2025 December Times Ink for CCH

“It’s Never Too Late for Jesus”

Romans 15:13 – *“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”* 1 Corinthians 13:13 – *“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”* (New International Version)

Casting about for ideas, I was relieved when a friend of a friend suggested I write about a new way of looking at Advent, a time when we focus on anticipating Jesus’s birth and contemplating the central themes of hope, peace, joy, and love. But now, as I sit down to write, I realize we will already be in the middle of the Advent season by the time this paper goes to print. And that has led me to ask myself: When is it too late to start a new Advent tradition; or too late to start a new New Year’s Resolution; or for that matter, when will I be too old to read all 66 books of the Bible in just one year from Genesis through Revelation without skipping around? And that’s what led me to think about how grateful I am that it’s never too late for me to find new ways to learn and grow in Jesus. Our God of hope has infinite patience. Jesus tells us that through trust in Him, He will always be ready to fill us with joy and peace, so that we overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

I just read that a common expression of Christian faith is: “It’s never too late for Jesus”. The root of this is found in a number of stories and themes in the Bible. Perhaps most notable is Matthew 20:1-16, a parable about the amount of compensation a vineyard owner pays his laborers who are hired at different times throughout the day. Those beginning in the early morning are promised a full day’s wage while those hired later in the day are promised a fair wage. At the end of the day, each worker receives the exact same amount of money—irrespective of how many hours they worked. Naturally, those who were hired early complain that this isn’t fair. But the owner’s response is that the early workers are merely jealous because of his generosity toward those hired later in the day, saying: “So the last will be first and first will be last.” This parable is meant to emphasize that the reward we receive from God through belief in Jesus is a gift of grace and is not earned by either merit or seniority.

There’s also the story of the two criminals who are crucified in Golgotha, one on either side of Jesus. The Gospel of Luke says that one of the thieves mocked and taunted Jesus saying that if he is indeed the Messiah, why doesn’t he just save himself and them. But the other thief rebuked the mocker because he recognized Jesus as the Christ who had no sin. He begged Jesus to remember him in his kingdom, to which Jesus replied *“Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:432 – New King James Version)* This is a powerful example that God offers salvation to everyone, even up until the final moments of our lives. It is never too late to come to Jesus – just as it was not too late for the dying repentant thief to be accepted into His kingdom.

This is the great grace of God, available to all who sincerely believe in Him, regardless of our past, no matter how young or old we are. While we are nearly halfway through Advent, there is no better time than now to reflect on the hope, peace, joy, and love of Jesus—or to join us on Sundays at 9 am (or for our Wednesday Bible Study at 7 pm) to learn more.