

GOD WITH US BRINGS HOPE **God With Us Series, Part 1**

*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. **Isaiah 7:14 (NIV)***

*Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress... The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. **Isaiah 9:1–2 (NIV)***

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. **Isaiah 9:6 (NIV)***

These are passages the Jewish people of Jesus' day would have been very familiar with. Even though in Jesus' day it had been some 400 years since God had spoken through the prophets the people were still waiting... still hoping for the coming of a Messiah. This was the context in which **Luke 1** opens.

TEXT: LUKE 1:5-25, 57-66 [FOCUS IS ON ZECHARIAH]

APPLICATION: IT'S BETTER TO SAY NOTHING THAN SPEAK FAITHLESS AND HOPELESS WORDS OVER OUR LIVES.

*Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. **Hebrews 11:1(NIV)***

APPLICATION: WHEN YOU GET A GLIMPSE OF HOPE DON'T LET "NEW REASONS" NOT TO HOLD ON TO THAT HOPE GAIN A FOOTHOLD IN YOUR HEART OR MIND.

1. YOU CAN FIND HOPE IN GOD'S WORD

One way that God is Immanuel to us – is that God is with us is through the written Word that He has given us.

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast... Even the darkness will not be dark to you the

night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you... Psalm 139:7-12 (NIV)

Application: Search the Scriptures for promises related to your circumstances and then ask the Holy Spirit to show you how to apply those promises to your circumstances – and turn them into prayers, declarations, and meditations.

2. YOU CAN FIND HOPE IN GOD'S NATURE

Another place you find hope is in the nature of God. Place your hope on who God has shown Himself to be.

ILLUSTRATION: WOMAN WITH ISSUE OF BLOOD FOR 12 YEARS. **Mark 5:25–34 (NIV)**

APPLICATION: DON'T LET HOPELESSNESS PULL YOU AWAY FROM GOD. LET HOPE DRAW YOU NEARER TO HIM.

3. YOU CAN FIND HOPE IN GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

The third way we can find hope is by focusing on God's faithfulness.

- **How has God worked in your life?**
- Look at how God has worked in the lives of others in this age and in the Scriptures?
- Acknowledgment and appreciation bring hope. Listen to these words from Jeremiah found in Lamentations.

Yet **this I call to mind** and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. **I say to myself**, 'The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.' The LORD is good to those whose **hope is in him**, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD. **Lamentations 3:21–26**

Did you catch those hints at cultivating hope in the passage?

- **This I call to mind** and therefore I have hope – the faithfulness of God.
- **This I say to myself**, "God is my portion, I will wait for Him."
- The Lord is good to those who hope in Him.
- It's good to wait quietly for the salvation (rescue) of the Lord.

One last thought on hope. **This idea is Advanced Hope 401**, it's not for amateurs.

- Sometimes our hope is disappointed because we placed our hope in some **THING**, we wanted God to do, instead of in God Himself.
- But the scriptures teach us that our hope should be in God, more than in what we want God to do.

CLOSING

*May the **God of hope** fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that **you may overflow with hope** by the power of the Holy Spirit. **Romans 15:13 (NIV)***

What of God's promises, His nature, His faithfulness do you need to latch onto today to find hope for some circumstance or situation you are in? Let Advent and Christmas be a reminder to you that God still works miracles and is still showing himself strong to his people.