

Threads of Hope . . . Even In Our Darkest Times

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Isaiah 11.1-9

Isaiah 11 is a picture of hope _____
in a situation that seems _____. (Isaiah 6.11)

Isaiah's consistently repeated message to Israel:

- Even in their darkest times they could have hope because _____.
- Isaiah 40.1-2, Isaiah 9.2, Isaiah 7.14 - the name Immanuel means "God is with us".

What Isaiah's message says to us:

- Because Jesus the Messiah was born, because He will one day return, we can _____ in the midst of our _____ situations as well.

What difference does this make for us today?

1. It gives us hope even when we are _____.
 - The gospel in a nutshell: We are more broken than we can ever know; but we are more loved than we can ever imagine. (Romans 3.23, Romans 5.8, Romans 10.9)
2. It gives us hope even when we are _____ as we follow God.
 - We can have hope in difficult times because God promises to _____. That's part of what the Holy Spirit does in our lives. (John 14.16-17)
 - We can have hope in difficult times because God still _____ through His word. (Isaiah 40.28-31)

An important clarification:

- Hope doesn't make our troubles magically go away...but as we wait on the Lord our hope does make them _____.
- Waiting on the Lord is living in confident _____ of His action on your behalf.
- That is what we're called to do.

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.

- Think about a time in your life when you really felt like you were in a dark, hopeless place. What was it about your situation that made you lose hope? What do you feel like could have brought hope to you in that moment?
- Of the different stories you heard today, which one do you relate to the most? Which one gives you the most hope for the future? What can you take from those stories to apply to your life and situation?
- 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 the last major section of the book of Isaiah, chapters 40-66. As you do, keep your eyes open for other "threads of hope" that talk about who the Messiah will be and what He will do when he comes.
- Next week we'll be looking at how the birth of Jesus can bring joy into our lives and into our world. Take some time this week to google the lyrics to that old Christmas Carol, Joy to the World, and prayerfully study them, allowing them to help you think about all of the different ways in which Christ's arrival brings joy to our world—past, present, and future.

