

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**PRINCE
OF PEACE**
Called to Connect



WELCOME
THE SEASONS
Advent

Days of Hope

November 27 & 28, 2021

How do you hold onto hope when, looking all around, there isn't a hook to hang hope on, when hope seems impossible, when you can't see any way that tomorrow could possibly be different or better than today? The season of Advent proclaims that into the darkness of this world a Light has come that no darkness can overcome.

SCRIPTURE TEXT: JEREMIAH 29:11-14

Read the scripture text together as a group.

BACKGROUND INFO

In the year 586 BC the Babylonian army did what the Israelites had thought impossible. They breached the city wall around Jerusalem, destroyed Solomon's great temple, and carried off the majority of the population into captivity in Babylon. There, the Israelites languished for seventy years. Hopelessness is the ultimate pit of despair, and that is exactly where the Israelites found themselves – without any hope. What saved them were the prophets. People like Isaiah and Jeremiah proclaimed a word of hope into the darkness of hopelessness, and this reading is one of those words: "For I know the plans that I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, give you a future and a hope." Those are such powerful words, and many people have claimed them as God's promise to them. But it's important to note that in the original Hebrew, all of the "you's" in that passage are plural. Jeremiah isn't proclaiming God's promise to an individual; Jeremiah is proclaiming God's promise to the entire nation of Israel, a promise of hope.

That's where the Israelites were when they heard Jeremiah proclaim those words. But because God's Word has power, that promise birthed faith in those captives. They dared to believe them to be true. And it gave them hope. They waited for God to deliver on God's promise. And God did not disappoint them. Hope came in unexpected ways, and in time they returned to their homeland.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Share something that has given you hope, especially during this pandemic where so much feels hopeless.
- What is God teaching us in this passage?
- How do you think the Israelites responded when they heard this?
- Why does this message of hope matter to us today, in this Advent season?

APPLICATION: This week, let's trust God's promise to not only hear us, but to release us from the things that hold us captive. Spend some time in scripture and in prayer, seeking hope from God in these moments.