



A Thrill of Hope (Luke 2:22-38)
Practicing Christmas pt. 1
Pastor Kate Wallace Nunneley

THE BIG IDEA

Advent means “arrival”. The season of Advent helps us focus on the arrival of God with us & on the spiritual preparation for Christmas. By sharing in the preparation for Jesus’s first coming at Christmas, we renew our desire for his second coming, when all things will be made new.

So as a church family, for the next 4 weeks, we will prepare for Christmas together by focusing on various parts of the Christmas story and looking at proven spiritual practices that can help us become people of hope, peace, joy, love, and light.

For this first Sunday in Advent, we are talking about “biblical hope,” and asking *What is it?* and *How can we embody this kind of hope this Advent season?*

OPENING

- Are you familiar with the celebration of Advent, or is this new to you?
- What are some Advent practices you have done in the past, and how have these things helped cultivate hope or anticipation leading up to Christmas? (examples: Advent candle lighting, books, devotionals, calendars, etc)
- What are you hopeful for as you look forward to Christmas?

DIGGING DEEPER

- Building off the work of scholar Tim Mackie, Pastor Kate asserts that Biblical Hope¹
 - ✓ ...Is about waiting
 - ✓ ...Is hope in a person (the person of Jesus)
 - ✓ ...Looks forward by looking backWhich of the above resonates with you the most? Why?
- How does Biblical Hope differ from optimism?
- Read Luke 2:22-38. In what ways do you see Simeon and Anna embodying these 3 characteristics of Biblical Hope?

¹ If much of your group wasn't present for the sermon, it might be helpful to review Tim Mackie's 4 minute video on Biblical Hope: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/yakhal-hope/>



- In these next 4 weeks of Advent leading up to Christmas, how can we embody hope in our *waiting*?
- How does looking back on Jesus' first arrival at Christmas prepare us for when he will return to make all things new?

PUTTING IT TO WORK

- As a group, discuss which advent traditions you might be able to incorporate this year in your homes, so that you can be people who embody hope this Advent? How do you hope the meditations and practices of the season will shape you?
- Over the next four weeks, how can you leave enough space in the busy holiday season to be intentional in practicing these aspects of biblical hope, so that when you wake up on Christmas morning, you will be different?

PRAYER REQUESTS