

Advent 2021: Hope – Isaiah 59:1-13

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[0 : 00] We were kicking off our Advent, and Nathan has already explained that just the coming, the arrival of Jesus Christ, our Messiah, and also celebrating His future coming.

! And I think we've done Advent for quite a few years, and you eventually get to a point where you're like, man, I feel like I'm scraping the bottom of the barrel for stories and the Christmas story.

And so I decided to go big or go home today, probably go home, and go along. Hail Mary, but we will be in the amazing book of Isaiah today.

And usually if I'm in the Old Testament, I'm either there or in the Psalms, but we celebrate the special time that Christ humbled Himself and came down to us as a man who walked among us.

So my particular plea for this message is that God would help us with His Holy Spirit have hope renewed in us and to deliver us from counterfeit hopes that a lot of us are tempted to look to, especially during the holiday time.

[1 : 12] But a lot of us as well are looking at this season, Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc. And it's a sad time. A lot of us have experienced loss.

And even this past Thanksgiving at my grandmother's house in North Carolina, over the last three years, I've lost the three main males in my life.

One of my great uncles, George, my grandfather, John, and then about this time last year, my own dad. And went home to be with the Lord. And so it is going to be a good time to celebrate and to glorify God, but also a time where we're going to miss some people that are with us, but celebrate that they are with the Lord.

But a lot of us need to have our hope kind of renewed and restored today. And so we're going to be reading a good bit of scripture today, but it's not because there hasn't been study.

Sometimes I find the people that haven't studied just read and they're like, yeah, I covered it. I just read a lot. But I really hope that God's word just speaks to you. We need that so bad.

[2 : 28] And I listened to a sermon recently by one of my heroes, very, very few sermons recorded from this man, but the missionary Jim Elliott, a few sermons that are recorded before he was martyred in Ecuador.

He was about to preach and he said on the front end that he was going to be reading a lot of scripture during that time. And then he said, and he's like young, strong, deep voice.

Some of you may find reading God's word very tedious. I expect you just to get over your tediousness and learn to read the word as it is. And so that's what I'm going to say to you today.

Just enjoy it as it comes. So you're going to need your Bible or your phone, but whatever. But you're going to need it today.

But I'm not kidding about this. Because the scripture says whatever was written for us in the former days were written for our instruction.

[3 : 31] That through endurance and through the encouragement of the scriptures, we might find hope. So you have to be in God's word. But sin has caused so many of us, well, all of us, all of us to misplace our hope.

Or as the apostle Paul would say, to have a hope that disappoints. We all have been there. We all have done it. There are things, situations, and people that we have placed our hopes in that have let us down.

And some of you are putting your hopes in a person, sort of like a service of many savior to pull you out of some situation that you're in.

And you're just hoping that they're going to help and they're going to be your many savior. Others in some kind of success, future promotion at work, salary raise, a bonus, or whatever, especially at Christmas time.

Someone building a nice house and having just a nice place to go during the day. Guilty of that myself. Others anchor their hope in personal wealth in your bank account.

[4 : 42] You're like, as long as my bank account is big, I'm going to be good. My hope is in my bank account. And many of us in the last couple of years have had our eyes opened a lot more to what's happening in our nation, in our world.

And we're putting our hope in Washington, D.C. or in Atlanta. Hoping in Joe Biden and the Democratic Party. Hoping in Donald Trump and the Republican Party.

No, neither one. Neither one. There's a lot of national threats brewing abroad, such as we've never seen for a few decades.

And some of us are tempted to put our hope in the prowess of the United States military. With COVID-19, it really exposed a lot of what we put our hope in. Medical professionals, doctors. And as I've said before, even if you just trust in your organic, hippie, kombucha lifestyle. Don't put your hope in these things either. Lay your hope in something that's going to last.

[5 : 49] And we find ourselves, even me, drifting towards just wanting to grab some concrete thing to make me feel better in the news. Whether you listen to CNN, MSNBC, or Fox.

