

A Weary World Rejoices

Week 3 – Foundation for Joy

Transition: Last week God through Isaiah comforted King Ahaz with two certain promises. He would multiply God's kingdom and increase their joy in a manner comparable to a plentiful harvest and victory in battle. We saw that the comfort God offered through Isaiah was not merely restricted for Ahaz but is available for us today too.

Context: This week we will explore the ground for joy in a weary world. We are in week three of our Christmas series, *A Weary World Rejoices*. As we continue in Isaiah 9, we are greeted with another certain promise. Oppression, bondage, and exile lie in Israel's near future, but God gives them hope through the assurance that Immanuel would come one day and break the hold of a greater oppression, bondage, and exile.

Opening Questions:

- Do you have a favorite Christmas movie you watch every year? Why is it your favorite?
- Do you ever have to fight a "bah-humbug" attitude during the Christmas season? What brings on this kind of attitude for you?

Scripture/Storying: Isaiah 9:4

Discipleship Questions:

- Israel was taken into captivity because of persistent sin against God. Give some examples of the burdens people bear because of sin. What burdens have you carried? Share your story with the group.
- Often, we look at the problem of oppression and bondage as if it's just an issue out there somewhere. Why is it hard to turn the mirror around and face the ways you have contributed to the weariness others feel? What are you willing to do about it?
- How does Christ relieve the burdens of anyone suffering from oppression, bondage, and exile today? What have you done personally to experience this relief offered by Christ?
- Knowing Christ and keeping your eyes fixed on him is the key to begin living joyfully in a weary world. What other competitors distract you from making Christ your vision? How can the group assist you in keeping your eyes fixed on Christ?
- Who do you know that needs to hear of the freedom that Christ offers from their bondage to sin and exile? Share their name with the group. Pause as a group and pray for those on your heart.
- Who in your life is weary from carrying heavy burdens? What does God want you to do to help ease their load?
- What is the Holy Spirit teaching you through this story? How does it impact the way you think and live?
- **Prayer time: Renew Clinic**
Pray for Unity among staff, board, coaches, and volunteers. Pray for the ability of staff to rest. Pray for the participants to experience Christ, be strengthened by Him, and for families to be reconciled. Pray for salvation amongst participants. Pray for end-of-year giving; may the Lord provide all that is needed.