

# RIVERS CROSSING COMMUNITY CHURCH



## Community Group Discussion Guide – A Weary World Rejoices #1

*The Thrill of Hope* / November 29, 2020 / Pastor Joey Furjanic (The Block Church)

### GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Icebreaker Questions | What is an event or moment that you've waited for, or are still waiting for, with great expectation and longing? How did the actual event/moment compare with your expectations?
2. Read Proverbs 13:12 together. Do the words of this proverb ring true to you? If so, share about a specific experience, whether it's one from 2020 or from another period in your life, where this proverb applied.

**Proverbs 13:12 (NLT)** – Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a dream fulfilled is a tree of life.

**Proverbs 13:12 (MSG)** – Unrelenting disappointment leaves you heartsick, but a sudden good break can turn life around.

3. This Christmas season, our desire as a church is to rediscover the hope and joy of Jesus' birth. Yet in our daily lives, especially during a year like 2020, we can quickly lose sight of that hope and joy. Take a few minutes to reflect and then discuss the following questions.
  - a) What things – or “hope stealers” as Pastor Joey put them – tend to quickly rob you of your hope and joy? Are those things primarily internal (i.e. related specifically to you) or external (i.e. things that you observe in the world or the behavior of others)?
  - b) When you find yourself in season where your hope and joy feel depleted, what are your tactics for reengaging with the hope found in Jesus Christ?

**Psalms 42: 5-6a (NLT)** – <sup>5</sup>Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again—my Savior and <sup>6</sup>my God!

**Hebrews 6:18-20 (NLT)** – <sup>18</sup>So God has given both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. <sup>19</sup>This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary. <sup>20</sup>Jesus has already gone in there for us. He has become our eternal High Priest in the order of Melchizedek.

### DIVING DEEPER

4. Read Matthew 12:15-21 and Matthew 11:28-30. Then discuss the corresponding questions.

**Matthew 12:15-21 (NLT)** – <sup>15</sup>But Jesus knew what they were planning. So he left that area, and many people followed him. He healed all the sick among them, <sup>16</sup>but he warned them not to reveal who he was. <sup>17</sup>This fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah concerning him: <sup>18</sup>“Look at my Servant, whom I have chosen. He is my Beloved, who pleases me. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. <sup>19</sup>He will not fight or shout or raise his voice in public. <sup>20</sup>He will not crush the weakest reed or put out a flickering candle. Finally he will cause justice to be victorious. <sup>21</sup>And his name will be the hope of all the world.”

**Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT)** – <sup>28</sup>Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup>Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup>For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”

Hundreds of years before Jesus' birth, ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection, the prophet Isaiah proclaimed that the name of Jesus would be the hope of all the world. From these two passages, what can we learn about the person and work of Jesus? In particular, what is his heart toward those who are experiencing affliction and sorrow?

5. Pastor Joey shared that we're not meant to live under guilt or condemnation. Yet many of us still carry around the baggage of shame. Perhaps this shame results from our sin and shortcomings. Or perhaps this shame derives from the words or actions of another. Regardless, this shame robs us of hope.

**Romans 8:1 (ESV)** – There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

a) What would it look like for you to go to God with that shame?

b) What's at stake if you don't deal with your shame?

6. When it comes to experiencing hope, we were challenged on Sunday to examine our worldview. As Pastor Joey shared, a secular worldview leads to selfishness and hopelessness, while a Biblical worldview leads to selflessness and hopefulness. Review the following comparisons that Pastor Joey provided and discuss the corresponding questions.

Secular Worldview	Biblical Worldview
If something offends me, it's wrong	Absolute truth exists and can be offensive
Everyone is equal	Everyone is unique
I'm better than you because of your color, status, or position	I'm better with you because of your color, status, or position
My body is my own	My body is a living sacrifice
What's mine is mine	What's mine is God's
My identity is my culture	My identity is found in Jesus Christ
If I disagree with you, then you're canceled	If I disagree with you, I'll still love you, pray for you, and bless you

Which one, if any, of these comparisons resonates the most as to where your worldview differs from the Biblical worldview? Explain your answer. What do you plan to do with this tension?

**Romans 12:1-2 (NLT)** – <sup>1</sup>And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. <sup>2</sup>Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

## TAKING IT HOME

7. The first chapter of the gospel of Luke is an incredible chapter. As a part of this chapter, Jesus' birth is foretold when the angel Gabriel visits the virgin Mary. <sup>1</sup>As Mary processed the news that she was to give birth to Jesus, we can only imagine what was going through her head. Would her family disown her? Would people in town make assumptions and gossip? Would her husband Joseph believe any of this? Would she be rejected? Disparaged? Or worse?

<sup>1</sup>*Wording and inspiration for this question taken from the Wycliffe Bible Translators reading plan titled "The Weary World Rejoices." This 5-day reading plan is available on the Bible app.*

We know what Mary ultimately felt as Luke records her song of praise known as The Magnificat. Read this passage of scripture together and discuss the corresponding questions.

**Luke 1:46-55 (ESV)** – <sup>46</sup>And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, <sup>47</sup>and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, <sup>48</sup>for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; <sup>49</sup>for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. <sup>50</sup>And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. <sup>51</sup>He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; <sup>52</sup>he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; <sup>53</sup>he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. <sup>54</sup>He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, <sup>55</sup>as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”

What can you take away from Mary about finding hope in a season that could easily be consumed by fear and “what-ifs?” How can you begin to live that out this week?

## PRAYER REQUESTS

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## RIVERS CROSSING – THINGS TO KNOW

1. Christmas Conspiracy | This Christmas, we’re inviting you and your family to worship fully, spend less, give more, and love all. 100% of the Christmas Conspiracy proceeds, which will be collected through a special offering on December 20<sup>th</sup>, go toward funding our local outreach ministry Joshua’s Place and helping us plant churches through our 10 in 10 church planting strategy. Will you be a part of this year’s Christmas Conspiracy? Learn more and join the Conspiracy at <https://riverscrossing.com/christmas-conspiracy/>.
2. Remember Song Release | Rivers Crossing Worship released an original single titled Remember on Sunday November 15th! You can purchase Remember on iTunes or listen to it on Spotify and Apple Music. Purchase Remember on iTunes: <https://music.apple.com/us/album/remember-single/1538437741>
3. 2021 Discipleship School | Discipleship School is a one-year program that helps Christians from all backgrounds become fully engaged followers of Christ. The school helps students learn to hear God’s voice clearly, experience a full and free life, develop intimacy with God, develop Christlike living, and understand their spiritual gifting. For more information, visit <https://riverscrossing.com/discipleship-school/>.
4. Volunteering at Rivers Crossing | Everything we do as a church is made possible because of our incredible volunteer teams. Whether they're leading a group in River Kids, welcoming first time guests or helping produce our online services, each person makes a huge impact. If you'd like to find a place to serve, click the following link <https://riverscrossing.com/get-involved/>.