



HopeFUL or Hopeless

Matthew 1:18-25

Growth Group Discussion Questions for December 3, 2017

Getting Started:

- 1) As a child, what is the one Christmas gift that you really hoped you would receive? Did you get what you hoped for?

READ: Matthew 12:15-21

- 2) Isaiah prophesized about the coming of God's servant. Matthew identifies Jesus as the fulfillment of his prophecy.
 - What did Isaiah declare that Jesus was sent to do?
 - What reason does the angel give Joseph as to why Jesus was born? (Matthew 1:21)
- 3) One thing Isaiah said Jesus would do is give hope to the nations. Hope is not passive wishfulness but confident assurance in God's promises. How would you describe the difference?
 - Our hope is in Jesus as our Savior. What kind of Savior is he to you?
- 4) Hope has two blind spots: presumption and despair. Which blind spot makes hope leak out of your life the most? Why do you think that is?
- 5) What truths about God have you been missing or forgetting?
 - God is capable/powerful enough
 - God is intimately involved with his creation
 - I am valuable enough to God for Him to specifically intervene on my behalf
 - Other: _____
 - Our expectations are exceeded when we hope in the right things. How does your particular "forgetfulness" affect your hope?

Going Deeper

The Hebrew people believed that God is a promise keeper. When they heard the good news of Jesus' birth, they understood that God was fulfilling his promise of a Savior and King.

READ: Hebrews 6:9-20 and Genesis 15:1-21. Jot down any insights, questions or observations.

- 6) How does Abraham's example help the readers of Hebrews maintain hope in God's promise to them?
- Why do you think the author of Hebrews describes hope as an "anchor for our soul?"
 - What promises of God anchors your soul right now?

Bringing it Home:

Part of God's promise to us is through Jesus is that he is Immanuel; God is close, he is with us. This promise implies relationship.

- 7) What are some favorite ways that you try to keep God at arms length instead of pursuing a relationship with him? (spoiler alert! We *all* have our own particular ways.)
- Staying too busy
 - Trying to earn his approval by being a really good person
 - Fostering a lazy, undisciplined life; just choosing not to pursue him
 - Spending too much time gathering information *about* God, but not spending time *with* him.
 - Not really understanding how one goes about developing a relationship with the Creator of the universe. It seems overwhelming
 - Other _____
- 8) Is there anything you need to do or change as a result of what you've learned this week?