

The Prophets Foretold – Part 2

Jeremiah 23:5-6; 33:15-16

MAIN POINT: Because God has kept his promises to be with his people in all life's circumstances, we can maintain a sense of hope for the future, no matter how dark the present might appear.

Introduction:

Introduce the topic for this discussion by asking the group to collaborate in answering these questions:

- **The very first Star Wars movie released in 1977 was sub-titled, “A New Hope.” Who or what was the new hope to which that title was referring?**
- **What other famous movies or stories are about a new hope of some sort?**
- **Who or what is famous now for being portrayed as a new hope?** [NOTE TO LEADER: If the group gets stuck on this question, offer one or two of these ideas to “prime the pump” of their thinking: new cancer treatments; political candidates who promise reform; new weight loss programs, etc.]

The Problem with Kings

Ask a volunteer to read aloud Jeremiah 23:5-6. Then ask the group to respond to the following discussion questions:

- **Pastor Andy gave us some of the historical context for these verses. The social and religious conditions of Israel and Judah had become like a dead stump that needed to be cut down. What are some conditions in our world that seem to have become dead and lifeless?**
- **Have you ever felt that God was taking an awfully long time to fulfill his promises? What was that experience like?**
- **When have you encountered times in your personal life that lacked life and hope?**

The Hope of a New King

Ask a volunteer to read aloud Jeremiah 33:14-16, which is essentially a restatement of 23:5-6. Then ask the group members to respond to these questions, based on both passages:

- **Looking back from our point in history, Christians see that God fulfilled the promises given to Jeremiah by sending Jesus into the world. Let's compare Jesus to Jeremiah's description of the “Righteous Branch.”**
 - **What are some situations in the world that call for wisdom? How can Christ bring wisdom into that situation?**
 - **What are some situations in your personal life that need some wisdom? How can Christ bring wisdom into that situation?**

- **What are some examples of injustice in our world? What is a Christian response to those?**
- **Where are you personally experiencing some level of injustice? How can you respond in a Christian way?**
- **Pastor Andy explained that the word “righteous” means covenant faithfulness. Where is faithfulness to God most lacking in our world? How can we live more faithfully?**

God's Restorative Kingdom

Remind the group that we now live as members of God's restorative kingdom. The prophetic word is that in the middle of the mess, God has not forgotten us! Ask the group to respond to these questions:

- **What practices or experiences seem to serve best to reassure you of God's dependability?** [NOTE TO LEADER: some examples might be corporate worship services, Bible reading, reflection on your personal walk with God, Christian community, Advent or Christmas music, prayer, etc. Anything that reminds people of God's trustworthiness.]
- **Hope shines even in dark times; how does hope shine for you?**

Prayer: During prayer time, take requests and spend time in prayer for those. Be sure to include a time to thank God for specific instances when promises have been fulfilled and God has been present through good times and bad.