



GROUPS AT CROSS POINT

BREAKING THE ICE

Do you use (or have you ever used) an advent calendar? Describe it.

If you've been reading along in the HeReadsTruth or SheReadsTruth Advent reading plan, what scriptures or ideas have been the most meaningful to you this week?

MAIN CONTENT

Last Sunday, we began the Advent season as a church, a season of waiting, looking forward and anticipating the arrival of Christ at Christmas. This week, we continue our Advent series in a discussion of how to find hope when we're waiting.

Pastor Kevin shared the story of Brian, who has been saving a seat at church for his daughter for years because of the hope he has that their relationship will be restored. The empty seat next to him is a symbol of what he's hoping for.

1. What is something that symbolizes hope for you?

2. When you think about things you're hoping for, what comes to mind? What are you hoping for?

Pastor Kevin described the difference between hoping FOR and hoping IN. "Hoping FOR" is external and is focused on the circumstances surrounding us. "Hoping IN" is all about our internal connection with the heart of God. Knowing and trusting Him with our deepest desires. Who your **HOPE IS IN** has to be greater than what you're **HOPING FOR**.



3. What happens to your perspective, your attitude and your mindset when you shift your focus from the things you're hoping for to Jesus, Who you're hoping in?





GROUPS AT CROSS POINT

Read Romans 5:1-8 and Isaiah 43:25.

Romans 5:1-8 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Isaiah 43:25 "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more."

These passages show us this truth:

WE HAVE HOPE BECAUSE WE ARE ABSOLVED OF OUR PAST.

4. How does it feel to know that the debts of our past have been cancelled—completely forgotten—just like the debt Pastor Kevin's dad cancelled for him?

Focus on vs. 2 in Romans 5. Paul tells us that "we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God." God's grace gives us a firm footing for our life and hope for our eternity. It's more than we could ever deserve—Romans 6:23 calls it a "free gift"—and it allows us peaceful assurance.

WE HAVE HOPE BECAUSE WE ARE ASSURED OF OUR FUTURE.

5. How is your life different than it used to be because you have access to God's grace?

Verses 3-4 of Romans 5 tell us that "suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope." During times of waiting, darkness and suffering in our lives, it can be easy to feel like God has gone silent or that we're simply sitting still and wasting time. Nothing could be further from the truth. God doesn't waste our waiting. He is working in us.

WE HAVE HOPE BECAUSE GOD IS WORKING IN THE PRESENT





GROUPS AT CROSS POINT

6. What are some specific ways you see God working in your life right now? How have you seen times of waiting or suffering in your life develop perseverance, character or hope?

CLOSING PRAYER

God, when things feel dark, You are our light. When we are in a season of waiting for the things we're hoping for, help us find our hope in You. Thank You that you use these times to build our character and to bring us closer to Your heart. Help us see Your goodness, Your love and Your light in our moments and days.

ACTION STEP

Share with your group the prayer you wrote out at the end of the service on Sunday. If you weren't able to be at the service, share a prayer or a hope that you're currently waiting for. Pray for each other about these specific hopes throughout the week.

Write Romans 5:1-8 on a card to display in a place where you can revisit it each day this week—on your mirror or dashboard. Spend time each day meditating on this passage and ask God what He wants you to learn from it. Take note of the words or phrases that stand out to you.

