*From the Pastor’s desk:*

**FIRST ADVENT: HOPE**

“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” **Romans 5:5 KJV**

Today is a special day, being the first Sunday of Advent. Traditionally, Advent has been observed in the Christian church for centuries, as far back as 380 AD. Advent refers to a four-week season of commemorating and celebrating the arrival of Jesus on Earth. It is a time to reflect on the unexpected nature of Jesus' humble birth, His exemplary life here on earth, and expectantly anticipating His second coming. Each of the Sundays of Advent is significant and has a subject of focus. Today, being the first focuses on HOPE. Hope is an act of trusting with confident expectation of good.

The first phrase of the above-Scriptural reference makes it clear that hope does not lead to shame. In other words, hope does not disappoint. But do you realise that the following statement clarifies why you will not be put to shame if you have hope? It states, “Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” Wow! What a statement!

The allusion here is, as vain hope does things: not answering to expectation, being deceived, being lost, being disgraced, being confused, there is a hope that cannot disappoint. The strength of that hope is the love of God that is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. The love of God mentioned here is not referring to how we love Him, but how He loves us. Alleluia! Have you ever stopped to think that without hope, there can be no faith? Faith rests on hope. Even, faith that leads to salvation of our souls’ rests on the hope of eternal life.

Therefore, on this first Advent, I pray that your hope in God will not die. Because your hope is in Him who chose to love you, you will not suffer shame. More than your expectations, God will give joy. And the joy shall be total. Pleasant surprises are coming your way. Whatever the gimmick of the enemy, you will laugh last in Jesus Name.