

## “The Light of Hope”

### Follow the Star #1

## INTRODUCTION

Our Christmas sermon series focuses on how the Light of Christmas can change our lives. During the Christmas season we will be surrounded by dazzling displays of lights. But as Christians we know the Jesus is the true “Light of the World.” The first light we will consider this week is “hope.” For the believer, hope is not a feeling, or simply wishing; rather it is a confident expectation for the future. It is a light that can change your life.

**Ice Breaker (Optional):** What is one thing you are hoping for this Christmas?

## STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

### The Foundation of Our Hope. The Promises of God

#### Q1. Read Hebrews 10:23; Jeremiah 29:11

Hope is defined as a favorable and confident expectation. It has to do with the unseen and the future. When you read Hebrews 10:23, what reason do you see that makes the unseen future something we can steadfastly and confidently anticipate? How have you personally experienced God’s faithfulness in your life? Jeremiah 29:11 promised that the future God has planned for us is to prosper us and not to harm us. If we prosper spiritually even though we are suffering in our outward circumstances, would you still consider God faithful to his promise?

#### Q2. Read 2 Peter 1:3-4; Leviticus 11:45; 1 Peter 1:16; 1 Peter 1:3-4

Our “hope” includes both how we live out our lives on earth and our eternal lives. 2 Peter 1:4 says God has enabled us to participate in his divine nature, and in 1 Peter 1:16 and Leviticus 11:45, we see God calls us to be holy. What benefit can we expect to receive as we live in the holiness God calls us to (2 Peter 1:4)? What do you think is involved in “participating in God’s divine nature”? How does 1 Peter 1:4 describe the inheritance that we can expect in heaven?

### The Formation of Our Hope – The Challenges of Life

#### Q3. Read Hebrews 6:17-19; James 1:2-4; Romans 5:3-5

In Hebrews 6:17-19 we find that hope has been given to those who “flee to God for refuge.” Our lives can be filled with many challenges. How does knowing we have refuge in God impact the way we face the trials and sufferings described in James 1:2-4 and Romans 5:3-5? Can you share a time when this hope has brought you through one of life’s challenges?

### The Fulfillment of Our Hope – The Presence of Christ

#### Q4. Read Luke 1:78-79; John 8:12; John 12:46

Our hope is both now and future. We have a great promise of eternity with Christ, but we also have been blessed with the presence of Jesus in our lives here on earth. These three verses contrast a life in darkness with one lived in light. Luke 1:78-79 paints a beautiful picture of a merciful God lighting the way for us out of the dark shadow of death. What do John 8:12 and 12:46 tell us is required to escape from darkness? How were you drawn out of darkness and into the light of life? How would you describe the transition from darkness to light to someone who was still living in darkness?

## WRAP-UP

For the believer, there is a confident expectation of good in the future. It is our hope, based on the promises of God that we can escape the darkness of this world and receive an inheritance that awaits us in heaven. It is a hope that is shaped in the furnace of trials and suffering. Our hope is that we have a place of refuge in the inner sanctuary of God. And while we live out our lives on the earth, our hope is fulfilled in the presence of Christ each day.

### Memory Verse

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 1 Peter 1:3-4 NIV*

## PRAYER (20 MIN)

*Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: \_\_\_\_\_*

*Pray for your group members’ needs: \_\_\_\_\_*

*Challenge: This Christmas shine the light of hope into as many lives as you can, in words and in actions.*

**Q1**

Hebrews 10:23 NIV - 23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

Jeremiah 29:11 NIV - 11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

**Q2**

2 Peter 1:3-4 NIV - 3 His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4 Through these **he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.**

Leviticus 11:45 NIV - 45 I am the LORD, who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.

1 Peter 1:16 NIV - 16 for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

1 Peter 1:3-4 NIV - 3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us **new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.** This inheritance is kept in heaven for you,

**Q3**

Hebrews 6:17-19 NLT - 17 God also bound himself with an oath, so that those who received the promise could be perfectly sure that he would never change his mind. 18 So God has given both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. 19 This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary.

James 1:2-4 ESV - 2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Romans 5:3-5 ESV - 3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

**Q4**

Luke 1:78-79 ESV - 78 because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high 79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

John 8:12 ESV - 12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

John 12:46 ESV - 46 I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.

Prayers Con't: \_\_\_\_\_

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