

Small Group Discussion Guide — December 6, 2020

- Series: Hope in the World
 - Sermon: “A Light in the Darkness”
 - Scripture: Luke 2: 8-12, John 1: 4-5
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FOLLOW-UP FROM LAST WEEK:

Last week David mentioned all the hints God’s word gives us about eternity. Which of the many hints he mentioned is most intriguing to you?

CONNECT:

1. What one thing stood out for you from this weekend’s services?
2. What’s your favorite Christmas decoration? Why is it that most Christmas decorating involves lights?

ENGAGE:

1. Read Luke 2: 8-12.
 - The word “glory” suggests that it was something other than just light. What do you think makes up the “glory of the Lord?”
 - What was the shepherds’ response, and why do you think they felt this way?
2. Read John 1: 4-5. What do you think “the light of men” means? How would you define the darkness, as referenced in verse 5?

APPLY:

1. Pete spoke a lot about how easy it is to fall into despair in 2020, the year of COVID. He described despair as “the complete loss or absence of hope.” How does the fact that there is a “light that shines in the darkness” give us hope, when there is so much darkness competing with that light? What makes it hard for you to see the light?
2. When Pete listed the ways that we can find the light, he mentioned a list of actions we can take to help the light shine brighter, all of which involve acts of service like feeding the hungry, comforting the lonely, etc. Why do you suppose these acts of service keep us from despair? What are some actions you can take as an individual or as a group this week?
3. Although the Apostle John was well aware of the birth narrative, he left it out of his Gospel. Instead, he emphasized the fact that Christ is the eternal light of the world, and He has overcome the darkness. How does this inform our experiences as Christians in 2020?

PRAY:

Dear Lord, thank you for bringing the light of your Son into the world, and for allowing us the chance to spread that light where we have been planted in your world. During this despairing Christmas season, may we shine the light of your love and forgiveness to everyone by becoming your hands and feet to a lost and hurting world. Amen

GOING DEEPER:

1. Much was made in this message of the word “light” as a description of Jesus Christ. This week it might be useful to examine the qualities of light and compare them to qualities of our Lord. Different kinds of light serves different purposes. How are each of these kinds of light like Christ? Can you think of other lights and how they remind us of Christ?
 - A Lighthouse on the rocky coast of Maine
 - A flare shot into the night sky
 - A lantern on a walk through the woods
2. Jesus grew in the darkness of Mary’s womb for nine months. Even in the darkness, God was growing something beyond amazing and beyond our wildest dreams. What has God been growing in you during the past nine months of darkness? What beautiful thing might come to be in your life because of this period of darkness and waiting? Pray this week that God will help you discern what He is doing in your heart during this time.

SUPPORTING VERSES:

John 19: 26-27

QUOTES

“If darkness is meant to suggest a world where nobody can see very well - either themselves, or each other, or where they are heading, or even where they are standing at the moment; if darkness is meant to convey a sense of uncertainty, of being lost, of being afraid; if darkness suggests conflict between races, between nations, between individuals...then we live in a world that knows much about darkness.”

Frederick Buchner