



## **Week 3 - A Vision for Hope**

December 20, 2020

### **Group Discussion Guide**

#### **Begin with 5 minutes of silence + prayer (7-10 minutes)**

For this final week, begin your gathering with five minutes together in prayerful silence.

*Why silence? Our world is so busy and distracted, with technology filling in any gaps in between. With all that moving, it can be hard to hear others and hear the voice of God. As we gather together, let's press pause and enter into a moment of quiet so we can hear what God is saying to us and through others.*

Once you've sat in silence, each acknowledging each other's presence and God's presence, centering yourselves on Him, have someone pray to open your time together.

#### **Read this overview (1 minute)**

It's always good to look forward and hope for clarity (as we started in 2020), but in reality, it's typically looking back that we see with the greatest clarity. Using Isaiah, we'll look at the story of God's people in crisis and calamity and how God turns their tragedy (exile) into blessing (purification/refining). Through the eyes of faith, God refocuses our vision to see compassion, justice, hope, joy, and renewal.

This week we're focusing in on having a vision of hope.

#### **Scripture + Debrief in small groups (30-40 minutes)**

Split your group into smaller groups to read the following Scriptures and go through some of these questions:

- What resonated with you from this weekend's message? What was something new you learned? What challenged you?
- How did Dan describe hope in his message according to the Scriptures? How do you think our culture defines this word?
- In what ways have you felt hopeful over the course of 2020? In what ways hopeless?
- In his message, Dan cited **Isaiah 8:22** saying, "They will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness." When you are in dire straits, do you think your tendency is to "look toward the Earth" like Israel does here

in this passage? If not the Lord, what are those things you tend to be drawn to when things are tough?

- When was a time the things you set your hope on failed you? How did that experience affect you? What did that experience teach you about hope?
- Take turns reading through **Isaiah 9:1-7**. What words or phrases about Christ our Hope resonate with you?
- Which aspects of Jesus' character from the **Isaiah 9** passage (i.e. Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace) do you need to internalize deeper in this season? Explain.
- What does certainty about God's promises here in Isaiah do for you when your outside circumstances feel out of sorts?
- In what ways can you exercise your "hope" muscle this week?

### **Transition back to one large group (20 minutes)**

Ask a few questions about each person's time in their smaller groups:

- Which questions did you discuss in your smaller groups? What were some the things that came from your smaller group discussions?
- How can we as individuals and as a group practice compassion?

### **Finish with prayer (10 minutes)**

Like each week, finish your group session with prayer. You might designate someone in your group to write down everyone's prayer requests and then send them to the whole group for everyone to be praying about through the week.

- What is on your heart that you need prayer for?
- Who in your life needs prayer?

Have someone close your time together by interceding for the requests that were shared.