

CT Community Groups Study Guide

Message: Unexpected Hope | Pastor Adam Browett | Nov. 30, 2026

Series: Light of the World

Icebreaker Question

What's the most ridiculous or embarrassing thing you've ever run into, tripped over, or knocked down while trying to navigate in the dark? (Bonus points if it made a loud crash or woke up the whole house!)

Key Quote: God doesn't give hope the way we want it, he gives hope the way we need it.

Discussion Questions

1. Light in the Darkness

Read **Matthew 1:23, 4:16** and **Isaiah 9:2** together. Pastor Adam used the illustration of a light switch in a dark room—when the light comes on, nothing in the room actually moves, but suddenly you can see everything clearly.

- How does this picture change your understanding of what hope is?
- Where in your life right now do you need Jesus to "turn on the light" so you can see more clearly?
- Why do you think we often expect Jesus to *change* our circumstances rather than *enter* them?

2. The Light of the World

Read **John 1:5, 1:9, and 8:12**. These passages reveal Jesus as 'the true light' whose light 'can never be extinguished' by darkness.

- What's the significance of Jesus being THE light (not just A light) that gives light to everyone?
- How does this exclusive, inextinguishable nature of Christ's light connect to the Christmas message of Emmanuel—God with us?
- How does understanding Jesus as 'the true light' that darkness cannot overcome give you hope in situations that feel overwhelming?

3. False Expectations

The sermon outlined three false expectations about hope:

1. Hope will come once I get things under control.
 2. Hope will come after God removes my darkness.
 3. Hope will come in the way we expect it.
- Which of these false expectations do you most relate to? Why?
 - Can you share a time when you were waiting for circumstances to change before you could have hope? What happened?
 - What's the difference between "hoping to have hope one day" and receiving hope now?

4. Unexpected Hope

Read **Luke 2:28-32**. The Christmas story is full of unexpected moments—Mary's pregnancy, Jesus born in a manger, Simeon recognizing salvation in a baby.

- Why do you think God chooses to show up "subtly in a whisper" rather than "obviously with a shout"?
- When has God shown up in your life in an unexpected way or unexpected place?
- How does it change things to know that hope shows up "in our exhaustion, in grief, in pain"—not as an escape plan, but as God's presence *with us* in difficulty?

5. Receiving Hope This Advent

"God doesn't give hope to us the way we want it, he gives hope the way we need it."

- What's one concrete way you can "refocus on Jesus as the central hope of Christmas" this week?
- Is there an area where you've been trying to navigate in the dark, waiting for things to change, instead of turning to Jesus now?
- How can this group pray for you as you seek to experience Emmanuel—God with us—in a fresh way this Advent season?

Action Step

This week, practice bringing one area of darkness to Jesus—whether it's exhaustion, grief, doubt, shame, or confusion. Instead of waiting for it to change first, invite Him into it and ask Him to be your light right where you are.