**Hope – Week 2**

**December 11-12, 2021**

Have you ever forgotten something important before? Whether it’s something for a test you’re taking, something you were supposed to bring on a trip, forgetting to do a chore your family asked you to do, putting your laundry away – whatever it is, not a very fun feeling, right? How about this – how many of you asked someone to do something for you and then they forgot? Even worse! You were counting on that person to come through for you and they didn’t!

**(Teacher’s Note: Share a personal example of each situation – both of forgetting to do something and asking someone else to do something that they forgot to do)**

The bottom line is this: no one likes being forgotten or the feeling of forgetting something. We think to ourselves, “How did that happen? How could I forget that?” We can beat ourselves up about it or think through a bunch of scenarios (after the fact) where we obviously would have remembered it. It’s too late. Sure, life moves on and you eventually do, too. It’s still hard.

I read recently that people in the late 1800s who lived in rural areas – or “out in the country” as some people might say – had to travel dozens of miles to the nearest post office to pick up their mail, without even knowing if they actually HAD mail or not! If that wasn’t bad enough, people who lived in urban areas (or in the city) had been receiving their mail at their house since 1863, but people who lived in rural areas didn’t start receiving mail until 1893 – 30 years later! When the postal service would deliver their mail, they soon realized they couldn’t even navigate the bumpy and muddy roads in the country, so some mail didn’t arrive on time. It made people who lived in these areas feel unimportant, abandoned, and most importantly: forgotten.

It leads us to a question that maybe you’ve thought about. Don’t answer this out loud…just think to yourself: have you been forgotten? Have you been overlooked? Have you been abandoned? There’s a book in the Old Testament called Psalms – an ancient book of poetry, journal entries, and music. They contain all kinds of emotions – including ones where people have felt forgotten. One writer, David, says this in Psalm 31:12: *“I am forgotten as though I were dead; I have become like broken pottery.”* Another writer says this in Psalm 42:9-10: *“O God my rock” I cry, “Why have you forgotten me? Why must I wander around in grief, oppressed by my enemies?” Their taunts break my bones. They scoff, “Where is this God of yours?”*

That last line, “Where is this God of yours?” Have you thought that before? When you feel overlooked or forgotten by someone, you might think, “Maybe God has, too. Maybe God has forgotten about me.” You are not alone in feeling this way. In fact, did you know between the book of Malachi (the last book of the Old Testament) and Matthew (the first book of the New Testament) 400 years had passed and God hadn’t said anything to His people? 400 years! 4 centuries! God’s people were wondering if He had forgotten about them.

But then something happened…God showed up. He showed up to a woman named Mary and said she was going to give birth to the Savior of the world. His name would be Jesus. After she finds out this news, she prays an incredible prayer. We read it last week and we’re going to read it again this week. It comes from Luke 1:46-55:

*And Mary said, “My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has been mindful of the humble state of His servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me – holy is His name. His mercy extends to those who fear Him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped His servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and His descendants forever, just as He promised our ancestors.”*

You know what words/phrases stick out to me as I read this? Words like “mindful,” “generation to generation,” “helped,” “merciful,” “promised.” God has NEVER forgotten His people. This leads us to one of the most encouraging THPs (Take Home Points) that I can come up with.

**Hope never forgets about us.**

When you feel forgotten or overlooked, God is there. When you feel like life is too difficult and is going to swallow you up, God is there. When you feel like even God has forgotten about you, He is there. Celebrating the birth of Jesus reminds us that while people waited hundreds of years for God to speak, when He did speak, He shared the most wonderful news – more wonderful than anything they could have imagined. God has come to us, and His name is Jesus.

As we close, I want you to close your eyes and think of a time where you felt forgotten. Maybe it happened a long time ago or very recently. Think about how it made you feel. Now, repeat this phrase after me, “Hope never forgets about us.” Say it again, “Hope never forgets about us.” Now, I want you to think of someone in your life who you think has been forgotten. It could be someone in your family, a friend, someone at school who seems lonely and doesn’t have a friend – say this phrase with me: “Hope never forgets about us.” You can open your eyes – students, that is the message of Christmas! Hope is here. Hope arrived at Christmas! May you feel the incredible hope of Jesus today as we see and hear God’s truth in this video…

**(Teacher’s Note: Show “Hope” message video. Once the “Hope” video is done playing, immediately move into a Gospel presentation time. Once you’ve finished, you can move on to the script below.)**

Here’s your action step for this week – share hope with someone you know this week. It might mean reminding someone of why we celebrate Christmas. It might be sitting with someone at the lunch table who looks lonely. It might be thanking your parents and giving specific encouragement to them because you have overlooked just how much they do for you. It might be telling someone in your life group or your life group leader how much they mean to you. We have the greatest message of hope ever because we have Jesus. That’s the only hope we need. Let’s go share that hope this week. Have a great discussion!