

Advent – The Light Shines in the Darkness

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Isaiah 9:2-7

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December is often a cold and dark season

Isaiah chapter 9 was written amidst a time of deep darkness for God's people.

*How does the darkness/coldness of December affect you?

Isaiah introduces a great contrast of light in the darkness

Read and discuss Isaiah 9:2-5 (NIV)

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.

*What do we see in this passage about dark and light?

*What might hearing this have meant to the people of Israel? Do these verses speak to your darkness?

*If you are comfortable sharing, what is a darkness you are experiencing this season?

Advent begins where human potential ends

Read and discuss Isaiah 9:6-7 (NIV)

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.

*What are you usually drawn to wanting during your dark times?

*In what ways does this passage provide the meaning our souls long for?

*Which title of this child most resonates with you right now? How could his light be showing up in the darkness for you?

As a reminder from week 1 consider beginning every day of this season with this Prayer of Wakefulness

Unexpected light of Jesus, your advent alarms us.

Wake us from a drowsy life and drowsy worship,

Wake us from the sleep that neglects love,

And wake us from the sedative of misdirected frenzy.

Awaken us now to your coming, and bend our angers into your peace.

King Jesus from the heavens your rain down mercy and kindness,

Give us ears to hear, O God, and eyes to watch,

that we may know your presence in our midst during this holy season of joy

Raise our heads in expectation,

That we may yearn for the coming day of the Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.