



Jesus Is the Birth of Hope!

Week of December 6, 2015

Use these discussion for personal growth and development, or as a guide for your Connect Group discussions.

Message Recap:

Read Matthew 1:18-21

The hope that came to life in Christmas longs to come to life in us! That hope is Jesus Christ, and this is the time of year to not lose sight of what is most important. Not only did Jesus come to Earth to save us from our sins, but he came to bring light into a world full of darkness. Only God can create something from nothing. He made it all possible for us to go from a place of no hope, or false hope, to a place where real hope is ignited within us and which not only fills us up, but overflows into the world around us and reaches those who are still wandering around in the darkness.

Pray

Lord, let us not forget what is the real meaning of Christmas this year. Help us not get caught up in the world's view of Christmas. Let us shine our brightest and be the bearers of light into a community filled with the darkness of hopelessness and despair. Let us give the gift of hope this season, so that others might catch even the faintest of glimpses of the hope that can be found in your mighty and loving arms. Lord, thank you for the greatest gift of all; the gift of your son, Jesus. Thank you for making it possible for us to shed the darkness and live a life of light and hope as we enjoy all of the wonderful blessings that you give to us.

#SevernRun

Getting Started

- If you could ask for ANYTHING this Christmas, what would be the one thing you'd want most?
- What was the best gift that someone has ever given you? How did that make you feel?

Listening Deeply

1. Think about your answer to that last question. What about that gift made it feel so special? Was it really the gift, or was there something more behind it?
2. Do you remember a moment when you were lost in the dark and finally found something that brought you hope? How did that feel?
3. What are some areas of your life where you might still need a little more hope?
4. Is there anyone specific who you know is still living with some darkness in their life? How do you think you could show that person some hope this Christmas season?
5. Think about hope for a minute. Why do you think it's so hard for people to find it these days? What are ways that you can help to remove the obstacles to hope that you just listed?
6. Are you committed to repenting from your hopelessness and letting God fill you up so that you can be the light of hope in your neighborhood, your workplace, or wherever you go? What's one way you can share hope this week?

Living Wide in Jesus

In Deuteronomy 31:8 we are told that the Lord will go ahead of us on our paths. He will never leave us and he will always be there to help when we need him. Knowing this should give us hope! Find out ways to remind yourself of that so that you never lose focus of what really matters amidst all the hustle and bustle of the holidays. Remember to be thankful for the greatest gift of all this season; the gift of Jesus...the gift of hope!

- Start thinking about your New Year's resolutions now. Think, not in terms of what you will accomplish, but more in terms of what changes you need to make to live the way you know that God wants you to live.
- Make a list of people that you know you could reach out to within the next week or two who need a little more hope in their lives.
- Think of ways that perhaps the group as a whole could work together to share some holiday hope with local people in need.