



Discipleship Guide

Sermon: Advent: Hope

Speaker: Pastor JohnEric Zayas

Date: November 30, 2025

Key Scripture

Isaiah 9:2 – *“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.”*

Key Takeaway

1. Hope Breaks Into Darkness

- Advent begins by acknowledging darkness—not avoiding it
- Israel’s world was filled with fear, oppression, and uncertainty, yet God spoke a promise
- The hope God gives is not wishful thinking; it’s anchored in a Savior
- Jesus is the Light who steps into our darkest places

2. The Messiah Is God’s Promise Fulfilled

- Isaiah prophesied a Child, a Son, a righteous King who would carry God’s

government and peace

- Jesus fulfills every name given in Isaiah 9: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace
- Advent reminds us that God keeps His promises—even if fulfillment takes time
- The gospel is this: God sent Jesus to deliver us from sin, restore us to Himself, and reign as our eternal King

3. Hope Is Not Passive—It Shapes How We Live

- Hope strengthens us to endure what we cannot yet see
- Hope gives us courage to trust God's work, even when we don't feel it
- Hope draws us back to the truth that God is with us (Immanuel)
- Hope in Christ transforms our perspective, choices, worship, and relationships

4. Advent Hope Looks Back and Forward

- We look *back* to the birth of Jesus—the Light breaking into the world
 - We look *forward* to Christ's return—the fullness of God's kingdom and peace
 - We wait actively: with expectation, prayer, and obedience
 - Our hope is not in circumstances improving, but in the Messiah who reigns forever
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Discussion Questions

Opening Questions

- What stood out to you most from today's sermon? Why?
 - When you hear the word "hope," what comes to mind—emotion, memory, or situation?
 - What forms of "darkness" (in the world or in your own life) make the promise of a Messiah feel especially relevant?
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Going Deeper

On Hope Breaking into Darkness

- Why is it important that Scripture acknowledges darkness instead of pretending it isn't there?
- Where have you experienced God's light in the middle of a dark season?

On the Messiah as Promise Fulfilled

- Which name of Jesus in Isaiah 9:6 speaks to you most right now? Why?
- How does knowing Jesus fulfilled ancient prophecy strengthen your faith today?

On Living with Hope

- How does biblical hope differ from optimism or positive thinking?
- In what areas of your life do you feel tempted to give up hope?

On Advent as Waiting

- Why is waiting such an important part of the Christian faith?
 - What does it practically look like to “wait with expectation”?
 - How can we keep hope alive when God’s promises feel delayed?
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Personal Reflection Questions (10 minutes)

Take time to pray or journal through the following:

- Where in life do you most feel like “a land of deep darkness”?
 - What promise of God do you need to cling to in this season?
 - How have you seen evidence of Jesus, the Light, guiding you this year?
 - What area of your life needs to be surrendered so that hope can rise?
 - How does the truth that “the zeal of the Lord will accomplish this” (Isaiah 9:7) comfort you today?
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Practical Applications

This Week’s Challenge:

Choose one action to practice hope intentionally:

For Those in a Dark Season

- [] Write down three ways God has been faithful in the past
- [] Pray each morning, “Jesus, be my Light today”
- [] Share your struggle with a trusted believer for support

For Those Needing Renewed Confidence in God’s Promises

- [] Memorize Isaiah 9:6–7
- [] Identify one promise of God and apply it to your daily decisions
- [] Worship intentionally when discouragement hits

For Everyone

- [] Practice active waiting—set aside 5 minutes daily to sit in stillness before God
 - [] Serve someone in need this week as an act of shining God’s light
 - [] Read the story of Jesus’ birth (Luke 1–2) and reflect on God’s timing
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Group Prayer (10 minutes)

Prayer Points

- Thank God for sending Jesus, the Light of the world
- Pray for renewed hope for those struggling with fear, grief, or uncertainty
- Pray for faith to trust God’s promises and timing
- Pray that our church would reflect the light of Christ to our community
- Pray for hearts to be prepared throughout this Advent season
- Pray for confidence in the Messiah’s reign and His coming return

Additional Resources

Recommended Reading

- *“Hidden Christmas”* – Timothy Keller
- *“The Promise: God’s Purpose and Plan Through the Prophets”* – Various authors
- *“Waiting Here for You: An Advent Journey of Hope”* – Louie Giglio

Scripture for Further Study

- Luke 1:26–38 (The promise of the Messiah announced)
- John 1:1–14 (The Light enters the world)
- Romans 15:13 (God fills us with hope)
- Revelation 21:1–5 (The future kingdom where darkness ends)

5-Day Devotionals

Day 1: Light in the Darkness

Reading: Isaiah 9:2; John 1:4–5

Devotional:

Before God speaks of joy, peace, or victory, He speaks of light. Advent begins here—acknowledging that the world is dark but declaring that Christ is brighter. Jesus does not avoid your darkness; He steps right into it. The gospel is not that you climb your way to God, but that God came down to you. Whatever darkness you face today—fear, grief, uncertainty—Jesus is your Light. And the darkness cannot overcome Him.

Day 2: The King We Needed

Reading: Isaiah 9:6–7; Luke 2:8–14

Devotional:

The Messiah didn't come as the world expected. Not a warrior, but a Child. Not in a palace, but a manger. God's hope often arrives differently than we imagine. Each name Jesus carries fills a deep human need:

- *Wonderful Counselor* for our confusion
 - *Mighty God* for our weakness
 - *Everlasting Father* for our loneliness
 - *Prince of Peace* for our storms
- Hope is not a feeling—it is the presence of this King.
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Day 3: Hope That Anchors

Reading: Romans 15:13; Psalm 27:13–14

Devotional:

Hope is more than surviving tough seasons; it's trusting that God is at work even when nothing changes yet. Advent teaches us how to wait—not with despair, but expectation. Hope anchors your soul when everything around you is shaking. Hope lifts your eyes from what is to what God promised will be. Choose today to anchor yourself in the God of hope, who fills you with joy and peace as you trust Him.

Day 4: When God's Timing Feels Slow

Reading: Galatians 4:4–5; 2 Peter 3:8–9

Devotional:

Israel waited hundreds of years for the Messiah. Yet “when the fullness of time came,” God sent His Son. God is never late—He’s perfectly timed. You may feel caught in delay, but God is working beneath what you can see. Advent reminds us that waiting is not wasted when God is involved. His delays hold purpose. His timing carries wisdom. Trust Him: the promise will come.

Day 5: The Hope of His Return

Reading: Revelation 21:1–5; Matthew 24:30–31

Devotional:

Advent doesn't only look back—it looks forward. The baby in the manger is the returning King. One day there will be no more darkness, pain, grief, or fear. Hope is not merely for surviving life; it's for anticipating eternity. Let the promise of Christ's return shape your life today. Let it purify your choices, strengthen your faith, and renew your joy. The story is not over. The King is coming.

Reflection Questions for the Week

Where do you see darkness in your life or community that needs Christ's light?

What promise of God do you struggle to believe right now?

Where is God asking you to wait with hope?

How does knowing Jesus reigns forever change how you handle challenges?

What does it look like to live as a person of hope this Advent?