It doesn't matter. Like, what are you hoping they're going to say that's going to help you take some hope that day? Feel better. In technology. You're putting your trust in that.

You're hoping that. And follow me on this. As great as it is. As great as gifted as it is. The church. Pastor. Some of you put our hope in us. And we stink.

And then you get mad at us and we let you down. Don't do it. There's only one place to put that hope. We all can testify we've been disappointed.

So in memory of my great uncle, my grandfather, and my dad, who immersed me in the world of Western movies growing up. There's an old movie called Lonesome Dove.

[6 : 47] And this analogy has worked. Because people have mentioned it to me over the years. But there's in this Western, this lady named Lorena. This young, young girl who feels trapped and wants to escape from this lonely, dusty, old, boring town of Lonesome Dove.

And she's putting her hope in this rugged old cowboy who's really sort of a scoundrel to rescue her and take her to San Francisco. And cowboy, take me away.

Right? Yet, yet, the legendary Texas Ranger, the tough, grisly, but tender-hearted Augustus McCray, he knows that Jake is a scoundrel.

Not our Jake, but a different Jake. This Jake. His name is Jake Spoon. And he says to Lorena, Jake's too leaky of a vessel to put your hope in.

And then in the book, it says, but then again, all vessels leak to some degree. And so many of us are placing our hope in leaky vessels.

[7 : 55] Or as the Bible would say, cisterns are wells that hold no water. And a lot of us have lost hope. Some of you just quit. I've talked to many of you over the last few months.

And somebody just feel like you're done. Like, your faith is barely recognizable, even though it's still there. Terrified and sort of being let down again. And as the Scripture says, hope deferred makes the heart sick.

But our desire fulfilled is the tree of life. And I just pray today that you would preach to yourself. Allow God's Word to speak to you as the psalmist in Psalm 42.

Why are you downcast, O my soul, hope in God? When you're feeling overwhelmed and you just can't think or reason a lot, just go to that. It's like hope in God.

And let that be your prayer. But I'll read to you something from Romans 15. You can just write it down or turn there. But Romans 15, verse 13.

[8 : 57] Paul says, May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace and believing so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

There's only one safe place, one sure deposit, one non-leaky vessel to put your hope. And that only is in the living God.

He says, May the God of hope fill you. So God is both the source of hope and the supplier of hope. He is a part of his very nature, a part of his very essence.

He doesn't just inspire hope in us. Again, it's a part of his very essence. And the distinctive meaning of hope in the scripture is very opposite of how we use it.

I hope the Braves win the World Series. They did. But, like we, it's the wishful thinking, fingers crossed, knock on wood kind of attitude.

[9 : 58] And it's the very opposite of what the Bible actually means when it uses the word hope. And you can, it's used around 200 times or referred to roughly, but you can tie it up in a sensual meaning.

And if you want to write this down, I think the meaning of hope could be tied up into this. And this is a Piperian definition. A joyful, confident expectation and desire for something good in the future. A joyful, confident expectation and desire for something good in the future. So it implies looking forward to something in the future with confidence, joy, expectation. Surely, like you know it's going to happen.

You don't just like wish for it to happen. You expect it to happen. And only God can deliver like that. And it sounds like this in Scripture, Psalm 62. For God alone my soul waits in silence.

For my hope is from Him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress. I will not be shaken. That's what hope looks like. And Paul says this is a hope in Romans 5 that does not disappoint.

[11 : 10] It does not put us to shame. Because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit whom He has given to us. So then, if God is the God of hope and we are people, creatures of hopelessness, He has to bring that to us in some way.

He has to like bring that hope to us. And that's what we celebrate in a way here at Christmas. So, turning your Bibles to Isaiah 59.

We're going to go through our little outline here. But Isaiah, one of, if not the greatest prophet of God in the Old Testament. His name means Yahweh has saved.

He's prophesying to the southern kingdom of Judah. And during this time, there's a lot of wickedness going on in society. There's a lot of social injustice.

And I mean biblical social injustices. And it looks a lot like our culture today. So, as we read this, just think about it.

