

Mighty God

Colossians 2:9 NLT - 9 For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body.

Everlasting Father

John 10:30 NLT - 30 The Father and I are one."

Prince of Peace

Philippians 4:7 NLT - 7 Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

Which of these do you need Jesus to be for you at this point of your life? Pray God to reveal Himself to you in that way this Advent season.

WRAP-UP

Seven centuries before Jesus was born Isaiah prophesied of His coming to a remnant of Israel looking for a deliverer. When Jesus appeared it was to a people who were oppressed and in spiritual darkness. He didn't come as people expected- a mighty warrior, but He did embody the promises of Isaiah as Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. He has freed us from slavery to sin and death, and we trust in the hope that when He returns He will usher in a new heaven and earth.

MEMORY VERSE

Isaiah 9:6 NKJV - 6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life

Challenge- Remind yourself this week that you live in the hope of Jesus' second coming. Then live in that reality.

"God Promises Hope in the Darkness"

Advent Promises #1

INTRODUCTION

This Sunday begins the first week of Advent. It is a time we celebrate and anticipate the coming of the Messiah. The first week of Advent we light the candle of hope. This is not the wishful hope we had as children anticipating what Santa might bring. It is the confident, expectant hope in a faithful God fulfilling His promise to send a savior and rescue us from sin and death. It is hope that was inaugurated in Jesus' birth and will be completed upon His return.

Ice Breaker

Do you remember having hope in something you wanted to be true only to be disappointed and find out it wasn't? (Product claims, social media posts, weight loss plans)

Key Passage

Isaiah 9:6 NKJV - 6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Hope to Who

Our key passage is a familiar one. It is from the book of Isaiah and was spoken 700 years before Jesus' birth. Isaiah was a prophet during a time when the kingdom was divided and there was war amongst the tribes of Israel and attacks from surrounding nations. The people had had suffered brutality and brokenness under faithless kings. Isaiah's prophecies were not always easy. Many spoke of God's judgment. But this prophecy of hope he shared in chapter 9 spoke to the heart of their needs and ours. It was a promise to the faithful, not the successful.

Isaiah 9:2 NLT - 2 The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine.

Darkness is simply the absence of light. What places have you been that were utterly without light? What emotions did that darkness evoke?

Symbolically darkness can be the absence of the light of God, spiritual darkness. The contrast between darkness and light began in Genesis.

Genesis 1:2-4 NLT - 2 The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. 3 Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. 4 And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness.

God is the creator of light and the one who dispels the darkness. For the people Isaiah spoke to He offered them hope for relief from a place of despair. If you were to name the darkness we've seen or experienced recently, you might call it- discouragement, depression, frustration, disappointment, weariness, hatred, bitterness.... Which type of darkness most troubles you? What would shine God's light into that darkness?

2. Hope for What

Isaiah 9:3-5 NLT - 3 You will enlarge the nation of Israel, and its people will rejoice. They will rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest and like warriors dividing the plunder. 4 For you will break the yoke of their slavery and lift the heavy burden from their shoulders. You will break the oppressor's rod, just as you did when you destroyed the army of Midian. 5 The boots of the warrior and the uniforms bloodstained by war will all be burned. They will be fuel for the fire.

To the people of Isaiah's time God's promises answered their greatest prayers. God promised blessing and freedom. The people had been decimated by war and oppressed by the Assyrians to the point of hopelessness until God's promise to enlarge the nation of Israel, to

bring a harvest and rejoicing. God was promising them that their darkness would not last.

In verse 4 God's promise of deliverance from slavery is paired with a reminder of Gideon's victory at Midian. How does a past victory affect the people's trust in God's future promise? What are some of the promises God has already fulfilled for you that increase your trust in His promises for your future?

Leviticus 26:13 NLT - 13 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt so you would no longer be their slaves. I broke the yoke of slavery from your neck so you can walk with your heads held high.

God had rescued His people from bondage many times before. Perhaps when Isaiah spoke of breaking off the yoke of slavery the people remembered that God had freed them from slavery in Egypt. Even so the faithless and sinful acts of the people returned them to oppression time and again. Even at the time of Jesus' birth Israel found themselves oppressed by Rome.

How is this same pattern of deliverance, oppression, and God's rescue repeated in the lives of individuals?

3. Hope of Whom

Isaiah 9:6 NKJV - 6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

We may recognize this verse as describing the birth of Jesus, but to the people who received Isaiah's prophesy this was a description of their promised Messiah. And it probably stunned them. They were looking for a warrior and they are told to expect a child. Sometimes it's not that God isn't faithful to His promises. Sometimes it's that his promises look different than we expected.

Has God ever shown up in an unexpected way in your life?

God's promised Messiah would be identified by four titles and Jesus was the embodiment of all.

Wonderful Counselor

Colossians 2:3 NLT - 3 In him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.