

This week, I spent some time going between hospitals, and I got to one hospital and was focused on where I've just been and where I was going. I wasn't really paying any attention to anything else. I just was in my own little zone, and I was just going. And I just wanted to get to where I needed to be, and I wasn't really paying attention to what was going on around me. And all of a sudden I hear this voice from behind me say, are you a believer; and I stopped. I looked around, and I was the only person in the hallway. So I'm like, this is kind of weird, So, I stopped and I went back outside. And there was a woman sitting there on a chair. I'm assuming she's waiting for a ride. You know, she had a walker. She had an oxygen tank next to her There were a bunch of Band-Aids on her arm. And I said, excuse me, were you talking to me? And she said, yes. She said, are you a believer? Now in my mind, I'm thinking this is going to go one to two ways. She's either going to have a good conversation with me, or she's going to try and convert me because I'm so used to that. I'm so used to being on campus. I'm so used to walking around through the malls. Well, not anymore, but you used to walk around through malls. But I'm used to people coming up and asking you these things and handing you a Bible or handing your card or something else. I said, I am; why do you ask?

She says I saw your cross and a lot of people just wear crosses. It doesn't mean that they actually are believers. They just think it looks cool. I'm like, well, I'm glad you think my hat looks cool, but I do. I am a believer. She's like good, I have something for you. I'm like, oh man, okay. And she pulls out a card, and it has a scripture reading and information on how to contact the church and all of this. And I said, thank you. And she's like, I know, all that information is on it, ignore it. And I said you want me to ignore it. You want me to not reach out to your church. And she's like, no. I don't belong to that church. I am like okay, So this is getting interesting. Like if you don't belong to that church, why if you give out their cards? She says, well, I believe in the sayings.

She then went and told me about how she lived in a commune in California for a number of years through the 70s. And she started to talk to me about how she lost her faith and believed that the commune was just there to use her. She said Oh, they're just there, she was a resource. She goes on to add to the church and bring money in and all of that. And she had lost her faith. I'm like, was it this church? She said yeah. I'm like so you lost faith in the church. You lost faith in God, you lost faith in everything, But you still give out these cards. It's like, well I don't believe in the church, but I believe in God and I believe in Jesus.

We talked more about it and I was like so, did you lose faith for a long time? She said about 30 years. I'm like but you went back. And she's like yeah. I'm like why did you go back? Well, I went back because of Christmas. I'm like what about Christmas? She said, well, the first week of Advent is about hope. It's about hope; like I never lost my hope. I never lost hope in good people. We're good. I never lost hope and believe me that God was still watching me even though everything around me was telling me otherwise, I never lost that hope. I never lost hope that there's something better. There's something bigger than me. There's something greater than all of us.

I am like so, where are you at now? She said so I still have hope I don't have any faith in the church, but I have hope. I believe in God. I believe in Jesus. I believe that there's something greater than all of us, especially right now. And I thought that was fantastic.

The last few weeks, we've all been talking about people losing hope. We've been talking about people being afraid of what's coming. We've been talking about all of these things And it all leads to losing hope. But this week is the week of hope. This is the week of the beginning. The more anticipating Jesus being born. Our Savior is coming to us before everything else.

Advent is blue because it's the time before the dawn. It's to remind us that each morning, the sun will come up. It's to remind us that the hope is there. We know the sun is going to come up. We know that's going to happen. We know the next day is going to happen, but we hope that tomorrow is going to be better than yesterday. We hope the things are going to go right for us today. That hope is always there. It's always around us. Today's reading from Matthew is telling us not to worry, God will take care of us. God will. He'll provide no matter what. He provides for the birds. He provides for the flowers. He provides for the grass. He'll provide for us as well. If we keep that hope alive, we keep planning for a better day tomorrow. We keep hoping that people will be better tomorrow than they were to us today. We hope that we will be better people tomorrow. And today, God will provide.

We're anticipating the birth of his son. The vast, the biggest point in our faith. When our savior will be born and he'll be brought to us and we get to celebrate and rejoice. And it's just a small little window we get to do that.

After Christmas, we're going to be looking at everything that he did in his ministry. We're gonna be focusing on him dying. And we will be focusing on him being resurrected and ascending.. Living in that time. Today we get to celebrate his birth. We get to celebrate that he's coming, and that hope is still alive. That hope is there for each and every one of us. Something greater is going to happen. And as long as we keep remembering that, God will always provide for us. Let us pray.