

Open It

Who in the Old Testament has encouraged you to have hope? What unique contribution to hope do they offer by their example?

Consider It

Carmen Joy Imes highlights the way hope is depicted in Exodus: "Christian hope is rooted in God's seeing. Nothing escapes his notice. The heart of Advent is knowing that God sees a world gone wrong and that he will do something to make it right." What's your reaction to her observation about hope? About Advent?

Read Psalm 46 with the experiences of 2020 in mind. What lines or phrases resonate with you?

Read Isaiah 9:2-7. How do the descriptions of Messiah in this passage speak to our deep human longings and needs?

What is one phrase from Psalm 46 or the Isaiah readings that best expresses your response to God this week? How do you desire to strengthen your hope in him?

Advent: A Living Hope

The Hope of God's Promise

Isaiah 40:1-11

December 5 & 6, 2020

Introduction

Sermon Proposition

God Breaks through Our Despair with four Words of Hope.

A Word of Assurance

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. ² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

Isaiah 40:1-2 (NIV)

A Word of Expectation

A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; The rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. ⁵ And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Isaiah 40:3–5 (NIV)

A Word to Proclaim

You who bring good news to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and he rules with a mighty arm. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

Isaiah 40:9–11 (NIV)

A Word of Perspective

A voice says, "Cry out." And I said, "What shall I cry?" "All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever."

Isaiah 40:6–8 (NIV)