

**Sermon-Based Questions**  
**December 2, 2018**  
**Dave Gustavsen**

**Four Words for Christmas**

*Hope*  
Isaiah 9:1-7

**Introduction (choose 1):**

1. Another Christmas season is here:
  - What are some things that you enjoy about the Christmas season?
  - What are some things that you don't enjoy about the Christmas season?
2. Are there changes that you can make to declutter these weeks leading up to Christmas? What are they?

**Reading (Scripture Reference):**

*Read Isaiah 9:1-7*

**Understanding (choose 4-6):**

3. What is something that you are hoping for this Christmas? How is this "hope" different than the "hope" that Isaiah talks about in this passage?
4. What words does Isaiah use to describe the present state of the people of Judah? Why did these people need a message of hope?
5. Verse 2 says, "...on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned."
  - What makes the places where you live and work "dark"?
  - How can Jesus lighten up the darkness in these places?
6. Pastor Dave defines hope as "the belief that the future holds good things."
  - Where do you need this message of hope the most today?
  - Do you get easily discouraged? How can God's promises help encourage you?
7. A vision of hope helps get us through dark times:
  - How does hope change our outlook on life? How does hope change how we live each day?
  - What are some examples in your life where your hope in Jesus got you through tough times?
8. *Read Isaiah 9:3.* What two images of joy does Isaiah use in this verse?
  - Have you had a "harvest" moment in your life over the past year? What was it?
  - Describe the deep joy that you felt in that moment.
  - Do you feel that same joy when you think about what Jesus has done for you? Why or why not?
9. *Read Isaiah 9:6.* Reflect on each of the names that Isaiah attributes to Jesus.

- Which of the four names is the most significant to you? Why?
- Has there been a time in your life where one of these attributes was particularly meaningful to you?
- How can each of these attributes give us hope?
- How do you think the people of Judah felt when they heard this?
- How do you think a person today would feel if they heard this message for the first time?

10. *Read Isaiah 9:5.* Jesus' coming will ultimately bring a lasting peace.

- Does celebrating the coming of Jesus give you peace? Why or why not?
- What area of your life needs peace?

11. What are some examples in the Gospels of Jesus as the "Giver of Hope"? Pastor Dave mentioned a few in his sermon: The disabled man at the Pool of Bethesda; The woman at the well; Zacchaeus):

- *Read John 8:1-11.* How do the examples above and this passage show hope?
- How does thinking about how Jesus gave hope to the hopeless give you hope?

12. *Read 1 Corinthians 15:55-58.* How should we live our lives knowing that Jesus has already conquered death?

- Share a time where you or someone you know "gave themselves fully to the work of the Lord" courageously?

### **Application:**

13. What are some steps that you can take to make sure that you are rooted in this message of hope?

14. What can our small group do to live out this message of hope to each other? How can our small group share this message of hope with others?

15. Take some time to pray. Ask Jesus to open your heart to fully understand and appreciate what Jesus has done for you. Pray that this Christmas season would bring you joy and peace as you reflect the coming of Jesus – our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.

**December 2, 2018**

**Lectio Divina**

- 1. Opening Prayer:** Ask God for insight into His Word, for open hearts and minds, for hunger to know Him better, and for an attitude of learning from one another.
- 2. Reading:** Have someone from your group read the passage aloud. It is best to print out a copy for each group member so they can read along, make notes, or go back as needed.
- 3. Meditation:** Spend *an entire minute in complete silence*, contemplating what was just read. Feel free to re-read the passage quietly to yourself or jot down thoughts/highlight what stuck out to you.
- 4. Sharing:** At the leader's signal, invite group members to share their insights for about 5 minutes.
- 5. Repeat:** After the 5 minutes are over, repeat the process 2 more times using the same passage. Listen/read like you haven't heard this passage before. If there are longer moments of silence, the leader can prompt discussion with the following questions:
  1. What did you hear and what seems important?
  2. What is the Holy Spirit impressing on you?
  3. What does it make you think of from your life?

*1 Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—*

*2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.*

*3 You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder.*

*4 For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor.*

*5 Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire.*

*6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

*7 Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.*

-Isaiah 9:1-7

**31** *What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?*

**32** *He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?*

**33** *Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.*

**34** *Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.*

-Romans 8:31-34

**35** *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?*

**36** *As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."*

**37** *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*

**38** *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,*

**39** *neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

-Romans 8:35-39