

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

ADVENT: HOPEFUL EXPECTATION • DECEMBER 18, 2022

Hopeful EXPECTATION

Foundational Practice: Celebrating the Work of God

This month, we are focusing on our foundational practice of celebrating the work of God (1 Thess. 5:16-18). We mark moments, make memories, and joyfully delight in life with God! We call out God's work in one another's lives and praise the One who created us and delights in us. Share your responses to the following questions: What is something that you have watched God do in your life that you can celebrate from this past week? What are you most looking forward to as you celebrate Christmas this year?

1. **Read Matthew 2:1-11 out loud.** What stands out to you in this passage and why? What caught your attention in Brad's message?
2. What does it mean to have hopeful expectation/anticipation? When have you experienced hopeful expectation in your life and how did it impact your perspective on life?

“Come, Thou long expected Jesus. Born to set Thy people free; From our fears and sins release us, Let us find our rest in Thee. Israel's strength and consolation, Hope of all the earth Thou art; Dear desire of every nation, Joy of every longing heart. Born Thy people to deliver, Born a child and yet a King, Born to reign in us forever, Now Thy gracious kingdom bring. By Thine own eternal Spirit Rule in all our hearts alone; By Thine all sufficient merit, Raise us to Thy glorious throne.”

- CHARLES WESLEY, *COME THOU LONG EXPECTED JESUS*

3. **Read the lyrics above out loud.** What draws your attention and why? How do these lyrics point your heart towards Christ?
4. As you celebrate Christmas this year, what are different ways that you can center your heart on the hopeful expectation we have in Christ? How can this hopeful expectation change how we interact with family and friends this Christmas season?

CLOSING CHALLENGE

As you anticipate Christmas, spend a few minutes practicing the prayer of examen.

Prayer of Examen (Psalm 139:23-24): “Lord, what's happening in my heart that is not like you?

Is there any work the Gospel needs to have in my heart because I've drifted from you?

Be honest with the Lord and allow Him to remind you of truth and draw you back to Himself.