

## Advent - Hope

### Isaiah 9:1-2;6-7, Matthew 4:12-17

#### Living with hope...

- Be honest with yourself & God
- Commit to Jesus, not the outcome
- Make room for God's creativity & patience

#### Thinking it Through (agree/disagree, consider, contemplate)

“Religious systems that ignore the dark side of life are fundamentally dishonest. ... In Advent, we don't pretend, as I once thought, that we are in the darkness before the birth of Christ. Rather, we take a good hard look at the darkness we are in now, facing and defining it honestly, so that we will understand with utmost clarity that our great and only hope is in Jesus's final victorious coming.”

- Fleming Rutledge

“We can live forty days without food, eight days without water, four minutes without air, but only a few seconds without hope.”

- Anonymous

#### Working It Out

1. What stood out to you from this message? Did anything surprise you, unsettle you, or stir your heart?
2. In your own words, how would you distinguish Christian hope from optimism or wishful thinking? Is hope something you can practice or train in? If so, how do you do it?
3. Jacob argued that what ultimately distinguishes Christian hope is that it is placed in a **Person**, not in outcomes. For you personally, what are some **outcomes** that you tend to place your hope in?
4. Hope for the future rests on God's faithfulness in the past. Where have you seen God show up in surprising ways in your past?

#### Prayer Points

- Pray this benediction over one another: and use it as a launchpad to pray over the needs of your community, committing them to Jesus.
    - o *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.* (Romans 15:13)
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