

Sermon Discussion Questions

The Original Hope of Advent by Destin Garner
Sunday, December 14, 2025, I RPC Central

Scripture Passages: Hebrews 10:23, Luke 3:2-9, Luke 3:15-17, Isaiah 64:1-12

Icebreaker: Share one moment from the past week where you noticed something good, encouraging, or life-giving—something that gave you even a small sense of hope.

1. Who can share on one thing you learn about the character of God from these scriptures &/or this sermon?
2. What does it look like—practically—to practice Hebrews 10:23 when life feels overwhelming &/or disappointing?
3. John Mark Comer suggests disappointment reveals misplaced hope. What are some common “objects of hope” in our culture that often leave people disappointed? Where do you see that in your own life?
4. Destin taught us what the focus and intent of Advent used to be; what did you learn about the history of Advent? What is “the advent question” and what does it look like to wrestle with that in this season?
5. In light of Luke 3, why do you think repentance is essential preparation for hope? How does repentance actually *clear the way* for Christ?
6. Isaiah 64 paints a picture of what kind of people? Which part of Isaiah’s prayer resonates most with you right now: yearning for God, confessing sin, appealing to relationship, or pleading for action?
7. The sermon describes three Advents—past, present, and future. Which Advent do you tend to focus on most (Christ’s birth, His presence now, or His return)? Which one do you tend to forget—and how might that shape your hope?
8. Destin said our, “Application of Advent is that while we hope for that glorious day of the Lord—we must make sure we are prepared for when that day comes. Repent of our sins and trust in Christ alone to forgive us and save our soul.” What would it look to apply this to our hearts this week individually and as a small group?

For application and next steps:

1. Meditate upon and memorize Romans 15:13 this week.
2. Prayerfully pause and reflect on this Advent season in light of these scriptures above. What is something you may need to stop hoping in—and intentionally place your hope in Christ alone?
3. John the Baptist called people to *repent and bear fruit*. What is one specific area of your life where God may be inviting you to repentance or deeper surrender this Advent?
4. Journal about a time when you were really disappointed—big or small (a plan falling through, unmet expectations, etc.). Did that disappointment come from hoping in something that couldn’t really deliver? How does that idea connect with the quote, “*Disappointment is an emotional signal that our hope was set on the wrong object*”?

Sermon notes

Hebrews 10:23 NIV Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

The primary American emotion is disappointment...But, what if disappointment is a good thing? What if disappointment is an emotional signal from our body that our hope was set on the wrong object?

- John Mark Comer

What is the object of your hope? What is the hope the author of Hebrews writes we are to hold unswervingly to?

The focus and intent of Advent has shifted over time:

- Christmas day used to be the starting block not the finish line.
- Advent used to be more for preparation not for partying.
- Advent used to be more for fasting not feasting.
- Advent used to focus more on the judgment of your soul than on baby Jesus.
- Advent used to be more focused on what happens in the book of Revelation than on the Incarnation.
- Advent used to be more aimed at people repenting not rejoicing.

Luke 3:2-9, Luke 3:15-17 ESV

during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’ “He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. “As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the ChristJohn answered them all, saying, “I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

Advent that it is not for the faint of heart. To grasp the depth of the human predicament, one has to be willing to enter into the very worst. Hope begins with peering into the darkness of our souls and the world and saying, 'God do something, because I can't.'

Wondering if there's a God at all is THE Advent question.

Isaiah 64:1-12 ESV

Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil—to make your name known to your adversaries, and that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome things that we did not look for, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him. You meet him who joyfully works righteousness, those who remember you in your ways. Behold, you were angry, and we sinned; in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved? We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls upon your name, who rouses himself to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities. But now, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Be not so terribly angry, O LORD, and remember not iniquity forever. Behold, please look, we are all your people. Your holy cities have become a wilderness; Zion has become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised you, has been burned by fire, and all our pleasant places have become ruins. Will you restrain yourself at these things, O LORD? Will you keep silent, and afflict us so terribly?

They Yearn for His Presence:

"We don't need advice; we need divine intervention."

They Confess their Sin:

"Our best efforts cannot fix our broken hearts."

They Appeal to Relationship:

"We're not asking you to ignore our sin, but please remember Your covenant love."

They Plead for Action: "If You don't act, we're finished."

Summary of Isaiah 64:

We are dirty, destitute and desperate. Where are you God, we need you?

God's answer and our Hope is in His Advent(s).

"Do not grumble against Heaven because it does not fulfill all your hopes. Grumble against yourselves because you do not know how to hope." - Nikolai Velimirovic

The hope of Advent can be seen in three parts:

1. First Advent - adventus redempcionis (lit: arrival of redemption)

The coming of Christ in the incarnation provides hope that you are loved.

2. Second Advent - adventus sanctificationis (lit: arrival of holiness)

The coming of the Lord in our present moment, through the indwelling of believers by Holy Spirit provides hope that God is with you and will never leave you.

3. Third Advent - adventus glorificamus (lit: arrival in glory)

The coming of Christ in “the last days” provides ultimate hope that He will right every wrong.

This is the primary and original hope of Advent. This is God’s definitive response to the deepest longings of the human soul.

- The birth of Christ at Christmas gives us hope that we are loved.
- The coming of the Spirit to believers beginning at Pentecost gives up hope that God will be with us forever.
- The return of King Jesus gives us hope that He will right every wrong.

The Application of Advent is that while you hope for that glorious day of the Lord- make sure you are prepared for when that day comes. Repent of your sins and trust in Christ alone to forgive you and save your soul.

Romans 15:13 NIV

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.