

# Hope | We Believe

WEEK ONE | PASTOR BOB JOHNSTON

## Finding Hope in Our Uncertainties.

## KNOW

### A Dark Time for Israel (Isaiah 9:2)

- ◇ Darkness – refers to both evil and ignorance.
- ◇ It also refers to the fact no one knows the answer to evil and suffering.

### Advent Season

- ◇ Advent means “coming” or “arrival.”
- ◇ A season that links to the past, present & future.
- ◇ It connects the Messiah’s birth to the promise of His second coming.
- ◇ We wait in active confidence and hope for His return.

### Keeping Hope Alive (Luke 2:22-38)

- ◇ Simeon and Anna were waiting, listening and expecting, they were filled with hope.
- ◇ Our hope ought to be not in circumstances but in the person, Christ.
- ◇ Hope should fuel our faith.

### Paul & Silas (Acts 16:25-34)

- ◇ Paul and Silas are chained to the foundation of the building.
- ◇ Instead of complaining and worrying, they began to praise.
- ◇ They weren’t trying to break out, God broke in!
- ◇ Hope is alive because God is with us, here, now and always.

## SCRIPTURES

Isaiah 9:2

Isaiah 8:19-22

Isaiah 9:6-7

Luke 2:22-38

Jeremiah 29:11

Isaiah 43:1-2

John 8:12

Matthew 5:14,16

## QUOTES

“Hope doesn’t increase because of favorable circumstances in your life, nor does it decrease because of unfavorable ones.”

## GROW | Small Group Questions

1. Have you been in a situation where you felt all hope was lost? Are you going through one now?
  - a. To get through it, who or what did you find yourself relying on most?
  - b. What advice would you give someone who is going through a difficult trial?
2. Discuss: When life is going well, is it easy to hope and trust God? What about when life is not going so well – through painful experiences, is it easy to hope and trust God?
3. Pastor Bob showed us that in Isaiah's time, it was one of the darkest periods of Israel's history. People were looking for hope in all the wrong places (Isaiah 8:19). Where are you placing your hope other than in Jesus?
  - a. Do you tend to rely on your own power and ability? Explain.
  - b. Do you find yourself thinking that money could solve the problem?
4. Similarly, Pastor Bob also mentioned that during Jeremiah's day, the message of the Lord came to his people when all hope was lost. The popular text of Jeremiah 29:11 came during this time.
  - a. Read Jeremiah 29:11 together aloud.
  - b. Do you believe God has a good plan for your life?
    - i. How can you actively lean into this promise?
    - ii. How can you choose to live in hope of this promise?
5. Do you hope in God? Do you believe God is bigger than anything you will ever face?
  - Go around the group and say aloud (declare) that God is stronger than the specific issue you are facing.
6. The term darkness in scripture is described as evil and ignorance. Pastor Bob mentioned that believers can have hope during periods of darkness because the light has come!
  - a. Read John 8:12 together aloud.
  - b. What steps can you take now to follow Jesus?

**We are in the Season of Advent; a time of expectation and anticipation for something better. During this season, Christians remember the promise of Jesus (the Saviour), the birth of Jesus (Immanuel, God is with us), and the return of Jesus (the King). With hope, Advent creates an opportunity to lean into the promise of God with us.**

GO

Find a quiet place to be alone with God (just you and God). Quietly ask God to make his presence known around you. Linger and rest in this experience for a moment.

1. Spend a few moments in gratitude, thanking God for one or two of the blessings, big and small, that you have received.
2. Slowly read John 3:16 and meditate on the impact of this verse, for you and the world.
3. Slowly read the annunciation of the birth of Jesus found in Luke 1:26-38.
  - a. Think of how Mary felt hearing these words.
  - b. Think about Mary's response (v. 38).
  - c. Think about how you can accept God's promise of his presence in all circumstances in your life.
4. Thank God for his presence in your life. Once you have done this, find someone this week you can meaningfully share God's message of hope with.

