

Week One - Hope

Read Isaiah 40:1-5

.....

Have you ever waited a long time for something to happen? Maybe you are waiting to find out a grade on a test, or waiting for that day when you will finally understand how to do that math problem, or waiting for your brother or sister to be nice to you (that might take a while, right?).

What about waiting for a dream to come true? And I'm not talking about a dream you have at night while you sleep. I'm talking about a dream of the future. Maybe you have a dream to make the football team, a dream to get the lead in a play, a dream to learn how to ride a bike, or a dream to become an astronaut. Waiting takes time, and it is so hard to do!

This kind of waiting, though, is what we call hope. When we have hope, we are expecting or desiring for something to happen. In my life, I have hoped to make the basketball team, to get accepted into the college of my choice, to find a job, to find the right man to marry, to have children, to write a book that makes the New York Times Bestseller list, and even have hoped to have all my prayers answered by God. Some of these hopes happened sooner than others, and some I am still waiting on!

But the hopes I have for my own life pale in comparison to the hope the Israelites had. These people had been through the wringer: slaves in Egypt, rescued by Moses only to be in the wilderness for forty years, wars with other nations, kings wanting to kill them, and even listening to prophets (like Isaiah) tell them that they would be exiled out of their own land. These people desperately needed some hope. Their hope was all but gone. And God provided that hope.

The Old Testament is filled with prophecies about the coming of a Savior. I love the Scripture above from Isaiah 40:1-5. God is comforting His people. He is giving them hope, letting them know their sins have been paid for. A Savior is coming, one they must

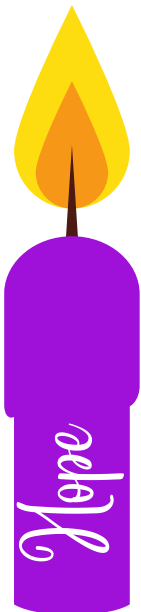
Week One - Hope

prepare for. They must not give up hope, for God has promised to send them a Savior. A king. One who will reign over the earth. One who will reveal the glory of the Lord. One who will take away all their sins and remember them no more.

Maybe you are like the Israelites and have lost hope. Maybe you have given up on those dreams. Maybe you don't think you will ever understand math, make good grades, get along with your sibling, or have that dream come true for your life. My prayer for you is that you will remember the hope God provided for the Israelites and know He provides that same hope for you, too. Jesus is our Hope. He is our Savior. He is the one who is there for you. And we can trust in Him because His Word is true. Today, let the light of hope shine in your life.

Light the Candle

.....
Have one person in your family take a lighter and light the candle of Hope.



Discuss

.....
What is a way you can share the hope of Jesus with someone this week?

Closing prayer

.....
*Heavenly Father, thank You for the hope you have given us in Jesus Christ. Thank You for sending Him to be born on this earth so that we might be saved. Forgive me for the times when I lose my faith and my hope in You. I ask that You renew my hope in You this Advent season.
In Jesus' name, Amen.*