

Advent Week 2 – Adam spoke on Sunday how Advent helps us hold the pain we all experience as we point our longings in the right directions. This week he spoke specifically about the pain that comes from violence (both direct damage and collateral damage, direct wounds and indirect wounds like fear and worry and division). And as followers of Jesus, we are to remember: “In a world that gives birth to violence, Advent reminds us that we follow a God that gives birth to peace.

Adam then went through some scriptures that pointed towards that hope of peace. We looked at **Isaiah 9:2-7** where we read that liberation from bondage and sin doesn't come from returning violence, rather it comes from God who is the Prince of Peace. We then looked at **Micah 4:1-4** (powerful) and **Revelation 7:9-10** to see just how amazing the peace of God is (and will be) when it comes in its fullest.

Finally, we looked at **Matthew 5:9** to get a glimpse of our response, because following the God of peace demands that we to be people of peace. We are to pray for peace, we are to be people of forgiveness instead of retaliation, be “ambassadors of reconciliation” (**2nd Cor.5:17-21**).

Remember, we live in a world that gives birth to violence; we follow a God that gives birth to peace; what are we giving birth to in the world?

This guide is going to root questions for **Isaiah 9:2-7**, but it would be good for the group to read each of the passages above outloud and see how the H.S. moves people in the group as well.

Observation (what does the text say?) **Interpretation** (what does it mean?) **Application** (what does it mean to me/us?)

Discussion/Topic Starters (Ice Breakers)

- What “dawn of a new day” are you hoping for in 2020 (that’s right, new years is right around the corner!)
- : What things in the text strike you or jump out at you? Why?

Know (what does the text say about God?) **Be** (what does it say about us?) **Do** (what does it call us to do?)

Isaiah 9:2-7

- : What is the darkness that people walk in (**v.2**)? If you have been reading along in our devotional, speak to the darkness Isaiah is specifically writing about, as well as the darkness we each experience as individuals, and finally the darkness in our world today.
- : Discuss how Isaiah describes the effects of the “light that has dawned” (**v.3-5**). Remember, the immediate context for Isaiah and God’s people is the threat of Assyria (see **10:24-27**)
- l: What is the light in this passage; what will BE the light, how is he described (**v.6-7**)?
- l: What expectation would this arouse in you if you/we had first heard Isaiah pronounce it (remember the context is the threat of the Assyrians)? What type of son or ruler would you EXPECT to rise? From where we now sit, we can look back and see exactly how Messiah/Jesus came (It’s a little easy to now understand why so many people had a hard time excepting Jesus as Messiah).
- l: The New Testament directly interprets this prophecy (see **Mt. 4:12-17, Lk 1:32, Jn 8:12**). Of the titles given to Jesus in **Isa 9:6**, which fit Jesus as you experience Him the most in this season of your life?
- A: What is the purpose of Jesus’ reign in your life? In this world?
- A: How has Jesus shattered some of the “yokes that burden” you (**v.4**)? What is one yoke that you long to have Him shatter now?

Note: The Riverside devotional for this series is going through Isaiah. It’s VERY VERY good. Really consider journeying through it with our broader church this Advent season! You can begin today: www.riversidecommunity.org/resources/daily-devotional/

Recommended Follow-up:

- **Pray:** Pray together for peace in our church body, our local community, and beyond
- **Respond:** Spend this week responding to God’s word as fleshed out in the group time, as well as journey through this week’s companion devotional guide.

An explanation on how Riverside structures these discussion guides*:

Riverside defines a disciple of Jesus as a **“Know, Be, Do”** person. And since Jesus told us to “make disciples” we use the “Know, Be, Do” framework in our discussion guides.

Riverside leadership regularly asks questions around these areas:

- “What do we need to **know** about God?”
- “Who do we need to **be**?”
- “What do we need to **do**?”

Here is what we mean by “Know, Be, Do” (based on Colossians 1:9-10, see below)

Know – *“to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives..., growing in the knowledge of God”* Not just knowing about Jesus, but knowing Him personally, intimately, and deeply. This is also about knowing the scriptures, knowing the voice of the Holy Spirit, even knowing yourself.

Be – *“so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way”* Becoming more like Jesus (sanctification). This is about our character and our heart and our motivations, our passions and convictions change the more we get to Know Jesus (and others).

Do – *“bearing fruit in every good work, ...”* Knowing Jesus and Becoming like Jesus practically will change our actions. As we grow in these areas we will naturally DO the things that Jesus did while in the flesh on earth (living and loving like Jesus). Some broad categories around DO are evangelism and justice and service.

Notice *“bearing fruit in every good work”* then yields more *“growing in the knowledge of God.”* In other words, while “Know, Be, Do” are three distinct words, they are deeply interconnected.

As a side note, the next chapter states: *⁶ So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. ⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ. (Col. 2:6-8)* To aid in this process Riverside also has a **daily devotional guide available each week.**

Colossians 1:9-10, NIV

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,...

* As discussed in Riverside’s HGLT (Home Group Leader Training), these guides are to be starting points for home group leaders to develop their own guides and approaches to leading group discussions. This is a resource tool, not a rigid “go through this guide word-for-word.” There are intentionally too many questions for a single home group time. This guide relies heavily upon the following resources: Thomas, Mack. *The Complete Bible Discussion Guide: Old Testament and New Testament, Serendipity Bible for Personal and Small Group Study*, Zondervan