



## ADVENT WEEK ONE: GOD'S PROMISE OF HOPE

December 1, 2019

Pastor Brad Williams

### BIBLICAL TEXT(S)

#### MAIN TEXT(S):

*Luke 1:19-20; Luke 1:76-79; Luke 2:1-7; Luke 2:10-12; Ephesians 1:16-18; Romans 15:13; and Lamentations 3:20-24*

### SUMMARY

The Hebrew word for hope carries with it this idea that no matter how bad the present may be, there is way through it, because of a future that God promises. Hope carries expectations of a new tomorrow. Hope is based on something that is in our future, but even so, it gives us courage, and strength, for the moment. Hope is what gets us through the toughest circumstances in life.

The word for hope in Hebrew is tikvah. The literal translation is "thread", or "a little line." Hope can seem tenuous at times. It can seem like a delicate thread, and if we pull on it a bit too hard, it will break. But we must keep in mind that the other end of this thread is held by God. He is the one holding our tikvah. That's where the strength of our hope comes from.

God is the difference between an idea of hope that is "wishing" and a hope that is sure and strengthening.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*These questions are designed to help you lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage and the speaker's message, helping them understand and apply the teaching.*

#### LEAN IN

***These are icebreaker/warm up questions, mostly just to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.***

1. What struck you from our last discussion together? What stayed with you or what did you chew on afterwards?
2. What do you observe in the broader culture that illustrates hope?
3. What do you see in our culture that undercuts hope?

#### LOOK DOWN

***These are questions on the passage and observations about what's been read. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max***

1. Where do you see hope implied in the passages from Luke 1 and 2?
2. How is the hope Paul addresses in Ephesians different from "wishing?"
3. How are the Holy Spirit and hope related according to Romans 15?  
What do you think of that?
4. What do you see in Lamentations 3:20-24? What's the main point?
5. What does Jeremiah "call to mind" in Lamentations 3:21 that gives him hope?

#### LOOK OUT

***These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today.***

***Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max***

1. How have contemporary Christians usually thought about hope? How does that compare to the texts and sermon for this week?
2. Pastor Brad drew a distinction between wishful thinking and real hope. What do you think of that? How do you see that distinction in the world around you?

3. Bono once said, "Stop asking God to bless what you're doing. Find out what He is already blessing and go do that." How does hope figure into this advice?
4. Why do you think hope seems to be such a fragile quality in life?
5. Name something hopeful in your life and/or experience.

### **LOOK IN**

*These are questions that help you consider personal application.*

*Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max*

1. Where do you see hope in yourself. What's the foundation of that hope? Don't offer a convenient, culturally Christian answer. Dig deep.
2. What wars against an abiding hope in you?
3. Where do you find strength for the hope within you? Specifically, what Christian practice (worship, prayer, the Scriptures, and community) fortifies you and why?
4. Do you sense spiritual headwinds and opposition for your hope. If so, what's its source? Is there spiritual warfare involved? What does that even mean?
5. Describe your hope in Jesus? Even if your answer is, "I don't have any."

### **LIVE IT OUT**

*These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life.*

*Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.*

1. What hope do you have that you will invite others in your group to pray with you for?
2. Where, and to whom, can you offer a new vision of hope? How will you do that?