

RECAP

As you reflect on last week's practice, were you able to share your personal experience with God with someone who doesn't know Christ?

IDEA 1

Hope declared for the future brings peace in the present. Easy to understand but difficult to live. Even though we know the end of the Big God story, how do we live in the tension of THIS day as we wait for THAT day? We are called to be a people of peace, to bring peace, and release peace; we long for Salem to be a city at peace. We declare hope for the future to bring peace to the present. And yet we see tension as peace sits alongside a raging apocalyptic war.

What does the story of Ezekiel 38-39 tell us about God? How does it give us (in the present) hope?

How would you describe the hope we as believers have that brings peace?

What do you believe is the church's role in providing peace in a world without hope?

IDEA 2

God is always more concerned with our long-term transformation than He is with our short-term comfort (our holiness, not our happiness), And waiting is part of the process. We live in this day, waiting for that day. There will be a day when this tension will not exist in us. But in this foreshadowing, we have hope that resolution and restoration will come.

Why is waiting such a difficult part of life in our society?

Describe a time/or season you've had to wait on God. How did it change you? Was there anything new you learned about God?

What is something you're waiting for from God in this season? And what is your hope with that thing?

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

As a group, consider Brian's quotation from C.S. Lewis:

"Hope is one of the Theological virtues. This means that a continual looking forward to the eternal world is not (as some modern people think) a form of escapism or wishful thinking, but one of the things a Christian is meant to do. It does not mean that we are to leave the present world as it is. If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next."

From this quote, Brian challenged us to instill the rhythm of "Thinking of Eternity every day."

Brainstorm with your group:

- **What does it look like to have a rhythm of "Thinking of eternity every day?"**
- **Where can this be practiced?**
- **How will you as a community have this rhythm together?**

NEXT STEPS

One of the final practices Brian challenged us with is "to be the Hope in the Present." In your sphere of influence, consider this week choosing an individual who might need a bit of hope, whether that's a coworker, family member, friend, or someone from the neighborhood.

As you do prayerfully consider these questions

- **What could it look like to provide peace in the present moment for this individual?**
- **How can the Hope of Jesus be spoken or demonstrated to this individual? (If they're unbelievers, could this be an opportunity to share the gospel?)**