

Sermon Discussion Questions

December 5, 2021

Second Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 59-60

1. Now you've had a week since being introduced to, or being reintroduced to, the examen. Did you pray it again at any point this week? What was your experience of it as you tried it on your own? The examen, like many other forms of prayer, is like weight training. It takes time to build strength before you feel like you're making progress. Keep trying!
2. One of the through lines through Advent is this: We live in a dark, chaotic, busy and hurried world. Where do you sense darkness, chaos, busyness and hurry the most in our world and in our lives? How do you think Advent might help us push back against these things and grow in our relationship with God in this time?
3. In his book, *The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality*, Ronald Rolheiser says: "We are more busy than bad, more distracted than nonspiritual, and more interested in the movie theatre, the sports stadium, and the shopping mall and the fantasy life they produce in us than we are in church. Pathological busyness, distraction, and restlessness are major blocks today within our spiritual lives." Do you sense that this is true for your own life now, or in a previous season of your life? What do you think the relationship is between "busyness, distraction, and restlessness" and the spiritual life God might be inviting us into? How do you counteract busyness and distraction?
4. Isaiah 59:20-21 sits between a passage of judgment and a promise of hope. It speaks of God sending a Redeemer, a promise that God's Spirit will be with his people, and that God's words will be on the lips of God's people. As we live in Advent, between the darkness we experience today and the light that is coming into the world, how important are the words and promises of God to you? How have you been able to keep God's word on your mind and on your lips in order to point you towards hope?

5. Have you ever prayed using breath prayer or breathing prayer before? What was your experience of it on Sunday morning? Can we try it one more time?

Try this again using Psalm 46 as your guide:

Pause. Slow. Right. Down. Close your eyes. Breathe. Ask Jesus for light.

Inhale and exhale. Find a rhythm.

Smile at distraction and come back to the presence of Jesus.

As you inhale, play these words in your mind

“You are our refuge”

As you exhale, play these words in your mind

“a help in times of trouble”

Take this prayer with you into your week. When you wake up, pray it. When you eat a meal, pray it. When you become anxious, frustrated, sad, happy, pray it. See how you become aware of God’s presence with you throughout your day and your week as you pray prayers like this often.