

**BIG IDEA**

In Jesus, we find hope for the future that changes our present.

**SCRIPTURE**

Jeremiah 33:12-18, 2 Corinthians 5:21

**ICEBREAKER AND OPENING THOUGHT**

Use the icebreaker as an opportunity to discuss how, in child-like fashion, you may have hoped or “longed” for something. This will set up the discussion about the kind of hope Jeremiah and Israel had during a challenging personal and national circumstance. Similarly, we can have hope that surpasses our superficial wishes.

**BIBLE DISCUSSION**

Read the scriptures and discuss how this prophecy may have been received at the time. In verse 12, it says that the place was desolate, without people or animals. What might the people assume was going to happen? Without having the example of Jesus’ life, what type of person may they have expected to be the Savior?

The word righteousness may be a challenging word for the group to understand. For some, this word has moral connotations or is primarily concerned with collecting good deeds in a kind of moral bank account. We can hear that idea in the common phrase self-righteous, which is a phrase we use to refer to thinking better of your self than others. While there are moral ideas contained in the biblical notion of righteousness, that term is better understood through the lens of relationship. So to be righteous is to be in a right relationship with God as a member of his family. Not only are we accepted into God’s family through Jesus, but we also have a hand in extending God’s love to others in the hopes that more people would find their way back to God. To become “the righteousness of God” means that as a community, we are embodying the character of God so that others might come into his family.

**LIFE APPLICATION**

Discuss how hopelessness can be seen in our culture and what we as believers can do to bring the hope of Jesus to others. What do hope and righteousness have to do with one another? What do group members use to help their hope for the future change their current perspective regardless of circumstances? People may be more open to the message and hope of Jesus during the Christmas season – are their ideas that the group can share to help spread this hope?

**CHALLENGE**

During the week ahead, be mindful of those around you that need the hope of Jesus. Is there someone that you can share how your hope sustains you even in the hardest of times? Pray for opportunities to be used by God in others’ lives.