah! Pretend we're not home. It's probably bill collectors.

George: <Knock knock>

Mom: Oh, no, they're harassing us at our house now? Can't they just leave us alone?

George: <knock knock>

George (from beside the stage): Guess they're not home. Oh well, more cookies for me!

Mom: Good, I think they're gone. So, how was school today kids?

Nancy: Well, I had my science test today. But I couldn't even concentrate on it because I'm so stressed out about the D I have in Spanish. I don't know what I'm going to do about it.

Mom - So what's your plan? Is this one of those classes where you can retake the quiz and get some points back?

Nancy: Probably not. I never get a chance to talk to the teacher. I don't know, I guess I could study more, but it doesn't seem to help.

Mom: Sounds like it. I know it's not your favorite subject, and that makes it tough.

Junior: Yeah, that's how History was for me last year. Everyone has their difficult subjects. I wasn't any good at History, but I've learned to be OK with that.

Dad: That's true, Nancy, you just might be a D student, and that's all we can expect of you.

FREEZE

### **Scene iii (the Hopes)**

Mom: By the way. I've got a meeting with the school district about immigration issues in our community. You might not believe how many kids in your school could be affected by the repeal of DACA.

Dillon: Yeah, I heard Daniel was planning on applying to DACA so he could go to college and he's been telling me recently that he's really worried that it won't work out for him. Can you imagine a great kid like Daniel having to worry about something like that. He's such a cool guy.

Mom: Yes, he always seemed like a nice boy. You know, there's a rally on Saturday downtown to support the Dreamers. I was thinking about going. Would you like to come? We could make posters beforehand.

Dillon: Sure mom. I'll give you a hand.

Faith: can I help too? I'll make one of the posters in Spanish?

Mom: Of course. (Mom stands up and starts clearing the table). Is everyone done eating?

Dad: I am, I'm going to start working on those job applications right away.

Mom: Sounds good. Kids, let's clear the table while Dad starts on that. Oh, we certainly are busy. We talked about going caroling later tonight. Is that still a good idea? Faith still needs to study.

Dad: Well, I think if I start now, I'll be in good shape. Faith?

Dillon: Hey, if you come, I can help quiz you as we walk between houses.

Faith: That's a good idea. I'll start studying right now.

FREEZE

### **Scene iii (Melancholies & Hopes)**

Mom: By the way. I've got a meeting with the school district about immigration issues in our community. You might not believe how many kids in your school could be in big trouble by the repeal of DACA.

Junior: Yeah, I heard Daniel was planning on applying to DACA so he could go to college and he's been telling me recently that he's really worried that it won't work out for him. Can you imagine a great kid like Daniel having to worry about something like that. He's such a cool guy, but he was naive to sign up for that.

Mom: Yes, he always seemed like a nice boy, but that was a foolish hope. Too bad for him, I guess. You know, there's a rally on Saturday downtown to support the Dreamers. I was thinking about going. Would you like to come? We could make posters beforehand.

Junior: What's the point? How's making posters going to help Daniel?

Nancy: Yeah, that seems like a waste of time.

Mom: You're probably right. Is everyone done eating?

Dad: I am. Let's clear the table, and then I'm going to go watch the news.

Mom: Sounds good. I'd like nothing more than to just plop in front the TV myself.

(Everyone gets up from the table and goes to sit in the bean bag chairs. Everyone has their devices in their hands staring at their phones.)

**HOPES:** (The hopes grab their coats and leave their side of the stage and head around the back sacristy area and then come out singing joy to the world as they arrive at the Melancholys door.)

<TV watching is interrupted by Hopes coming by, singing carols>

(The melancholys peek out their door and open it up. The kids look over)

Dad M: Hi there Hopes. What a nice surprise!

Dad H: Hi Bob! Hi Debbie! We wanted to stop by and wish you a happy Christmas!

Dad M: Wow. Thanks.

Dad H: With both of us losing our jobs and all we figured spreading hope and joy was the best thing we could do this time of year.

Dad M: Uh yeah. Well Thanks for stopping by. (Dad M starts closing the door and is kind of rushing them off). Ok See you around...

(The hope family all look at each other and shrug their shoulders at their indifference.).

Mom H: (says hopefully) Well let's move on to the next house.

Kids: Great let's go (excitedly)

Mom M: Well, it's nice to see that some people are going to have a merry Christmas, at least.

Dad M: Their life is so much better than ours. It just doesn't seem fair.

Narrator: So keep watch! You do not know when the owner of the house will come back. It may be in the evening or at midnight. It may be when the rooster crows or at dawn. He may come suddenly. So do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone. 'Keep Watch!'

**END**