

EVERGREEN | STUMP

DECEMBER 9, 2018

SERMON STUDY

Dive deeper into this week's message and passages from the Bible. Here are some questions to help you guide your group discussion.

Jesus came to bring hope, and when things seemed darkest, he came to bring light. The power of Christmas is that God involved other people and their stories. We find those stories in Jesus' family tree.

Read Matthew 1:3-6. Matthew was writing to a Jewish crowd of people who would have known the stories associated with each person in this list. When we read the stories behind the names, we see that there were challenges to the relationships, threats of unmet expectations, and feelings of hopelessness.

- Two of Jesus' grandmothers were associated with prostitution. Several women in Jesus' family tree struggled with infertility. King David was far from kingly at times. If you are facing a hard family situation, is it encouraging to know that Jesus had hard situations in his family too? Why or why not?
- The big questions with Jesus' family tree were "What good can come from these stories? What hope can be found here?" In what ways do you wonder the same about a situation your family or you might be facing? Can you see hope and possibility in your own difficult family or personal situation?

Read Isaiah 11:1. Nothing grows from a stump. A stump was once something, but is no longer. Yet Isaiah tells us: Don't give up hope! Out of challenging, messy relationships, unmet expectations and the hopelessness of sinful men came a "shoot," which is Jesus. He came from imperfect people, for imperfect people, so that he might work through imperfect people!

- How do you see God's power in this passage? In what ways does this encourage you for anything you might be going through today?
- What does this passage personally mean to you?

Read Isaiah 9:6-7 and Psalm 119:49-50. Christmas is all about light invading the darkness and hope invading the space of hopelessness. Christmas is all about God doing unexpected things at unexpected times through unexpected people.

- What does it mean to you knowing that Jesus' government and its peace will never end and he will rule with justice and fairness for all of eternity?
- If you have experienced new life through Jesus out of hopelessness, would you be willing to share about your experience?
- Christmas can often magnify hard family situations. If you are facing this right now, how can our group pray for you in this throughout Christmas?

REFLECT

What is God saying to you through his word? How and when will you respond?

DAILY BIBLE READING

Need a review of what we're reading in Daily Bible Reading? Here's a glance at how we're being challenged this week. (Subscribe at: tpcc.org/dailybiblereading)

Day One: Isaiah 11:1 | Out of hopelessness came hope.

Day Two: Matthew 1:3-6 | Jesus' messy family tree.

Day Three: Isaiah 9:6-7 | God is doing the unexpected.

Day Four: Psalm 119:49-50 | Comfort in all troubles.

Day Five: Isaiah 11:1 | Hope for today and eternity.