

Talk It Over

Hope On The Horizon
(Week 2)
The Light Has A Name

SMALL TALK

1. Is there a story behind your name? Named after someone? What does your name mean (if anything)?

VIEWPOINT

2. **READ Isaiah 8.** What do the names of Isaiah's sons mean in chapter 7 and chapter 8?
3. Why did Judah prefer Assyrian help over God's help as they faced a crisis (see 2 Kings 16:7-9)?
4. What was the judgement that would result?
5. Is the cry "O Immanuel" (Isaiah 8:8, 10) a cry of despair or of hope? Why? What is Isaiah's hope for Judah, even as he considers the coming siege from Assyria? (See ch. 36-37)

GETTING PERSONAL

6. How has the Lord been a gently flowing stream to you? When has your choice of allies resulted in a flood of trouble?
7. When has God stopped the flood of your wrong choices from overwhelming you?

PRACTICE!

- a. What are you grateful for?
- b. What is something God has been showing you this week (in His Word or some other way)?
- c. About the people you are interacting with who do not yet follow Jesus, how can we join you in prayer?
- d. What is keeping you from having a better answer to questions a - c?

December 13, 2020

2-The Light Has A Name

Series: Hope on the Horizon

In dark times, doubt arrives uninvited:

*Is God really good?
Can God really be trusted?*

What if our setbacks were our setups?

And our pain, platforms of grace?

Maybe we would keep our judgments to ourselves with smiles upon our
face.

--Chloe Lauren Smith

Christmas is a hope story, a story about rescue, a great and gaping need
answered.

Isaiah 7:14 (NIV) Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel.

If you have questioned hope, if you haven't felt it, or if you haven't even searched for it. This message is for you. Because even when you can't, hope hopes for you. Hope always exists. Why? Hope has a name. Jesus.

I. TRUSTING God requires a CHOICE

Isaiah 7:9 (NIV) ...If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.' "

Trusting God isn't just an initial decision to trust God, trusting God requires a choice again and again. This is what it means to "stand firm in your faith."

What you do with your doubts matters.

- Some people decide to trust their doubts then choose a false hope.
- Some others have doubts because they have already attached themselves to something false, and that is the reason for their doubts.

That was King Ahaz' problem. He had attached himself to something false. He attached himself to a false god, a false lifestyle, a false hope. It all led to a hardness of heart. While King Ahaz chose this darkness as his help, and choosing darkness is the same as rejecting God's light. Whether you first choose darkness to fill you, or first, the reject light because it seems too hard, the result is the same

We are fortunate to have a running story of God's track record to ponder and investigate. Then God invites us into a covenant relationship to experience his faithfulness for ourselves.
Even still, like in all relationships, our trust will be tested.

But in the darkest of tests, God promises "Immanuel" (God with us) for the "Faithful Remnant" who choose to trust him!

Isaiah 8 opens with God telling Isaiah to write down this strange name on a scroll in the presence of witnesses.

Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz.

This wildly long name means, "*quick to the plunder, swift to the spoil*". And this was published for all to see, with witnesses to verify the prediction, so that when it happens nobody could say that the prophecy was spoken after the events.

What prophecy? Let's look at it. God told Isaiah to name his next son with this wildly long name, and then to speak this prediction that came from God.

Isaiah 8:4 (NIV) For before the boy knows how to say 'My father' or 'My mother,' the wealth of Damascus and the plunder of Samaria will be carried off by the king of Assyria."

As prophesied, it came about. Because there were witnesses verifying the prophecy, those who chose to believe God (the faithful remnant) had God's track record to bolster and strengthen their faith, preparing them for significant challenges ahead. Faith is always a choice available to us, no matter how dark the circumstances.

That which bolstered the faith of the faithful remnant, did not soften the hardened hearts of those who looked to their false hopes. They believed this "victory" was the result of King Ahaz' "wise" plan to form an alliance with Assyria.

Yet, God was about to show them otherwise. He continued to fill in detail after detail. Just enough to prepare the faithful remnant to choose to believe God is still God.

II. Choose IMMANUEL

On the surface it looked like King Ahaz's plan, his alliance with Assyria worked! You can read about that in 2 Kings 16. But Assyria had a plan of their own. Assyria didn't stop where King Ahaz' planned for them to stop. There was treachery and a conspiracy on the Assyrian side. Although Assyria took their plunder and spoil from Israel and Syria, they didn't stop there!

Isaiah 8:5–10 (NIV) The Lord spoke to me again: ⁶ "Because this people has rejected the gently flowing waters of Shiloah and rejoices over Rezin and the son of Remaliah, ⁷ therefore the Lord is about to bring against them the mighty floodwaters of the Euphrates— the king of Assyria with all his pomp.

God's people rejected the gentle waters of trusting God's plan, and instead enlisted their own plan, harnessing the power of Assyria which was like trying to harness the Euphrates in full flood stage.

It will overflow all its channels, run over all its banks⁸ and sweep on into Judah, swirling over it, passing through it and reaching up to the neck. Its outspread wings will cover the breadth of your land, Immanuel!"

And yet the Prophet raises the challenge to all nations opposed to Immanuel!

⁹ Raise the war cry, you nations, and be shattered! Listen, all you distant lands. Prepare for battle, and be shattered! Prepare for battle, and be shattered! ¹⁰ Devise your strategy, but it will be thwarted; propose your plan, but it will not stand, for God is with us.

God was going to remove Assyria's threat miraculously (you can read about it starting at Isaiah 36).

Do you see how this message is so applicable to our experience today? When disaster floods up to your neck, and things look dark and hopeless, don't despair, turn instead to "Immanuel!" Nobody can stand against IMMANUEL, God with us!

As God is still with the faithful remnant in Isaiah's day in their dark times, he holds out hope and a promise to the faithful remnant of our dark times as well. And just as for them, even if it was to become darker, there was hope on their Horizon! And so it is for us, there is hope on the horizon!

III. **CHOOSE today whom or what you will FEAR**

Isaiah 8:11–13 (NIV) This is what the Lord says to me with his strong hand upon me, warning me not to follow the way of this people: ¹² "Do not call conspiracy everything this people calls a conspiracy; do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it. ¹³ The Lord Almighty is the one you

are to regard as holy, **he is the one you are to fear**, he is the one you are to dread.

This was a clear message to that generation. It is a clear message to our generation!

We cannot afford to take this truth lightly. The line that was being drawn in Isaiah's day is still being drawn today, with the same ultimate issues at stake.

In the darkness will we choose to trust Immanuel. And will our lives look like a "God with us" life or not?

*Isaiah 8:17 (NIV) I will wait for the Lord, who is hiding his face from the descendants of Jacob. **I will put my trust in him.***

Hope is more than a word. Hope is more than a concept.

HOPE IS A WHO

Jesus is our hope. What disaster has overtaken you? Walk with Jesus, he is the light. Talk to Jesus, he will give you peace. Peace not like the world gives, but better. What darkness hides in your heart? Talk to Jesus about it. Invite him into your life. Confess your darkness. Light displaces darkness. He came to take your darkness away, and give you resurrection life!

Let the problems, and the darkness, and the challenges, bring glory to God. This is not a time to retreat into the shadows away from God and into your fears, this is the time to draw near, and have your faith strengthened and purified!

- Trusting God requires a choice (again and again)
- Choose Immanuel (God with us)
- Choose today and again and again whom or what you will fear