

advent week one

day three, tuesday, november 30th

"Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.' It was too dark to see much hope. Our leaders were too susceptible to corruption, our hearts too inclined to selfishness, our affections too prone to idolatry. God told us to repent, but we chose to believe a lie; that it's too hard to return to your first Love when you've loved something new. So we ended up here, exiled in Babylon. Here, it's too dark to see any hope. They want to change our names and our worship. Our homes and our laughter have been stolen. Our identity is slowly slipping away to Babylon's message of "Assimilate! Assimilate!..."

Jeremiah 33:14-16

This is the context into which Jeremiah speaks his message. He reminds God's people that God's promises have not been forgotten. There is a future because the line of King David will be restored. The new King will restore justice and righteousness in its truest form. Jeremiah dared God's people to risk believing in hope when there was no evidence of it. He challenged them to believe that their hope, salvation, justice, and future were wrapped up in the story of this Righteous King. He dared them to believe that living out that hope in exile was worth the risk.

REFLECT: We know that this Righteous King is Jesus. Like God's people in Babylon, our hope, our salvation, our justice, and our future are intricately tied into his story, and like God's people in Babylon, it's hard to hold on to hope when things feel hopeless and culture pressures us. But the story isn't over. God's not done. Throughout your day come back to Jeremiah's words. Let them challenge you to risk and redirect your hope.

PRAY: God, my heart is too inclined to selfishness, my affections too prone to idolatry, and my life too susceptible to corruption. I can too easily give into the pressure of assimilating to the culture, and too often I place my hope in the false promises of its idols. Forgive me Father. Thank you for Jesus. Without him, I'd be left with my weak substitutes for hope. Please give me the courage to live into true hope even when it's hard. Amen.