

Have You Heard? The Sound of Hope

Scripture used: [Matthew 2:16-18 \(NLT\)](#), [John 1:1-5 \(NCV\)](#), [John 1:14a \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Today, Pastor Hurmon began the Christmas series "Have You Heard?" with the sermon titled "The Sound of Hope". He shared with us that Christmas is not only about light but about darkness too. The shepherds were tending the sheep on a cold dark night when the angels appeared filling the night sky with light and announcing the good news for all people. ([Luke 2:8-14](#)) The Christmas season is especially for those in pain and suffering who are overwhelmed by the darkness of this world.

KEY POINTS

- 1. Christmas includes space for every human emotion, including inexpressible grief born out of unimaginable loss.** Within the Christmas story is the worst darkness. Herod was a cruel ruler during Jesus' birth. ([Matthew 2:16-18 \(NLT\)](#)) When the Magi went to him in search of the newborn king, Herod hid his fear of losing his power to this new king and secretly ordered his soldiers to kill all boys born in Bethlehem aged two and under. Some historians estimate that this order caused unbearable grief for approximately 20 to 30 families in Bethlehem. The Christmas story is not only about light and joy and miracles, but also darkness, grief, and loss.
- 2. HOPE: Holding Onto Positive Expectations:** Hope is the ability to see forward and to have positive expectations. When we are struggling with the darkness, we might lose the ability to see hope, but we can gather together and lean on each other. We can be each other's eyes and ears and guide one another to hope in our worship times together and in our gatherings.
- 3. Jesus' birth has shifted the ultimate outcome.** In [John 1:1-5 \(NCV\)](#) we read the announcement of Jesus' birth. This announcement is the true sound of hope. Through His birth, darkness was disempowered, and Jesus brought light into the world. This good news is much more than good advice. This good news only requires our ability to believe. It saves and redeems us. This good news puts the focus on what Jesus has already done for us - not on what we can do. He has already won the victory, and darkness and death now has an expiration date.
- 4. Jesus' birth means your help has already arrived.** Sometimes our burdens are very heavy, and knowing that Jesus has won the ultimate victory is not enough to keep us going. In [John 1:14a \(NLT\)](#) we read that Jesus became flesh. He joins us in our pain. He is our source of strength, hope, and love for today.

DISCUSSION

- 1) HEAR** - Take some time this week to read through the verses from the sermon. Ask God to help you recognize both the elements of light and darkness in the Christmas story. What did Jesus' birth mean to the people in the story - the shepherds, the Magi, Herod, and the people of Bethlehem? What does the presence of both light and darkness mean to you today?
- 2) UNDERSTAND** - Reflect on the season ahead. What emotions are provoked for you? What circumstances do you face? How do these emotions and/or circumstances shape your experience this Christmas season? How can you reflect on the sound of hope found in Jesus' birth to help shape the weeks ahead?
- 3) DO** - Pastor Hurmon encouraged us to "lock-in" in the next weeks and to make space to attend worship in the coming weeks. When we gather together, we can help each other to see and hear the true hope of the season. Look over your calendar and decide how you can make time to join the worship services throughout the holiday season - either in person or online.