

Small Group Discussion Guide — December 13, 2020

- Series: Hope in the World
 - Sermon: “Healing Hope”
 - Scripture: Malachi 4: 2-3, Luke 1: 76-79
-

FOLLOW-UP FROM LAST WEEK:

How have you seen a “light shining in the darkness” of Covid? Who or what has been that light for you?

CONNECT:

1. What one thing stood out for you from this weekend’s services?
2. What emotions do you experience in a time of waiting? Do you tend to be more hopeful or more despairing in times of waiting?

ENGAGE:

1. Read Malachi 4: 2-3.
 - These words were among the last of the Hebrew Scriptures, and they are full of hope. But they were followed by 400 years of silence! How do you think the Jewish people kept hold of that hope through that long dark season?
 - What are those who fear His name hoping for? What do those promises look like in today’s world?
2. Read Luke 1: 76-79.
 - Who is prophesying in this passage? How is it a bridge from the Old Testament promise to the New Testament fulfillment of the promise?
 - What is meant by those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death? How does one gain the “knowledge of salvation” according to these verses?

APPLY:

1. David said that what happens to you, the happy and the hard, are your circumstances. What you do with hope in those circumstances is your story. What is one part of your story where you have felt God’s mighty and loving hand move? How does that memory give you hope for what is happening in your story now?
2. David said that in all lives, there is the pain that’s happened to us, and the pain we’ve caused others. Both affect our ability to hope. Is there a situation in your life where you are still holding onto that hurt? How is that manifesting itself in your life? How can you participate with God to bring healing?
3. If Christmas is the dawning of hope - not the full light - what do you think the full light of the Sun of righteousness looks like? How does the hope of that future change how we look at the present times?

PRAY:

Gracious and loving God, we thank you for Christmas, for Emmanuel, for sending your Son into our darkness that we may find the light of Hope in our broken world. Let His light shine in us, expose and cleanse the hurt, and redeem our lives. And let His light shine through us to others so that they, too, can feel the warmth of your love. Amen

GOING DEEPER:

1. Advent is about hope, and hope is a waiting thing. What are you hoping for this Christmas season? How do we “press on” as we wait? Read Philippians 3:10-14 and discuss what Paul’s hope was and how he lived in that hope.
2. Take David’s suggestion and journal this week using the following headings:
Heart /anxious thoughts /offensive ways / the way everlasting

If possible, discuss with you group next week what you learn about yourself and about God through the exercise.

SUPPORTING VERSES:

- Philippians 3:12b
- Hebrews 1:2-3
- 1John 1:8
- John 1:5
- Psalm 139:23-24