

*a Trail of*  **H O P E**  
CHRISTMAS WITH CALVARY

HomeGroup Discussion Questions  
Advent Week 1: Dec 5-11

*Hope.* To some it's merely a wish. For the Christian, *hope* is a matter of waiting, not wishing. We wait, in hope, knowing that the outcome is certain even if the timing is unknown. These next few weeks we will give our attention to Advent—the coming of Christ—as the basis of our hope. The Light has penetrated the darkness. The silence has been broken. The Child has been born!

MAIN TEXT: Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

CONNECT

1. What was your favorite Thanksgiving dish, dessert, or activity last week?
2. On a scale of 1 to 10, how hopeful is your outlook on life as we begin to celebrate Advent?

LEARN

3. For background on our main verses, Isaiah 8 expresses how God's people would be "thrust into thick darkness" as they turned away from Him (v. 22). How is a refusal to follow God comparable to "walking in darkness"?
4. Read Isaiah 9, verses 2 and 6-7. Pastor Tom pointed out how this passage begins in darkness and so does the setting for Jesus' birth. Where do we see darkness in the circumstances of Jesus' birth?
5. Isaiah tells us that it's God's plan (v. 7) that this future great light (v. 2) will come from a small child (v. 6). What descriptions of this child in verses 6-7 stand out most to you?

APPLY

6. In what ways do you see darkness in our world today?
7. What are you hopeful for? Would you describe your hope as waiting for something you know is certain, or more as wishing for something to happen?
8. How is Jesus' arrival a great light of hope in our day—even in 2020?

9. Pastor Tom described God's zeal (v. 7) as "fervent passion" and "undeterred resolve" to shine this great Light into the darkness. How can we gain hope as we consider that it's God's light, not ours, that chases away darkness?

10. What else did you find significant or inspiring about today's sermon?