[12 : 22] But, here's your points if you want to follow along. But point number one, our desperate need of a sure hope. Our desperate need of a sure hope.

And we're going to see this in chapter 59. Let's start in verse 1. I pray you just let God's Word speak. Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save.

Or its ear dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God. And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.

Jump to verse 7. And he's going to get into this. Isaiah is describing the sinfulness of the people of Judah. Their feet run to evil.

And they are swift to shed innocent blood. Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity. Desolation and destruction are in their highways. The way of peace they do not know.

[13 : 30] And there is no justice in their paths. They have made their roads crooked. No one who treads on them knows peace. Therefore, justice is far from us.

And righteousness does not overtake us. We hope for light and behold darkness. And for brightness, but we walk in gloom.

We grope for the wall like the blind. We grope like those who have no eyes. We stumble at noon as in the twilight. Among those in full vigor, we are like the dead men.

We all growl like bears. We moan and moan like doves. We hope for justice. See that? We hope for justice. But there is none.

For salvation, but it is far from us. For our transgressions are multiplied before you. Our sins testify against us. Our transgressions are with us.

[14 : 33] And we know our iniquities. Transgression and denying the Lord. And turning back from following our God. Speaking oppression and revolt. Conceiving and uttering from the heart lying words.

So, descriptive of Israel's sin. But also very true of us in our day. And as people who are fallen. But it depicts Israel's hopelessness. This is a court scene. If you want to think of it that way. With the prophets suing Israel on God's behalf. Yet also representing Israel.

That's what the prophets did. They were both the prosecution and the defense attorneys. What an awful place to be in. So, God is appalled that there are none righteous.

Their sin, their rebellion, their failures. All of that precipitate. And eventually lead to their exile. The northern kingdom of Assyria. And then the southern kingdom of Judah.

[15 : 34] Into Babylon. Eventually. But a key verse to nail down is verse 2. Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God.

And your sins have hidden his face from you. So that he does not hear. This is one of the clearest verses in the Bible. I believe it depicts what sin does to our relationship with God.

It clearly says it. The problem we see is there is a relational separation. God can have no fellowship with us because of sin.

Our sins have made him hide his face. And as we've been talking about with the college students.

To see God's face is the greatest blessing. To have relationship with him.

To have favor with him. To have his attention. But for God to hide his face is the greatest curse.

Darkness. Judgment. Gloom.

[16:34] It says your sins have hidden his face from you. So that he does not hear. And so the problem here is not in the Lord's ability or desire to save. Right? Verse 1.

But he's saying it's because of your sin that I will not hear you. It's not that I cannot save or cannot hear. It's because I refuse to because of your sin.

Take away all your sin. Your religious hypocrisy. Quit rebelling and going crazy during the week.

And then showing up and then doing your religious ceremony. And thinking I'm going to be okay.

He said stop it.

Sin is darkness. And as John wrote. God is light. And in him there is no darkness at all. The literal of that.

There is not a single bit of darkness in him. Is what that means. God is light. And in him there is no darkness. And God cannot have fellowship with sin. As Paul wrote.

[17:33] What fellowship has light with darkness? And so you may think. Well that's Israel. But the problem is. That's a picture. A vivid horrific picture. Of our hopelessness and sin as well.

Why? Because in Romans 3. You don't have to turn there. Paul quotes from Isaiah 59. To help describe the general. Fallenness of all humanity.

He uses that language. He cites it. In Romans 3. To say that there is. There is none righteous. No not one. No one who seeks God. Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.

They are swift to shed blood. There is no fear of God in their eyes. He depicts that from Isaiah 59.

We all have exchanged the truth about God for a lie.

We worshipped and served a creature rather than the creator. He was blessed forever. So putting our hopes in the things of this world is a messed up thing.

[18:38] And we're going to suffer because those hopes won't just merely disappoint. They will destroy if you hold on to them for too long. So.

