

HOPE - WEEK 1

During this season of Advent, of waiting, we will take the biblical understanding of waiting to shape the season. Waiting is not the absence of activity but the activity of intentionally waiting on God to speak, guide, reveal and work.

Each week we will have a morning prayer to shape our days. Pray it each day of the week and be aware to how God speaks to you during the day through your prayer. Journal the things you sense/hear/observe.

MORNING PRAYER:

God you are my God and *I will* ever praise you.

I will seek you in the morning; *I will* learn to walk in your ways.

Step by step you lead me - *I will* follow you all of my days.

God help me to seek you, listen to and watch for you as I walk through my day.

EVENING PRAYER:

Father, today, I confess that there were times when I forgot about you.

Times when I sought my own wisdom and relied on my own mind and strength. Help me to find my hope in you alone, to stand on your solid rock so that in the storms that come, in the fears that rise up, in the disappointments and anger that are inevitable, I stand on a foundation of hope rather than despair.

When today were you aware of God with you? Did you pause to seek him on anything? What happened when you did? What happened when you didn't?

What does my absence of pausing to seek say about where my hope is built?

Am I actually building my hope on self-sufficiency in the shaping and actions of my day?

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR WEEK 1:

We will also share practices of reading and meditating and wrestling with three scripture passages each week. These will tie into the coming Advent messages when we gather together on Sunday's. Take the time to read each passage out loud to yourself asking God to reveal what he is saying to you in them. Consider the reflection questions and thoughts here and ask God to reveal to you what is needed to strengthen your heart and bring you to a place of praise and gratitude for Him.

READ: Psalm 13: 1-6 NIV

How long, O Lord?

We can weary in waiting and weariness can erode hope. We can simply give up. Can you relate to this Psalm written by king David? In what have you lost hope of? David writes beautiful songs of despair and loss, yet he always lands on the foundation of hope that despite what is present in circumstances ***there is still God.***

What is in your life right now where you need to land on that thought?

Even in the midst of doubt and unbelief that is what always brings me back: ***there is still God.***

READ: Matthew 12:18-21 NIV

Jesus has just spoken to the religious people that a person is far more valuable than a law. He then quotes Isaiah 42 to remind them of where their hope and justice come from. Jesus is the answer to the cry of the Israelites through the centuries and the One they have hoped to come. In what ways does this give you hope?

What justice does Jesus bring to your life? To your fears?

Write down some fears you currently struggle with. Take them to God in your morning and evening prayers.

READ: Luke 1:67-79 NIV

Where do you find hope in this Prayer of Zechariah?

This song is his response to answered prayers. Prayers that were prayed centuries ago and prayers that he himself had been praying that echoed those ancient prayers as well as prayers in his own challenges and circumstances.

What prayers have you lost hope in?

Ask God to show you where he is in those prayers and hopes?

Ask God to reveal where those answered prayers are because of selfish motivations?

Confess these and receive forgiveness and be filled with new hope.

God is with us. He hears and acts on behalf of those who hope (wait) on him.