

Beyond Sunday

For groups, friends, families, couples, or individuals to reflect on the message you heard this Sunday, 11/26.

1. Read Isaiah 8:21-22. Isaiah 8 was written when Israel was overrun by the brutal Assyrian empire. What were the dark circumstances God's people were facing then? What are some of the dark circumstances that are stealing hope from people you know today?
2. Read Isaiah 9:1-2. We serve a God who dances in graveyards and offers the greatest hope at times of deepest darkness. Unpack His promise here. How is God going to "honor Galilee of the nations." How will the light that is will dawn there going to peel back the world's greatest darkness? How has the light of Christ helped you personally in the turmoil of issues in 2017?
3. Read Isaiah 9:6. One of the famous Christmas carols poses the question, "What child is this?" What are the titles and descriptions this verse gives that describe this child? Take some time to reflect on the significance of each of these aspects of who Jesus is -- and how each aspect brings hope.
 - o Wonderful Counselor
 - o Mighty God
 - o Everlasting Father
 - o Prince of Peace
4. Which of these four aspects of who Jesus is and what He does do you need most in this season? Why?
5. Real life connection: Simone Biles, a five-time Olympic medal winning gymnast grew up in a fractured family that imploded due to addiction and left her in foster care. She was eventually adopted by loving parents and was thereby given a new lease on life that set the stage for all she has become. How does her story parallel the story all of us have when we come to know the Lord of Christmas?

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Challenged in Galilee

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.** Isaiah 9:6

Opening Reflection:

This Christmas Season, what is the darkness surrounding you?

Key Idea: The Darkness Will Not Last With Him

THE PROBLEM: *Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land; when they are famished, they will become enraged and, looking upward, will **curse their king and their God**. Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness.* Isaiah 8:21-22

THE PROMISE: *Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. **In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan...*** Isaiah 9:1

THE PERSON: *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.*** Isaiah 9:6

▶ **WONDERFUL COUNSELOR: He Guides Me**

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Hebrews 4:15-16

▶ **MIGHTY GOD: He Rescues Me**

For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him. Philippians 2:13 (NLT)

▶ **EVERLASTING FATHER: He is Present to Me**

Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. John 14:9

I and the Father are one. John 10:30

▶ **PRINCE OF PEACE: He Calms Me**

Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace. Luke 2:14

The New Testament details several significant ways Jesus brings peace to a world marked by human conflict.

1. Peace **with** God

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 5:1

2. Peace **from** God

When people's lives please the Lord, even their enemies are at peace with them. Proverbs 16:7 (NLT)

3. Peace **of** God

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Colossians 3:15

Closing Reflection: Who do you need Him to be?

Lord, I need you to be my....

because of....

help me to let you rule...