

WEEK 2: *Renew*
HOPE



Scripture Readings (NIV)

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Isaiah 11:1-10

1 A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.
2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of might,
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord—
3 and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.
He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
or decide by what he hears with his ears;
4 but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.
He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;
with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.
5 Righteousness will be his belt
and faithfulness the sash around his waist.
6 The wolf will live with the lamb,
the leopard will lie down with the goat,
the calf and the lion and the yearling together;
and a little child will lead them.
7 The cow will feed with the bear,
their young will lie down together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.
8 The infant will play near the cobra's den,
and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest.
9 They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.
10 In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples;
the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious.

Psalms 72:1-7, 18-19

1 Endow the king with your justice, O God,
the royal son with your righteousness.
2 May he judge your people in righteousness,
your afflicted ones with justice.
3 May the mountains bring prosperity to the people,
the hills the fruit of righteousness.
4 May he defend the afflicted among the people
and save the children of the needy;
may he crush the oppressor.
5 May he endure as long as the sun,
as long as the moon, through all generations.
6 May he be like rain falling on a mown field,
like showers watering the earth.
7 In his days may the righteous flourish
and prosperity abound till the moon is no more.

18 Praise be to the Lord God, the God of Israel,
who alone does marvelous deeds.
19 Praise be to his glorious name forever;
may the whole earth be filled with his glory.
Amen and Amen.

Romans 15:4-13

4 For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.

5 May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, 6 so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7 Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. 8 For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, so that the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed 9 and, moreover, that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written:

"Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles;
I will sing the praises of your name."

10 Again, it says,

"Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people."

11 And again,

"Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles;
let all the peoples extol him."

12 And again, Isaiah says,

"The Root of Jesse will spring up,
one who will arise to rule over the nations;
in him the Gentiles will hope."

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.

Matthew 3:1-12

3 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea 2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." 3 This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

"A voice of one calling in the wilderness,
'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.'"

4 John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. 5 People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. 6 Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. 9 And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. 10 The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

11 "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Devotional

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Transcript

Hoping and Waiting.

Hi I'm Cid and I have the privilege of serving with CBOQ! I want to talk today about how Advent teaches us to hope, and hope is nothing unless we wait. You know, we love instant everything. The first thing I do when I go into a hotel room is look for the coffee. How soon can I have an instant coffee?

We love instant. We love instant coffee, instant tea, and instant food. And today we can have instant friends. And if you post something on your feed, whether you're baking a cake or burning a cake, somebody is going to give you instant gratification. They're going to say, "Hey, I like it" because we love instant everything. We can have whatever we want and we can have it now.

We can have it instantly. And this desire, this need, for instant, creates an instant culture. An instant culture is that which says you can have it now without the work that's normally required to get it. But having things instantly isn't always good without the process, without the work; it produces it prematurely.

Think about the people that have won the lottery. Look at the statistics of those who won the lottery: "Oh, we don't want that." We don't want it instantly because it produces something without the work that's required. Having things instantly isn't always good. You know, nothing is taught until something is learned. To have it, to learn it requires us to have the process. It takes waiting. It takes time.

And that's where we get to Romans, where it says in Romans 8: "No one hopes for what they already have." All scripture is teaching us to hope. And hope is nothing unless we wait. So Advent teaches us to wait because God—the character of God—teaches us that his timing isn't always our timing.

So we hope, because we hope in the character of God, we hope in the promises that he gives us. And we hope, because of the work that he's doing within us. It's what he's doing within us, not what's happening around us that causes us to have hope.

And so when we pray for people to have hope. It's nothing unless we teach them to wait. When we encourage people to have hope, it's nothing unless we teach them to wait. When we support people to have hope, it's nothing unless we teach them to wait. So hope is nothing unless we wait.

Advent is all about teaching us to wait: wait on the Lord, wait on His coming, and wait on his timing. We wait and therefore, we have hope.

God bless you.



Children's Moment

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Transcript

The Hope of Jesus

So what are you hoping for this Christmas? I mean, seriously, what are you hoping for under your tree? The fact is, we have these ideas of what we hope for or maybe wish for. These are words that we use a lot of times interchangeably. But maybe one way to look at this is that a wish is something that is really for you, something that you want, that's really for yourself.

And hope is really something that is for someone else. It's for the benefit of others. And so when we look at this idea of wishes and hopes, perhaps this Christmas season, we want to focus a little more on hope.

