

THE LONG-AWAITED SAVIOUR

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR CONNECT GROUPS

17 & 18 DEC 2022

“IN DARKNESS, A LONG-AWAITED CHILD”

ISAIAH 9.2-7

Suggestions for Making the Most of your Group Time

1. Begin by reviewing the video of the sermon, preferably before you meet together (see <https://www.brmc.org.sg/services/sermons/>).
2. Read the Scripture passage together, before entering into discussion.
3. Spend time on both question components, namely:
 - a. Comprehension (*Who? What? When? Why? How?*);
 - b. Application / Transformation (*So what? What action should I take? Perspective should I adopt? Value should I uphold? Emotion should I embrace? Habit should I develop? Desire should I nurture? etc*)
4. Discuss as few or as many questions as best fits your group's current context and present stage in life.
5. Before ending your group session, allocate some time (15-20 min) to pray with and for one another.

Discussion Questions

1. From your review of the sermon and your reading of the Scripture passage, recap the key points of this sermon.

Throughout this Advent sermon series (“The Long-awaited Saviour”), we have walked through key promises God makes with his people:

- Genesis 3: God promises to ultimately deal with the consequences of Adam and Eve’s (and ALL of humanity’s) sin due to the Fall, through an offspring of Adam and Eve who will crush the serpent’s (Satan’s) head.
- Genesis 22: God renews his promise with Abraham, because of Abraham’s obedience and faithfulness in God, that through Abraham’s offspring all of humanity will be blessed
- Psalm 22: Even through sorrow, defeat and anguish, God has faithfully delivered and saved his people; a foreshadowing of Jesus’ own suffering and anguish on the cross to deliver and redeem humanity
- Jeremiah 33:14-22: God himself will faithfully become the means of his people’s restored relationship (“The LORD is our righteousness”) by causing “a righteous Branch to spring up for David”, even though his people were exiled because they were not faithful to God

This final sermon of the series (“In Darkness, a Long-Awaited Child”) recounts a well-known Advent promise and prophecy. Through the prophet Isaiah, God reveals to the prophet Isaiah his impending judgement on Israel and Judah, who have rejected the LORD. Yet in the midst of these dark pronouncements of judgement are proclamations of light, hope and restoration for Israel, and for all of humanity. These promises are accomplished through the future Davidic King and Messiah, Jesus. He is who would fulfil God’s promises as:

- The offspring of Adam and Eve who would crush Satan (“a child born for us”)
- Abraham’s offspring who also is Mighty God, the Son, provided as our perfect sacrifice through whom all of humanity is blessed
- The bearer of great authority, who yet bore our greatest sorrow, defeat, and anguish on the cross, to bring everlasting peace
- The only King (Branch of David) who establishes an everlasting kingdom with justice and righteousness

2. In Isaiah 9:1-2, Galilee is described as a land of gloom and anguish, whose people walked in darkness. This reflected the situation after the Assyrians overran this region of Israel as part of God's judgement.

- a) How are we as a human race today still walking in darkness? Consider, for instance, the domains of human relationships (e.g. husbands and wives, parents and children, employer and employees c.f. Eph. 5:22-6:9), or humanity's propensity to seek personal gain at the expense of others, or our failure of being good stewards of the environment God made for us.
- b) How does the good news of Jesus' first coming bring hope and light – in the context of Galilee in Jesus' time, and for humanity's situation today?
- c) In what way is God leading you to bring a little light into this present darkness?

3. Isaiah 9:4-5 may allude to the unlikely victory God gave the Israelites over the Midianites through Gideon with just 300 soldiers (Judges ch. 7-8). Counter-intuitively, Gideon was instructed by God to thin the Israelite forces twice and to send soldiers home, instead of mobilising more troops to oppose the Midianite coalition numbering 135000. God promised Gideon a sure victory, and brought it to pass in a most unexpected manner.

- a) As a 21st century reader of God's prophecy through Isaiah in this passage, in what ways do these various elements seem far-fetched or unlikely? In what ways are we still waiting fulfillment? How ought we respond in our waiting?
 - i. Multiplied exultation, joy at the harvest, dividing plunder (v. 3)
 - ii. Breaking the yoke of burden (v. 4)
 - iii. Clothing of warriors "burned as fuel for the fire" (v. 5)
 - iv. Authority / government under Mighty God (v. 6)
 - v. An everlasting kingdom of endless peace, ruled with and through justice and righteousness (v. 7)
- b) Our waiting is not passive, but as we wait, we attentively listen to God and to one another. If you asked a family member or friend, "am I a good listener?" – what would they say?

4. Consider the promises in Isaiah 9:2-7 in light of Jesus' birth, life and ministry, suffering and death, and resurrection.

- a) How are the promises first fulfilled in the Redemption that Jesus brought?
- b) How are the promises brought to fullness, in the New Creation when Jesus returns "making all things new" (c.f. Rev. 21:5)?
- c) What does it mean to live by faith, to be sure of all these things we hope for (cf. Heb. 11:1) in our current stations of life (family, work / office setting, friends, community)?

Prayer Items

5. Pray for one another, that we would be empowered by God to live out the specific areas of application and transformation raised during the discussion time. Pray also for any needs that were mentioned.