

Sunday Sermon Review: Week of December 4th, 2022

Sermon Series: Advent

Sermon: Fresh Faces - The Gifts of Advent: Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace

Icebreaker

- When you open a gift, do you...
 - a. carefully open the gift, taking great care not to tear the paper or damage the bow?
 - b. tear it open, throwing paper all around you like a crazed racoon digging through the trash for a delicious morsel of food?

Discussion Questions

Introduction - Shelby Knuckles

- Advent is a season of preparation for celebration leading up to the coming of Christ.
- What is advent and why do we do it?
- What does advent mean to you?

Hope - Pastor Willie Simpson, Small Groups Pastor

- How do you define hope? Does it line up with the Bible's definition of hope?
- We all know what it feels like to be hopeful, but have you ever felt HOPELESS? Did you know that while sometimes God is silent, He is never sleeping? Think of a time when it felt like all was lost. How does this knowledge that God was still there with you give you hope today?
- In Luke 2:36-38, Anna the prophetess was worshiping, fasting, and praying. Faith fueled Anna's life, but it was HOPE that fueled her faith. Anna began to proclaim Christ to everyone who would listen, because she was filled with hope. What about Jesus gives you the hope that fuels your faith?
- How can Anna's example of fasting, worship, and prayer be used in

our own lives to feel hopeful?

- Have you ever been so filled with hope, so completely overcome with the happiness it brings, that you couldn't wait to tell someone about it? Describe that time, and how it fuels you to proclaim Jesus today.
- Romans 5:4 says that "Hope does not put us to shame." What do you find yourself putting your hope in other than Jesus Christ? What does this lead to?
- Romans 12:12 says, "Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer." How does this help you as we enter the holiday season?

Love - Natalie Villegas, KidPoint Director

- Some people identify as masculine, feminine, American, military... Some identify as worthless, meaningless, hopeless... God is LOVE and He identifies us as HIS children. How does it make you feel to know that God sees us ALL as His worthwhile and meaningful children?
- Read Exodus 34:6-7. God gets misidentified all the time based on our needs and wants. How do you identify God? Have you ever misidentified God and what led to that?
- In John 3:16 we see that God's gift to us was LOVE in the form of Jesus as our savior. How much love would it take for a father to give his only son for a world of undeserving sinners? Think about that for a moment, and describe how it makes you feel to know this.
- Jesus died for you. Everyone. No one is excluded. Sit on that for a moment.
- What has formed your idea of love and how does God want to change that?
- In Romans 5:8 we see that "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Imagine the love you would have to have in order to make this sacrifice. Without God, we wouldn't have love. How does knowing this make you look at God a little different from how you did before you realized how much He

sacrificed for us?

- God is Love. What am I? Am I loving? Why or why not?
- Would the Holy Spirit living in you be able to see God's love in you? Or would all the other things you see yourself as cloud that love? How can you live in God's love and allow the Holy Spirit to work on you and all the negativity that clouds over God's love for you?

Joy - Pastor Jarae Meriwether, Students Pastor

- Joy comes from the hope in His word. Imagine getting a text message today and the news it contains is the absolute best news ever. Wouldn't you want to share it with everyone? What about God giving us his son as a gift of salvation to us makes you joyous?
- In Luke 2:9, Jesus was born and an angel appears out of nowhere to some shepherds in a field. Imagine being one of those shepherds, watching the herd and protecting them from predators. They must have been filled with great fear. Then, the angel brings them this great news directly from God that removes all their fear. What good news have you experienced in your life that took away all fear? How did you share it with others? Did you scream it from the rooftops, or keep it inside and tell no one? Why?
- In Luke 2:10 the angel says, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people." This GREAT JOY that the angel spoke of and God brings you was then beaten up, spit upon, placed upon a cross, and killed by man. Fortunately for us, Jesus the GREAT JOY then rose again, and He paid the debt of our sin. This GREAT JOY gives us everlasting life. Describe the feeling of GREAT JOY this news brings you today.
- Do you have a hard time being filled with joy? Do you believe joy is a choice and you are deserving of it? What may cause you not to choose this gift?
- "Joy is the serious business of heaven." It comes from the Holy Spirit and presence of God. Is this where your joy comes from? If not, where does it come from?

- What would evolve your happiness to joy?

Peace - Pastor Christian Christenson, Online Campus Pastor

- God's son brings us the peace that doesn't matter what season of life we are in or how good things are right now. It is an eternal peace, a peace that is everlasting, a peace that encompasses all of our being. How does it feel to know that every care is washed away by the peace of Jesus Christ?
- We all have a picture of what peace is in our minds. In Isaiah 9:6, we see Jesus referred to as Prince of Peace. How much bigger is this image of Jesus than any picture of worldly peace we could ever imagine? Do you truly understand the depth of Jesus as our Prince of Peace.
- In Luke 2:25-26, the Holy Spirit has told Simeon he will not see death until he sees the Lord's Christ. He had PEACE when he saw Jesus. Put yourself in Simeon's place and imagine what it would be like to be told that you would see the Christ and be assured of your own salvation by the Holy Spirit. How much peace would this give you as it happened?
- If the world is waiting on Jesus so he can have peace, what happens when he is gone? That's a trick question, because He was never gone. When he arose and ascended to Heaven, He left the Holy Spirit, and that is how He gives us peace. We don't always understand it, but the peace that Jesus gives is eternal, far beyond your reach, can't be earned, must be freely accepted. How has the Holy Spirit given you peace?
- Will you accept God's freely given peace? Will you say yes with your prayer, devotion, relationships? How will you spend time with the one whom we call PEACE, Jesus Christ?
- Do you try to control everything to have peace or are you allowing God to lead you to His peace?
- What is stealing your peace? Why are you allowing this thing to steal your peace?

Now What?

Encouragement: This advent season, take time to appreciate these four amazing gifts we've been given. We don't have to earn them, and yet, hope, love, joy, and peace are always there. And not only do we get the blessing of having the gifts, but we also have the privilege of sharing them with others. How can you share these gifts with friends and family this season?

Ask:

- Which of the four gifts do you truly need to accept in your life?
- Pray about what the Lord would lead you to do to fully accept this gift in your life.
- How can you be an agent of hope, love, joy, and peace to others around you this advent season?

Challenge:

- Read Luke Chapter 2 this afternoon, and see how God gave us His gifts of Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace. Look around you this week and discover new ways to see this in your everyday life. Use this newfound awareness to spark a desire to share these gifts with others in your life throughout the week. Pray that God will open your eyes and the Holy Spirit will guide you to share these gifts with someone who desperately needs them.

Closing Prayer

God, I am all in. I believe in Jesus, that he died for me, so I can live for Him. Help me to live in a way that honors God. I don't want to wait any longer, I want to follow you now. Help me to follow you in everything I do today, tomorrow, and every day. Thank you for your gifts of Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace. Help me to use them in everything I do, and give me the courage to share them with others. In Jesus' holy name, amen.