HOPE when it seems like no one cares December 23, 2018

*Isaiah 40:27-31 Series: Christmas Hope*

Christmas is saying "yes" to a hope based on God's initiative, which has nothing to do with what I think or feel. Christmas is believing that the salvation of the world is God's work, and not mine. – Henri Nouwen

Intro: Why does it seem like no one cares?

1. Is it because you haven’t heard?
2. Some people really don’t know it’s Christmas after all.

v. 28 *Have you not known? Have you not heard?*

1. Christmas reveals a powerful Saviour.

v. 28 *The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.*

v. 28 *He does not faint or grow weary …*

Isaiah 9:6 *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

1. Christmas reveals an unpredictable Saviour.

v. 28 *his understanding is unsearchable*

Isaiah 55:8 *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.*

Matthew 1:23 “*Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).*

1. Christmas reveals a merciful Saviour.
* v. 29 *He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength.*
* Matthew 1:21 *She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.*
* What aspects of the Christmas story have many Canadians not heard or really understood?
* How does God’s unpredictability affect our walk with Him? i.e. What is it like to follow a God whose ways are not our ways?
1. Is it because you haven’t waited?
2. Waiting for the Lord involves trust.

v. 31 *they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength*

Luke 1:38 *And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.”*

1. Waiting for the Lord involves obedience.

Isaiah 30:15-16 *For thus said the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, “In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength.” But you were unwilling, and you said, “No! We will flee upon horses”; therefore you shall flee away; and, “We will ride upon swift steeds”;*

*therefore your pursuers shall be swift.*

1. Waiting for the Lord involves expectation.

Psalm 130:5 *I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope*

Hebrews 11:6 *And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.*

* In Isaiah 30, why do you think the Israelites felt that importing more military power (i.e. horses) was the solution rather than turning to God and resting in Him?
* What are some areas where we’re tempted to compromise when we have to wait on God?
* What does it mean to wait with expectation on an unpredictable God? i.e. What kind of outcome are you expectantly waiting for?
1. Is it because you don’t want to grow?
2. Flying like an eagle can be terrifying.

v. 31 *they shall mount up with wings like eagles*

Eagles push their young out of the nest.

1. God doesn’t always promise that you’ll fly.

v. 31 *they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint*

1. God does promise His divine strength.

v. 29 *He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength.*

*v. 31 they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength*

*v. 31 they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint*

* What makes it hard to follow a God who’s so committed to our growth?
* How could someone confuse God’s training with God’s neglect?
* Where do you most need prayer in applying this passage?

Study ahead: On Christmas Eve, we’ll study Luke 2:25-32.

Notes