Augustus McCray and his deep cowboy theology of leaky vessels. As our Jeremiah says. We have forsaken God. The fountain of living waters. And have carved out broken cisterns that hold no water.

In Jonah. A very interesting verse here. Those who pay regard to vain idols. Forsake their hope. Of steadfast love.

So. There's a great need for all of us. Not just Israel of old. But all of us today. To anchor our hope in something real. And powerful.

Lest we perish. This brings us to point number two. God's promise of a sure hope. If you're in Isaiah 59.

[19:39] Jump down to verse 20. Thank God as it turns here. Okay. But. Verse 20. And a redeemer. Will come to Zion.

To those in Jacob who turn from transgressions. Declares the Lord. As for me. This is my covenant with them. Says the Lord. My spirit.

That is upon you. And my words that I have put in your mouth. Shall not depart out of your mouth.

Or out of the mouth of your offspring. Or out of the mouth of your children's offspring.

Says the Lord. From this time forth. And forever. Wow. So. In the previous verses. Israel knows that her sin is too great.

It cannot save itself. Too heavy. It cannot carry it. Too evil. It cannot purge it. There is hopelessness. There is hopelessness. In their sin against God. As it is with ours.

[20:35] Yet. In response to that confession. That we just read. In Isaiah 59. A true confession. Of sin. A true picture. Of repentance. Recognizing our.

Sin before God. In response to that. In verses 14 through 19. Isaiah speaks of God. Turning. He reacts. To take action.

To save them. Dressing himself for battle. On their behalf. Foretelling of one. Who will come and lift them up. And save them from their sins.

A redeemer. A redeemer. A redeemer is the sole. And only alternative. To God's wrath. And this redemption. Saves us from his wrath.

And he says. And right there. As for me. He declares his commitment. To his people. To bring about. A messianic service. A servant. A redeemer.

[21 : 31] That will come. And his spirit. Will be upon. That offspring. Anything going off. In your head. Look at the Old Testament. Because what's so awesome.

It's like. This is written. 700 years. Before. He showed up. Like you. You know. If you don't know somebody. Very well. You're tempted to think. Well. I hope they keep their word. I hope they do. What they said. They were going to do. But God has got. Thousands of years. Proving that he does it. Over and over and over. And that's what he's doing here. Who is this redeemer.

In verse 20. Jesus Christ. The wonderful fulfillment. Of that prophecy. And it didn't come easy. This redemption. Would not come with silver. Or gold.

Or work. But rather. Through his precious. Blood. He would be our. Redeemer. Not just of Israel. But for the nations.

[22 : 24] Ephesians chapter 1. Verse 7. In him. We have redemption. Through his blood. The forgiveness. Of our trespasses. According to the riches. Of his grace. Which he lavished.

Which he. Forged out. On to us. Overflowing. With all wisdom. And insight. So this redeemer. Is Christ. And he comes to save. Both Jews. And Gentiles.

Which Paul indicates. Which Paul indicates. By citing. Isaiah 59. 20. He does that in Romans 11. He cites. Isaiah. 59. Verse 20. Romans 11.

Verse 25. The deliverer. The redeemer. Will come from Zion. He will banish. Ungodliness. From Jacob. And this. Will be my covenant. With them. When I take away.

Their sins. And that's Paul. Quoting that. From Romans 11. Furthermore. It's foretold. That God's spirit. Would be upon this. One. And as we read earlier.

[23 : 20] In our Lord's supper. Gathering. At Jesus's baptism. The spirit. Came upon him. John the Baptist. He said. Behold.

Here comes the lamb of God. That takes away. The sin. Of the world. And he said. I saw the spirit. Descend from heaven. Like a dove. And it remained. On him. It's John chapter 1.

So. That's a promise. Like it was coming. The redeemer. Was coming. And so. We're going to transition. Right in the chapter 60 now.

So hang on. So we get the. A picture of. Number three. Our future. Hope. Our future.

Hope. All right. So. Go to verse. Or chapter 60. Verse 1. And as you're.

