

Isaiah 9:1-7 (NIV)

Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—

² The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

³ You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder.

⁴ For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders,

the rod of their oppressor.

⁵ Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire.

⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

Luke 2:25-32 (NIV)

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

²⁹ "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace.

³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles,

and the glory of your people Israel."

Sermon for December 3, 2023: www.collegechurch.org/college-church-online

Sunday our Kidsland children kicked off the season with a Christmas musical just for us. They worked hard memorizing, practicing and rehearsing every single part so they might share with us the good news of **Immanuel — God with us**.

Begin your small group or devotional time celebrating the good news the children shared with us. Discuss what song or line from the musical stood out to you and why. Think back: what Scriptures or music do you remember from your childhood Advent/Christmas musicals or Sunday School lessons. How have they shaped your understanding of God or impacted your life over the years?

KNOW ... *God and his Word.*

Long before Jesus came as a babe in a manger, the prophet Isaiah foretold the good news of his coming.

- Who were the people walking and living in darkness that Isaiah was speaking to in this passage? What do you think Isaiah meant by “darkness” (see Isaiah 8:19-22)? Discuss what circumstances created this darkness (see vv. 3-5 and Judges 7:19-25).
- Isaiah 9:2 proclaims “the light has dawned.” Describe the light that has dawned. What effect does the light’s arrival have on the people in darkness?
- There is a promise of “a child” to be born, “a son” to be given to them. Who does Isaiah say this son will be and ultimately do for them? Discuss the names used to describe the given son.

Luke 2 narrates Simeon’s story and his encounter with this promised one, the Lord’s Messiah.

- Who is Simeon? What had he been promised by the Holy Spirit?
- How long had Simeon been waiting for the Messiah to appear? Who made Simeon aware of the Messiah’s arrival?
- Discuss Simeon’s praise to God for the Messiah. What might Simeon be feeling in that moment? Why? Name the two things Simeon states that the child will be and to whom.

What stood out to you in these two passages? Discuss any additional insights, thoughts, or questions you may have.

ACT ... responding to & applying what we know.

- Go back to a time when you were in a dark room or dark place emotionally, mentally. Why were you in the darkness? How did the darkness make you feel? Where did you finally find light?
- Isaiah 9:6 uses these descriptors for the son who was to come and be **God with us**: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Has Jesus ever been one (or all) of these things to you? Choose the one that best describes who Jesus is and is being to you in this season. If you're willing, share why you chose that one.
- Is there a particular promise you believe God has made to you? Has it been fulfilled or are you still waiting? If you're willing, share the promise with someone and give praise to God for the answer or the strength he has given you in the waiting.

BE ... living in light of what we've heard, becoming more like Christ.

Make time this week to GIVE THANKS that Jesus, our Immanuel, has come to dwell among us. CELEBRATE the ways God has been with you in the past and LOOK for how he is with you this week.

QUIET and PREPARE yourself as you expectantly wait for God to speak and reveal himself to you this Advent season.

KEEP becoming more like Jesus!

Grace and peace,
Pastor Angela

Rev. Angela Alvarado
Discipleship Pastor
College Church of the Nazarene University Avenue
aalvarado@collegechurch.org