



Sermon Guide: The Wisdom of Christmas: Hope

11/30/25

Text(s): Isaiah 11:1-10; Matthew 1:1

Big Idea: *When life feels cut down and hopeless, God is still working. From the stump of despair, He brings forth new life through Jesus, who is our eternal hope.*

Summary of the Sermon - This sermon explains that Advent is meant to be a quiet season of hopeful waiting, not consumer frenzy, and uses Isaiah 11 and Matthew 1 to show that God brings real hope out of places that look dead and hopeless. Israel's story is pictured as a stump—God's people judged, cut down, and seemingly finished—yet Isaiah promises a Spirit-filled King, a “shoot from the stump of Jesse,” who will rule with perfect wisdom, justice, and righteousness. Matthew then shows that this promised King is Jesus, the son of Abraham and David, born out of a messy family line full of outsiders and sinners, proving that God keeps His promises and works through broken people and histories. Jesus begins the restoration of all things and will one day make all things new, and until then, when our lives feel cut down—through loss, sin, unanswered prayers, or uncertainty—we can live with confident hope that God is still at work, making new life grow from the stump through Christ, and sending us out as His ambassadors of reconciliation and hope.

Discussion Questions

1. Where have you seen “consumer Christmas” overshadow the reflective waiting of Advent? How can we intentionally slow down to remember the purpose of the season?
2. Isaiah's stump image represents a period of judgment and devastation. How can understanding Israel's history of failure and exile deepen our appreciation for Christ's coming?
3. A stump looks like the end of a story. When in your life have you felt “cut down”? What helped you hold onto hope (or what keeps you from it)?
4. The shoot from Jesse's stump grows slowly. It's small and easily overlooked. Why do you think God often chooses to work through small, humble beginnings?
5. The Messiah in Isaiah 11 is marked by wisdom, justice, righteousness, and Spirit-empowered leadership. Which of these qualities feels especially meaningful or needed in our world right now?
6. Matthew begins with a genealogy of broken and surprising people. How does Jesus' family line encourage you when you think about your own history, failures, or family story?

7. God's promises span generations. From before Creation to the Fall to Abraham to David to Jesus. How does seeing the long arc of God's faithfulness build trust when His timing feels delayed?
8. Isaiah 11 shows a picture of a world fully healed and peace extending to creation itself. What does Christian hope look like when it is rooted not just in personal salvation but in the renewal of all things?
9. Christmas reminds us that God enters our brokenness, not our perfection. What does that tell us about how God views us in our weakness, disappointment, or despair?
10. We are ambassadors of hope (2 Cor. 5:17–21). Who is someone in your life right now who needs to see “a shoot from the stump” through you?
11. What practical step could you take this Advent season to embrace waiting in hope?
12. Which promise of God do you need to remember daily this week?