

A close-up photograph of golden-brown grasses, possibly pampas grass, with a soft, bokeh background. The word "Hope" is written in a white, elegant cursive font across the center of the image, flanked by two thin white horizontal lines.

Hope

Week One: Hope

The story of Advent begins in the beginning. In the Garden of Eden, we see that God speaks a beautiful world into being, creates humanity in His image, and then blesses and gives humanity dominion over the earth. There in the garden, God and His image bearers walk together in the cool of the day, and it is good. It's the reality every human being was made for. But lo and behold, not even 4 chapters into the story, a deceitful serpent, an apple, and a wretched conversation later, all of creation is plunged into darkness, sin, and death. Man is separated from God, but God has a plan.

In Luke 1:26-35 (ESV), when the angel Gabriel reveals to Mary that she will supernaturally become pregnant with the Messiah, he says to her, *“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”*

When Gabriel speaks the name of the promised child, he gives substance to the hope of all of mankind. Jesus literally means salvation or savior, rescuer, and deliver. Messiah will reign over an unending Kingdom in which all that was lost to darkness in that garden will be salvaged, rescued, and delivered once and for all. What Mary must have felt in that moment for her people, for herself?

Have you ever experienced the thrill of hope? When all seemed lost, there in the darkness, a light appears. Jesus Christ is our hope of hopes. We look to his coming: past, present, and future, and as we allow him to daily come stunningly into view, we let our hope arise and rest in him alone. That he came as a child, that we who receive and grow up in him might be called the children of God, is reason to expect every awaited promise will be kept. In a world consumed with hopelessness as dark as night, Jesus shines like the dawn. It is in His advent that we find the hope of the nations.

Gabriel speaks these powerful words to Mary in Luke 1:37.
May they resonate with us this Advent season,
“For nothing will be impossible with God.”

*The thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices,
for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!*
-O Holy Night by Placide Cappeau, 1843

*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.*
-Isaiah 9:2 ESV

See Isaiah 9:6-7 Gen. 49:10 Mic. 5:2 Isaiah 53 Isaiah 9:2 Isaiah
61 Isaiah 42:1

Read Luke 1:26-35, Luke 1:46-55

What is the hope you have for yourself, your family, your
friends, and your community as you begin the Advent season?
How can you strengthen that hope this season?

J E S U S I S O U R H O P E

There are too many people who live hopelessly. Hopelessness is a blindness to the Love of God. We get to partner with God in helping those who feel unseen or unloved to recognize they are seen and loved by Him. We get to offer Hope to our community.

Week 1 | Hope | Integration

Basic:

Give to an organization that helps people. Give something or an amount of money of your choosing to a local organization that helps families. This will start to tune your heart toward Jesus and His heart for those hurting.

Read through Psalm 42 one time this week.

Baseline:

Help meet a basic need for an individual or a family. Finding out who has a need may be a little foreign to some. If you look at who is usually helping others meet basic needs, they will be able to help you getconnected to a need that you are able to meet. This is why community is important.

Read and meditate on Psalm 42 throughout this week.

Build:

Be a champion of Hope. Start being someone who is identifying people in need and being a champion for that individual or family. You will be the person posting about needs so that others can help meet that need. Don't try to do it alone!

Commit to reading through Psalm 42 daily with your Life Group this week.





*Scripture Reading
Week One*

ISAIAH 9:2, 6-7

MATTHEW 24: 36-44

MARK 1:2-3

JEREMIAH 33:14-15

ISAIAH 11:1-2

ISAIAH 61:1-2

ZECHARIAH 6:12-13

Reflections

HOPE

Where did you start this week? Circle one: Basic | Baseline | Build

What did you take away from your integration this week?

Do you feel more equipped to offer hope to others?

What is the next step for you to offer hope in the coming year?