When you look at the Bible, a lot of times the greatest hope that people were asking for is that God would be with us. You know, God who created everything, God who created us, God who created people from the very beginning.

The fact is that at the very beginning, we had this relationship with God. We had this relationship where we were completely in sync with him. We got to hang out with him. We got to talk with him. We were immersed in this relationship of love and grace and joy. The thing is, God gave people a choice: "Do you want to love me or do you want to do things your own way?"

You know, the Bible talks about this thing called 'sin' and one person defines sin as this: Sin can be defined as *a person choosing right and wrong on their own terms*. And so people chose: "God, I don't want what you think is best. I want what I think is best." And because of that, it separated us from God, it moved us away from him. And the fact is, we can't give back to God ourselves.

And so in the Bible, for centuries, people kept on asking, how do we get back to God? How do we have this relationship back with God in the midst of all the struggles, all the things happening?

God made this promise. He said that Jesus would come. Jesus, who is God and human, would come to Earth. And in fact, one of Jesus' names is Emmanuel. It actually means "God with us". During Christmas, this is what we get to celebrate; the fact that *God is with us—Emmanuel*. This is the hope that has already started happening. Jesus is still alive.

So, during this Christmas season, maybe a couple of questions to think about: One is that, if Jesus is actually with us, if God is actually with us, if God is Emmanuel, what changes in our lives?

Maybe another question to ask is, well, how can I actually bring the hope of God to the people around me, people I care about, maybe people I don't even know, some place I don't even know, maybe even people I don't like? You might have some of those people.

But the fact is that the hope of Jesus is available during Christmas and any time and perhaps during this Christmas season, you might want to think about that and actually bring the hope of God to others around you and ask your family, ask your friends, what they think of it as well.

Share those ideas, share those experiences, so that perhaps this Christmas, the hope of Christ will illuminate in your life.

Candle lighting + Prayer Resource

Reader One:

Life is full of unknowns and anxiety that can sometimes overwhelm us. There is too much to do; our lists are long; our calendars are filled up; we worry that something will go wrong, or we won't end up in the right place or take the right route. There is hope because we are not wandering ahead, but rather, we follow behind the one who knows where to go, goes with us and sustains us along the way.

Reader Two:

Who else should we put our hope in? Celebrities? Influencers? Ourselves? Isaiah says that there is one who is to come who will be the fulfillment of all our hope. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on this one, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. Who else should we put our hope in?

Reader One:

We light the candles of peace and of hope to give us strength for the unknown.

(Light two candles on the wreath.)

Reader Two:

Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, that God may teach us the ways of peace and hope.



Prayer of Hope

God of infinite grace,
 you fill us with joyful expectation.
 Make us ready for the message that
 prepares the way.
 Grant us hope beyond our limited
 imaginations.
 May we eagerly anticipate and await the
 kingdom of your Son, Jesus Christ,
 who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 now and for ever.
 Amen.

Intercession

God of hope,
 Like John the baptizer we direct others toward
 the hope of the one to come.
 As we joyfully await the glorious coming of
 Christ, we pray to you for the needs of the
 church and the world.

We pray in intercession for hope:
 Hope in the midst of loss
 Hope in the midst of despair
 Hope in the midst of the unknown
 Hope in this midst of declining health

Hear our humble prayer
 that we may serve you by directing others to
 the true hope found in Christ.
 May we do so with joy until the day of the
 coming of your Son, Jesus Christ,
 who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
 Amen.

Contemplative Practice

Speak:

“Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things” (Ps. 72:18).

Read:

Isaiah 11:1-10 and Romans 15:4-13

Reflect

Where do you see hope in Isaiah 11 and Romans 15?

Where do you see signs of hope in an anxious world?

Engage:

Slow down and reflect on your story.

Where have you been an instrument of division, fear, and hate?

Where have you been an instrument of hope?

Bring your family together to share stories of gratitude and salvation.

Pray:

Gracious God, we seek you everywhere with expectant eyes that invite us to see hope in the world and in our circumstances. We pray for others to find the hope that only Jesus Christ can bring. Amen.

Benediction

Be people of hope.

Let hope live in your heart and share the hope of Christ with all you meet.

Share hope by seeing other's dignity

Share hope by hearing someone's story

Share hope by praying for our world.

As you go out into the world, share hope and peace with those you meet.

Amen.

