

A Weary World Rejoices

Week 6 – Government and Jesus

Transition: Last week Isaiah gave another reason why joy is possible in a weary world. God would one day give the world a gift – his own Son (Immanuel, which means God with us). This reality created great expectations because Immanuel would be the light in the darkness, the one in whom we find joy, the one who would carry our burdens, and the one who would win our greatest battle.

Context: Israel has known war and corrupt rulers for a long time. This week we see God comforting his people with news that a perfect ruler is coming - one like they have never seen before. His rule and his reign would be perfect, ushering in true peace and justice.

Opening Questions:

- To you, what is the best form of government, and why?
- Do elections (local or national) cause you stress? Why or why not?

Scripture/Storying: Isaiah 9:6b, 7

Discipleship Questions:

- How does Isaiah 9:6b and 9:7 fit into the overarching message God has for his people in Isaiah 9:1-7?
- Verse 7 mentions that Immanuel's rule will increase. How does it increase? Is it increasing today? If so, in what ways have you personally witnessed it increasing?
- What areas of your life do you struggle bringing under the rule and reign of Christ? What makes it difficult for you?
- What is the difference between the peace Christ offers and the peace this world offers? Describe a time when you experienced the peace of Christ. Has there been a time when you were deceived by the peace this world offers? Share your experience and what you learned from it.
- Where in your life is God challenging you to be a conduit for his peace now, as we wait for his return? What typically interferes with your being a channel of God's peace? How do you overcome it?
- What is true justice? Why is it important to you personally? Why do we want justice to happen quickly on others who do us wrong but want mercy (and not justice) for ourselves? How does the justice of Jesus change this view?
- In what ways does the prospect of eventual never-ending peace affect your life today? In what ways should it affect you? What can you do to make your living in the hope of that future reality evident today?
- **Prayer time:** This month we will be taking a hiatus from our typical routine of praying for our ministry partners to focus more specifically on one prayer. For the month of December, we will focus on praying for peace in the Middle East and the birthplace of Christ.