

Nov. 29/20 Advent 1 - Hope: The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!

Read Isaiah 8:11 – 9:7

1. In the sermon Tim shared a little of the historical background of this passage. A divided nation of Israel under the thumb of oppression from Assyria, the southern kingdom (Judah) rejects an alliance with the north (Israel) against Assyria which sparks war, a famine has descended upon the land, the resulting food insecurity is hastening the movement of wealth to fewer and fewer, an economic cliff is looming. In these grievous circumstances hope has eroded. From the passage what are the symptoms of this erosion of hope?
2. In what ways have the events of the past year eroded hope in our society? What do you see as the symptoms of this erosion of hope?
3. (9:1-7) What is the particular content of the hope God promises to his people through Isaiah? Contemporary Christianity often proclaims a spiritual otherworldly hope – why do you think we have become less biblical in our understanding of hope? What impact has this had on our message and our mission?
4. Isaiah is so confident that God will bring about this future that he speaks of it in the past tense. Why is he so confident?
5. How would it impact how we respond to and live through our current circumstances if we possessed this hope?

Read Matthew 4: 12-17

6. In the sermon Tim shared that the way we lay a hold of this hope is through repentance (an acknowledgement that we can't save ourselves and that we not only live in darkness we participant / contribute to the darkness). How does this posture of repentance impact how we await Jesus' second coming to make all things new?