[24 : 17] As we're reading this together. I want you to do your best. To think about. Revelation 21. And a little exercise. For families. For children. Take Isaiah 60.

And Revelation 21. And see how many times. You can just go. All right. Here we go. Our future. Hope. Verse 1. Arise.

Shine. For your light. Has come. And the glory. Of the Lord. Has risen. Upon you. For behold. Darkness. Shall cover the earth. Thick darkness.

The peoples. But the Lord. Will arise. Upon you. And his glory. Will be seen. Upon you. And the nations. Shall come. To your light. And the king's.

Brightness. Of your rising. Lift up your eyes. All around. And see. They. All gather. Together. They come. To you. Your sons.

[25 : 12] Shall come. From afar. And your daughters. Shall be carried. On the hip. Then you shall see. And be radiant. Your heart. Shall thrill. And exult.

Because the abundance. Of the sea. Has been turned. To you. The wealth. Of the nations. Shall come. To you. A multitude. Of camels. Shall cover you.

The young camels. Of Midian. Ephnah. All those. Who. From Sheba. Shall come. They shall bring. Gold. And frankincense. Hmm. And shall bring.

Good news. The praises. Of the Lord. Just for sake of time. Jump down. To verse nine. For the coastlands. Will hope. For me.

From the ships. Of Tarshish. First. To bring your children. From afar. Their silver. Their gold. With them. For the name. Of the Lord. Your God. And for the holy.

[26 : 07] One of Israel. Because he. Has made you. Beautiful. You want to hear that. Sin makes us. Ugly. Detestable. He.

Made you. Beautiful. For sake of time. Again. Jump down. To verse 18. Violence. Shall be no more. Heard. In your land.

Devastation. Or destruction. Within your borders. You shall call your wall. Salvation. And your gates. Praise. Think of a revelation.

21. The sun. Shall be no. No more. Your light. By day. Nor brightness. The moon. Give you. At night. But the Lord.

Will be. Your everlasting light. And your God. Will be your glory. Your son. Shall be. Shall go down. Nor your moon. Withdraw itself.

[27 : 00] For the Lord. Will be. Your everlasting. Light. In your days. Of mourning. Will be ended. Verse 21. Your people. Shall be righteous. They shall possess.

The land forever. The branch. Of my planting. The work. Of my hands. That I might. Be glorified. The least. One. Shall become. A clan. And the smallest.

One. A mighty nation. I. The Lord. In its time. I will hasten it. So. How many things. Did you pick up on. In that. A lot of good stuff.

Here's just a few. God brings. Light. To Zion. You see that. In verse 1. Through 3. God speaks. The. See if I can. Butcher this.

In Hebrew. The. Tohu. Habohu. The. Emptiness. Void. Darkness. He speaks. Into it. And creates. Light. It looks. Back. To sort of. Like.

[27 : 55] The creation. Story. A new. Heaven. And a new. Earth. It's the most. Pure. Untainted. Holy. Light. Radiating. From the person. Of God. Himself.

And remember. In the scripture. Zion. Is sort of. A metaphor. For. The people. Of God. The church. All those. Who are gathered. Together. Who belong. To him. And it says.

The Lord. Shall rise. Upon you. And his glory. Shall be upon you. So. This isn't. Zion's light. We don't have any light. It's. God's light.

It's sort of like the sun and the moon. The moon has no light. It only reflects. The sun's light. And. This light. Isn't just to be enjoyed by Israel alone. It is for.

The nations. To the ends. Of the earth. And as God light. God's light reflects. Off of Zion. His brilliance. Will attract. His splendor.

[28 : 49] Will draw in. Other nations. Seeking relief. From their darkness. Isn't that awesome? He said. Lift up your eyes. Look. They're coming. All around you. From the nations.

They're coming. To be adopted children. To be converts. To worshiping. The true God. And entering Zion. As a. Growing. Family.

See this. And rejoice. Look at. Verse one. You'll see this. God's glory. Is seen. In Christ. Jesus. The son of God. The son of man. Emmanuel. Bringing the very light. Of the immortal God. To fallen. Humanity. Dwelling. In darkness. So it doesn't matter.

