

Threads of Hope . . . Both Now and Then

November 27, 2011

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Isaiah 9.2, 6-7

Today is the first Sunday of Advent, a word which means “_____”.

There are many prophecies in the Old Testament that point towards Christ’s arrival.

- These prophecies were lifelines, or threads of hope, that were given to the people of Israel at _____ times in their history.

What had God promised to do through the people of Israel?

- God promised that He would bless the entire world through them. (Genesis 12.1-3)
- God promised that one day a descendent of David would come, and that person, the Messiah, would _____. (2 Samuel 7.12-16)

In those difficult times the people of Israel needed these words of hope because _____ didn’t line up with the _____ God had given them.

A little problem:

- Even though Christ has already come, a lot of those prophecies still haven’t come true. (Isaiah 2.4, Jeremiah 33.16, Isaiah 9.6-7)

The solution:

- These Old Testament prophecies aren’t all about Jesus’ first coming, some are about His _____, pointing to the day when He will come back to _____ in this world forever.

What difference does this make?

It gives us perspective:

- Christmas is important, but it’s not the _____. It’s one key event in the story of God’s amazing plan to redeem His fallen creation. And that story ends with a _____ to restore all that has been lost.

It gives us a reason for hope:

- Today our hope comes from the promise that the same God who was born in the manger _____. When He comes back He will put this broken world back together. (Isaiah 9.6-7, Mark 13.33 ff)

It gives us something to do as we wait:

- As we _____, we _____. (1 Corinthians 15.58)

Talk it over. . . . with your friends, family, or Growth Group.

Talking through the ideas presented in Sunday's message helps us apply God's word to our individual lives. These questions are designed to help you put His words into action in your life this week.

- When it really comes down to it, where do you find hope? What are the true sources of hope for you in this life? What reasons do you have for putting your hope there? In what ways have your reasons for hope either come through for you or disappointed you in the past?
- Of the different promises made about what the Messiah will do, which one resonates with you the most? Which one gives you the most hope for the future?
- Why do you think God had you here this morning? What do you need to do as a result of what you've experienced today?

Some next steps. . . . Here are some things you can do this week to dig deeper:

- Read through Matthew's version of the Christmas story (Matthew 1.18-2.22). Note how many times He says that things in Jesus' life happened in order to fulfill a prophecy.
- Apart from these two chapters, what other Old Testament prophecies do you know of that Jesus' birth, life, ministry, death, and resurrection fulfilled? Where could you look to help you answer that question?
- Next week we'll be looking at how the birth of Jesus can give us hope in the absolute darkest moments of our lives. Read through Isaiah 40.1-11, a promise that was given to Israel at a dark time in their history, and think about how those words might impact your life.

