

A Weary World Rejoices

Week 2 – Unspeakable Joy

Transition: Last week we started a new Christmas series **A Weary World Rejoices**. We explored Isaiah 9:1-2. Israel and Syria were set to invade Jerusalem and King Ahaz of Judah was frightened. So, God sent Isaiah to comfort Ahaz and the people of Judah with hope.

Context: This week we continue in Isaiah nine, with verse three being our focus. Isaiah continues to comfort Ahaz in light of the turmoil surrounding him personally, as well as the nation of Judah. The comfort God offers through Isaiah was not merely restricted for Ahaz but is available for us today too.

Opening Questions:

- Christmas is a joyful season. What makes it especially joyful for you?
- What has potential to steal your joy during this time of year?

Scripture/Storying: Isaiah 9:3

Discipleship Questions:

- Why does Isaiah speak in the past tense about future events (“You have multiplied the nation,” “You have increased its joy”). What hope would this have brought to Ahaz, especially in a time of political turmoil? What future prophetic events bring you hope?
- Read Genesis 17:1-7, Romans 4:13, and Matthew 28:18-20. All three of these texts demonstrate that God will establish a global kingdom, consisting of all people groups. How does Isaiah’s message (in vs 3) align with God doing this? How does knowing this influence the way you view people groups not like your own?
- Notice the text credits God as the one who enlarges his kingdom. When Charles Spurgeon preached on this passage, he said, “If we add to our churches by excitement, by making appeals to the passions, rather than by explaining truth to the understanding; if we add to our churches otherwise than by the power of the Spirit of God making men new creatures in Christ Jesus, the increase is of no worth whatever.” What man-centered methods have you observed churches use to “grow” God’s kingdom? What did you learn from this?
- The text also credits God as the one who increased the nation’s joy. Biblically, what is joy? What techniques do you use to manufacture joy during the Christmas season? What usually happens after Christmas is over? Why don’t these techniques bring lasting joy? Why do people look to everything but Christ to bring them joy?
- This Scripture indicates that the rejoicing was done in the presence of God. Does God’s presence bring you joy? What do you do to maintain mindfulness of God’s presence?
- The last statement “as they are **glad** when they divide the spoil” gives the idea of shouting in exultation. Have you ever done this? If so, share the story. If not, is there something holding you back? If so, what is it? What can you do about it?
- What is the Holy Spirit teaching you through this story? How does it impact the way you think and live?
- **Prayer time:** *Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA)*
Pray for their new staff member, Chesney Lingerfelt. She will oversee many West Knoxville schools and their leadership. She will also focus on building up the female presence in FCA.