What nation. They come from. All who look upon him. And see his glory. And believe in him. Love him. And worship him. And turn. To him.

[29 : 44] Will be called. Children. Of God. Born again. From above. Quickly. Turn over to. John chapter one. To remember.

The imagery. We got. John chapter one. John chapter one. Verse one. In the beginning. Was the word.

The logos. And the word. Was with God. And the word. Was God. He was with God. In the beginning. With God. All things. All things. Were made. Through him. And without him. Was not anything.

Made. That was made. Here is. I think of. Isaiah 60. Okay. In him. Was life. And the life. Was the light. Of men. The light.

Shines in the darkness. And the darkness. Has not. Overcome it. Go down. In verse nine. The true light. Which gives light. To everyone.

[30 : 42] Was coming. Into the world. He was in the world. And the world. Was made through him. Yet the world. Did not know him. He came to his own. His own people. Did not receive him.

Here it is. For us. For us. But. To all. Who did receive him. Who believed in his name. He gave them right. To become children. Of God. Who are born. Not. Of blood.

Nor of the will. Of flesh. Nor of the will. Of man. Like we didn't just. Do this on our own. But of God. And the word. Became flesh. And dwelt. Among us. And we have seen. His glory. Glory. As the only son. From the father. Full of grace. And truth. So. The glory. That's talked about. In Isaiah 60. We see. In the face. And person. Of Christ. And as we see back. And. Going to flip back over. To Isaiah 60. Trying to bring the plane in. [31 : 36] For a landing here. Isaiah 60. But verse 3. It mentions. That the nations. Will come. The nations. Will come. To Christ.

Those outside. Of covenant. Israel. Who dwell. In darkness. Will see the light. And desire. To be delivered. From sin. And Satan. And as. As Paul. Talked about. In Ephesians 2. Talking to Gentiles. Remember. You were once. Separated. There's the language. Right. From Isaiah. You were once. Separated. From Christ. Alienated. From the commonwealth. Of Israel. And strangers. Of the covenant promise. Here it is. Having no hope. Without God. In this world. But now. In Christ Jesus. You who were once. Far off. Have been brought near. By the blood of Christ. Isaiah. 60. Look at verse 6. [32 : 30] Notice. These nations. And kings. Bring gifts. Of gold. And frankincense. Told you I get the Christmas story. In here. Somehow. Fulfillment. Of the promise.

Given. In verse 5. Yet. The ultimate fulfillment. Prefiguring the arrival. Of the savior. In the world. Of the world. The wise men. The magi. Representing the nations. Coming to faith. In the true God. Matthew 2. Going to the house. They saw the child. With Mary. His mother. They fell down. And worshipped him. Then opening. Their treasures. They offered him. Gifts of gold. Frankincense. And myrrh. So. I won't do it.

You just do it on your own. Okay. I was going to. Close. By. By turning with. Forget it. Just go to Revelation 21. We're done. I'll take the punishment. Romans.

[33 : 27] Revelation 21. Just read one part of it. Okay. We're done. Okay. We're done. Revelation 21. And go to verse 22.

Just a taste. To make you go back later. And make all the connections. Isaiah 16. chapter 21. Verse 22. John.

John. John. John.

John. bring their glory into it and its gates will never be shut by day and there will be no night there they will bring into the glory and the honor of the nations and nothing unclean will ever enter it nor anyone who does the detestable or false but only those who are written in the lamb's book of life so i hope this is something that i hope i did it you see that i know that if you look at this this will give you hope we have something coming it's not we're just looking back we're looking for something to lay our eyes on in the future so over this holiday season and christmas use the promises of god's word to help renew your hope and realize that we're not just looking back but looking forward and don't just kind of go through the motions because we can we can celebrate outwardly the christmas season but inwardly really be denying our our need for that savior this is a good time to do those things so let's uh let's pray together a lot of times a lot of times a lot of times