



Sermon: The Promise of Hope

Scripture: Isaiah 9:2–7; Romans 15:12–13

Spotlight: In a dark world, God’s promise of a Savior brings lasting hope.

Summary: Isaiah looks out over a nation stumbling in deep spiritual darkness and announces a breathtaking promise: **a great Light is coming.** The people who are overwhelmed, afraid, and confused are told they will one day see God’s redeeming brightness break through their night. This Light will not come through a stronger army or a better leader but through **a Child**—One who will carry the government on His shoulders and rule with endless peace, justice, and righteousness. Isaiah names Him: **Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.** In other words, **hope is not a pipe dream—Hope is a Person.**

Centuries later, the Apostle Paul echoes Isaiah’s promise and brings clarity to its completion. In **Romans 15:12–13**, Paul declares that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of Israel’s longing and the world’s hope. Paul calls God “**the source of hope,**” and prays that believers would be filled with joy and peace as they trust in Him, until hope overflows by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The scriptures tell one story: In our darkness, God did not turn away—He sent His Son. What Isaiah promised, a child fulfilled. What generations longed for, Christ delivered. Hope has come, and hope has a name: Jesus.

This is the heartbeat of Advent - In a world waiting for light, **God keeps His promise. For those who believe, the light has come!!!**

For God, who said, “Let there be light in the **darkness,**” has made His light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:6

Christian hope expresses knowledge that every day of his life, and every moment beyond it, the believer can say with truth, on the basis of God’s own commitment, that the best is yet to come. ~ J. I. Packer

Advent begins with this truth:
Silence is not absence. Waiting is not abandonment. Delays are not denials.

What was true for the children of Israel is true for you today! You have either received the light or you live in darkness.

Even in silence, God was not absent—He was preparing a Redeemer.
Today we light the **Hope Candle** because the first word of Christmas is *promise*.

1. Hope Radiates Brightest in the Darkest Places.

Isaiah 9:2 NLT

“The people who walk in darkness will see a great light...”

“Our world today so desperately hungers for hope, yet uncounted people have almost given up. There is despair and hopelessness on every hand. Let us be faithful in proclaiming the hope that is in Jesus.” ~ Billy Graham

A. Darkness is real

Israel faced invasion, loss, fear, and moral collapse.

Our world knows the same darkness—violence, confusion, addiction, worry, grief, pain, fear, suffering.

B. But Darkness Does Not Get the Last Word

Isaiah dares to say:

Light is coming. Hope is coming. Christ is coming.

The world tries to manufacture hope—new plans, new leaders, new resolutions.

But real hope is not human optimism; it is divine intervention.

Greek NT word for hope: **ἐλπίς** (*elpis*)

– Not “wishful thinking,”

– But **confident expectation** rooted in the character of God.

Advent Hope isn't fragile. It's anchored to Someone unshakeable.

2. Hope is Rooted in the Promise of God - His very Presence!

“For a child is born to us, a son is given to us.... the government will rest on His shoulders.”

While our hope can find momentum in the power of God, He wants us to have hope in His presence first. Hope rises when we value God's presence more than earthly gain. Hope truly is rooted in the Promise of God.

Israel's hope was not:

- A better army
- A stronger king
- A smarter strategy

Israel's hope was a **Child**. A child born to US!

Jesus is God's Promise Fulfilled and Our Hope Indeed

His purposeful presence is defined in these four descriptive titles:

A. Wonderful Counselor (when we are lost)

Leading us where we cannot lead ourselves.
Giving wisdom the world cannot provide.

B. Mighty God (when we are weak)

Able to do what no one else can do.
Hope rests in His power and is amplified in His presence.

C. Everlasting Father (when we feel alone)

Faithful, present, protective, nurturing.
Never abandoning His children.

D. Prince of Peace (when we feel afraid)

Calming the storm outside, and even more—the storm inside.

A Government on His Shoulders (the King of Kings and Lord of Lords)

The Hebrew picture is the robe of royalty on the shoulders of a king.

Everything rests on Him. Nothing rests on you.

3. Hope is Revealed in Jesus, the Light of the World.

John 1:4 NLT

The Word gave life to everything... and His life brought light to everyone.

John begins his Gospel not with shepherds or mangers, but with eternity.

A. Jesus is not just a teacher—He is the Light that existed before creation.

He doesn't just *show* the way; He *is* the way.

B. The Light enters the world of shadows

The manger was God stepping into our night.

The incarnation is God saying, **"I refuse to leave you in the dark."**

C. And the darkness cannot extinguish the Light (John 1:5)

Rome couldn't stop Him.
Religion couldn't kill Him.
Sin couldn't touch Him.
Death couldn't finish Him.
The Grave couldn't hold Him.

4. Hope Renews Us in Our Waiting.

Paul quotes Isaiah and then prays a blessing over believers:
"I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in Him, then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13 NLT)

A. God is the source of hope, not circumstances

B. Trust opens the pipeline of hope

C. The Holy Spirit makes hope overflow

5. Hope Reminds us that God is never Absent, even when He is Silent.

Between Malachi and Matthew—400 years of no prophet, no voice, no revelation.
But heaven wasn't empty.
Heaven was *working*.
While earth was silent,
Mary was being chosen, Joseph was being prepared, Rome was building roads, the world was being positioned, the fullness of time was approaching.
Advent tells us:
When you can't see God's hand, you can trust His heart.
When you can't hear His voice, you can depend on His promise.
When you feel surrounded by darkness, look for the Light that never goes out.
God is always preparing a Redeemer. And he beckons you to receive Him!

NEXT STEPS

- 1. For you who are waiting:** God is working in the silence—trust Jesus the Wonderful Counselor.
- 2. For you who are weary:** Light is coming—walk toward Jesus the Mighty God.
- 3. For you who are without hope:** Trust your everlasting Father who sent Jesus, the Light the darkness can never overcome—receive Him.
- 4. For you who are worried:** Lay your fear at the feet of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

Life Application Questions:

Isaiah 9:2–7; Romans 15:12–13 (NLT)

In a dark world, God's promise of a Savior brings lasting hope.

1. Where do I personally feel the "darkness" described in Isaiah 9:2 right now?
 - Is it fear? discouragement? uncertainty? family? friends? work? finances? health?
2. Am I placing my hope in something other than Christ?
 - Have I been looking to circumstances, people, politics, finances, or self-effort to provide hope?
 - What step can I take to shift my trust back to Christ?
3. Who around me is walking in darkness that needs the light and hope of Christ this Advent Season?
 - Is there a co-worker, neighbor, or family member who needs encouragement or a gospel invitation?
 - What simple step could I take to reflect Christ's hope to them this Advent season?
4. How does Jesus' identity as "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" challenge or comfort me today?
 - Which of these descriptions of Jesus do I most need to cling to this week?
5. What would change in my life if I truly fully believed God has not forgotten me or forsaken me?
6. Am I willing to allow God to replace my temporary expectations with His eternal plan?
7. How can I intentionally cultivate hope this Advent season for myself and for others?
 - Scripture reading? Daily gratitude? Serving someone in need?
 - Re-centering my family's routines around Christ?
8. What is one "next step of faith" God is calling me to take right now?
 - Confession and Repentance? Reconciliation? Church membership? Serving? Teaching?
 - A bold act of trust/faith?
9. Do I believe God wants to fill me/has filled me with joy and peace through the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:13)?