

Series: The Feelings of Christmas

Title: The Feelings of Christmas: HOPE

Text: Hebrews 6:13-20 & Various

Breaking the Ice:

OPTION # 1 – What is one example of something you “hoped” for that was fulfilled?

OPTION # 2 - What is an example of something you hoped for that was not fulfilled?

Discussion/Study:

1. READ Proverbs 13:12 – We are “hard-wired for hope,” which also means that when we lack hope we aren’t happy, and when we have it we are. The Proverbs tell us that “hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life.” When have you personally experienced a deferred hope that made your heart “sick”? When have you experience a desire being fulfilled that is “a tree of life”?
2. Michael defined hope as “a posture of our hearts in the present that is rooted in a future expectation.” The example of two identical men with the same tedious job (one paid a meager salary, and the other a fortune) is a great example of how our hope for the future impacts our experience of the present. What about this illustration stands out to you?
3. READ Hebrews 6:13-21 – The author here portrays Jesus as a certain hope, rather than a wish or desire about which we are uncertain. In contrast, Jesus is an anchor to which we can root our hearts no matter the circumstances. Using that extended metaphor, what are the “waves” [big or small] that pull at your heart to drift off course? How does Jesus serve as an anchor of hope in the midst of that waves?
4. READ Psalm 33:17, Psalm 62:10, and Jonah 2:8 – The Bible tells us that there are many “false hopes” in which we trust rather than setting our hopes in the promises of God. The Bibles gives us examples like the power of government, an army, money, or other false religions. What are “false” hopes that you have trusted in personally? Why do you find yourself putting your hope in these things rather than the Lord?
5. READ Hebrews 6:19-20 – The resurrection of Christ functions like a receipt for us from the Lord, demonstrating that the death of Christ truly paid our sins. It also functions like an appetizer, showing us the kind of eternal bodily resurrection life that Jesus offers to those who trust in Him. In contrast to the work of Christ and the Spirit that offers hope and security, the work of Satan is to accuse and condemn. How do experience these two “voices” in your life?

6. READ Romans 8:24, Psalm 42:5, Psalm 43:5, Lamentations 3:20-24 and 1 Peter 1:13 – The Scriptures tell us again and again, that the posture of our hearts and souls will be a reflection of what we allow to be on our minds. In this way, the Christian is called to healthy and Biblically rooted “self-talk”, to take our thoughts captive, and concentrate our minds on the promises of God. How have you seen this play out in your own life? What does it look like for you to practice healthy Christian self-talk to your own soul?

7. In contrast to a person that is filled with hope and expects the best in dependence on the Lord, we have all met (and been) an “Eore”, who expects the worst and is given to negativity, grumbling and complaining. Why is this the case? What does an person stuck in an “Eore-mindset” need to repent of and believe in order to move forward with a heart of hopefulness?

“[13] May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.” - Romans 15:13, (ESV)