



"A LIGHT IN DARK PLACES"

December 11, 2022

Pastor Tony Arnold

CHRISTCHURCHVA.ORG/SERMONS

Two questions we ask when we're feeling hopeless and lost in the dark:

" _____ ?"

&

" _____ ?"

When You Feel Hopeless and Lost in the Dark:

1. Take your _____ to _____.

Matthew 11:2-3 When John was in prison, he heard about the things Christ had done. So he sent his disciples 3 to ask Jesus, "Are you the one who is coming, or should we look for someone else?" (GW)

2. _____ the _____.

Matthew 11:4-6 Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: 5 The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. 6 Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me." (NIV)

3. _____ back to the _____.

Matthew 11:7-10 As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. 9 What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10 This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.'..." (NRSV)

4. _____ to what Jesus says _____.

Matthew 11:11 Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. (NRSV)

YOUR _____ IN JESUS WILL BE A _____ IN DARK PLACES

How Can You Strengthen Your Hope in Jesus?

1. By _____ God's _____.

2 Corinthians 1:20–22 For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God. ²¹ Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, ²² set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. (NIV)

2. By _____ with _____.

1 John 5:14–15 And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him. (ESV)

3. By embracing God's _____ and _____.

Hebrews 10:24–25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (ESV)

Sources: *The Communicator's Commentary (Matthew)*, *The Daily Bible Study Series (Matthew)*, *Feasting on the Word: Year A, Volume 1*, and various illustrations from Preaching Today.



DOGGY BAG

Something to take home and chew on!

1. Have you ever taken your questions to Jesus? What did you learn from that experience? How did the Lord speak to you? In what manner did he speak (through others, for example)?
2. Our mountaintop experiences can often give us hope when we're in the darkest valley. What undeniable experience of God's love and goodness sees you through dark moments? What evidence do you see that God is still working in peoples' lives?
3. How have God's promises in scripture spoken to you when you've faced a dark time in your life? In what ways can you become more proactive to internalize the promises of God?

4. What does it mean to pray in accordance with God’s will? What is one step you can take to cultivate your practice of prayer so you may come to pray with great expectation?

5. What difference do you think it makes that, unlike John the Baptist, we have experienced the full scope of Christ’s saving work?

6. How has God used your faith in Jesus to be a light for others? How has God used someone else’s faith to be a light for you?

Take a step in faith this week:

- **Let us know you are here today.** Fill out a Connection Card every Sunday through either the Christ Church app or the Connection Card tab in the top menu bar of the Online Campus Platform (LIVE.CHRISTCHURCHVA.ORG).
- **Check out our online bulletin each Sunday.** Use the Christ Church app, or the Resources tab* in the top menu bar of the Online Campus Platform, to access the most current edition each week.
- Sign up to **Read Through the Bible** with Christ Church in 2023. Find the link and info in the online bulletin.
- Come and bring the whole family to our last **Wednesday Night Dinner** (5:30pm) & **Discipleship** (6:30pm) of the year 2022! If you don’t know what group to join at 6:30pm, you’re invited to Pastor Todd’s Apply Group in Room 160. Email him for info at pastortodd@christchurchva.org.
- Join in discipleship through a small group or class—not all of them are on Wednesday nights! Contact Pam Charbonneau at pcharbonneau@christchurchva.org to learn how.
- **Join us for Midday Prayer** each weekday at noon on our Online Campus Platform (LIVE.CHRISTCHURCHVA.ORG).

*Quick link to Connection Resources: CHRISTCHURCHVA.ORG/CONNECT-WITH-US

ANSWER KEY:

Questions: “**WHERE IS MY HOPE?**” & “**HAVE I PUT MY HOPE IN THE RIGHT PLACE?**”

When you feel hopeless:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Take your <u>QUESTIONS</u> to <u>JESUS</u> . | 3. <u>GO</u> back to the <u>BEGINNING</u> . |
| 2. <u>CONSIDER</u> the <u>EVIDENCE</u> . | 4. <u>LISTEN</u> to what Jesus says <u>ABOUT YOU</u> . |

Your **HOPE** in Jesus will be a **LIGHT** in dark places.

How to strengthen hope:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1. By <u>INTERNALIZING</u> God’s <u>PROMISES</u> | 2. By <u>PRAYING</u> with <u>GREAT EXPECTATION</u> | 3. By embracing God’s <u>PEOPLE</u> and <u>PURPOSE</u> |
|--|--|--|