

HOPE BEGINS WITH A STUMP

Isaiah 11:1-10 (ESV)

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*There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.*

² *And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.*

³ *And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.*

*He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide disputes by what his ears hear,*

⁴ *but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.*

⁵ *Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist,
and faithfulness the belt of his loins.*

⁶ *The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together;
and a little child shall lead them.*

⁷ *The cow and the bear shall graze;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.*

⁸ *The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra,
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.*

⁹ *They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.*

¹⁰ *In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him
shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.*

INTRODUCTION:

Isaiah's vision gives us a breath-taking picture of peace through Christ. From the stump of Jesse, God brings forth a shoot, a promise of hope fulfilled in Jesus, the Prince of Peace. This peace begins with Christ's Spirit-filled reign, is sustained by His righteous justice, and extends to the renewal of all creation. As we reflect on this Advent message, may we be stirred to live as people of peace, embodying Christ's kingdom in our families, communities, and the world.

DISCUSS:

1. Peace through Christ's Spirit-Filled Reign

Isaiah shows us that peace does not arise from human wisdom or strength, but from the Spirit resting upon Christ. His reign is marked by wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, and the fear of the Lord. True peace begins when we yield to the Spirit's guidance in our lives.

How can we cultivate greater dependence on the Holy Spirit in our daily decisions, relationships, and ministry, so that our lives reflect the peace of Christ?

2. Peace through Christ's Righteous Justice

Isaiah declares that Christ judges with righteousness and equity, defending the poor and lifting the meek. Peace is inseparable from justice, it is not silence but truth, not avoidance but fairness. Advent calls us to be peacemakers who embody Christ's justice in a broken world.

In what ways can we, and also as a church stand with the vulnerable and practice justice in our community, so that peace is not just spoken but lived out?

3. Peace through Christ's Renewal of Creation

Isaiah's vision stretches beyond human society into creation itself: wolves and lambs dwelling together, the earth filled with the knowledge of the Lord. Christ's peace is cosmic, renewing all things. The church is called to be a signpost of this peaceable kingdom, living reconciliation in a fractured world.

How can we, both individually and corporately, be signs of Christ's renewing work, in creation care, reconciliation, and hope, pointing others to the peaceable kingdom?



Pray:

1. We pray that our hearts will be sensitive to the Spirit's leading, learning to quiet our distractions and listen for His voice, so that we may live each day as Spirit-filled people of peace whose words and actions reflect Christ in our homes, workplaces, and communities.
2. We ask God to give us courage to pursue justice and reconciliation, not only in the great struggles of our world but also in the ordinary places of life—defending the poor, speaking up for those overlooked, standing with the weak, and embodying Christ's righteousness in our families, schools, and workplaces.
3. We pray that hope will overflow in us, even when we feel weary or cut down like a stump, so that our lives may become signposts of Christ's renewal—through acts of care for creation, words of encouragement, and faithful prayer—pointing toward the day when the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.