**God is…**

1. The Spirit of Advent is one of anticipation, expectation, and longing.

*Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down....*

**Isaiah 64:1**

2. The season of Advent is becoming more secular.

*No one calls on your name or strives to take hold of you; for you have given us over to our sins.* **Isaiah 64:7**

3. All creation groans for redemption.

*For creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.* **Romans 8:19**

4. We must live our lives is anticipation of the second Advent (coming).

*We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hands.* **Isaiah 64:8**

November 30, 2014 Isaiah 64:1-8

Christmas Presence

He made his home among us. John 1:14

Study

*(Weekly Readings that are related to the sermon theme)*

* **Monday Luke 1:16-17**
* **Tuesday Luke 1:46-55**
* **Wednesday Luke 1:68-71**
* **Thursday Luke 2:1-5**
* **Friday Luke 2:6-7**
* **Saturday Luke 2:12-14**

*The word of God is living and active sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

**Hebrews 4:12**

Meditate

What is the beginning of your story like? When did you first depart from what was right?

When have you felt the “I want it now”?

When have you said to yourself, “I deserve it”?

When have you said, “I can do better on my own?”

How do each of these attitude take us away from a relationship with God?

*Father, I am the younger son who leaves home. There have been days when I have said, I want it now, I deserve it, and I can do better on my own. Show me the places where I have this attitude in my life and help me change it. Be with me on this AHA journey and awaken my soul to the things of you. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.*

December 7, 2014 Isaiah 64:1-8

**God’s Comfort**

1. God wants to comfort you in your struggles.

*Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem.*  **Isaiah 40:1**

2. We have to create the environment for the comfort of our souls.

*Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.* **Isaiah 40:3**

3. Physical comforts will always be temporary solutions to problems which are spiritual.

*All people are like grass and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers because the breath of the Lord blows on them.* **Isaiah 40:6-7**

4. Invest yourself in things that are eternal.

*But the word of our God endures forever.* **Isaiah 40:8**

Christmas Presence

He made his home among us. John 1:14

Study

*(Weekly Readings that are related to the sermon theme)*

* **Monday Job 5:11**
* **Tuesday Psalm 27:13-14**
* **Wednesday John 16:33**
* **Thursday Romans 8:37-39**
* **Friday 2 Corinthians 1:3-4**
* **Saturday Hebrews 13:5**

*The word of God is living and active sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

**Hebrews 4:12**

Meditate

What are the ways you escape the troubles you have?

Do you merely try to escape them, or do you look for real freedom from them?

What steps do you need to take to make way for God to work in your life?

Who is someone that you trust who can work through your spiritual struggles with you?

What are you going to invest in which is eternal?

*Lord is it hard not to get caught up in much of the madness that is present in our lives. It is a madness that we think a season can fix, but it is only you who can bring us comfort. This year we will find our comfort and peace in you. You come into our madness to bring us peace and comfort.*

*Thank you Jesus. Amen*

December 14, 2014 Isaiah 61:1-4

**God’s Purpose**

1. We are all poor, brokenhearted, captive, and bound.

*The Spirit of the sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to…* **Isaiah 61:1**

2. Does the message of Jesus make a difference?

*To proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.* **Isaiah 61:2**

3. The mercy of God changes the climate of life.

*To bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of despair.* **Isaiah 61:3**

4. We are rebuilt so that we can rebuild.

*They will be called oaks of righteousness…They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore places long devastated...* **Isaiah 61:3-4**

Christmas Presence

He made his home among us. John 1:14

Study

*(Weekly Readings that are related to the sermon theme)*

* **Monday Luke 4:18-19**
* **Tuesday Psalm 1**
* **Wednesday Psalm 45:1-7**
* **Thursday Hebrews 1:1-9**
* **Friday John 15:1-8**
* **Saturday Amos 9**

*The word of God is living and active sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

**Hebrews 4:12**

Meditate

Where in your life are you poor, brokenhearted, captive, or bound?

What difference has the message of Jesus made in your life and the life of those around you?

Do you see the beauty of Jesus at work in your life?

Could ou be described as an “Oak of Righteousness”? Hwy or why not?

What is God calling you to rebuild?

*Lord your purpose for us is wrapped up so clearly in the purpose of Jesus. We miss it. Help us to find that purpose. Help us to see what it is we were created for. We will put on a crown of beauty instead of ashes and trade the garment of despair for the garment of praise. You are the God who is worthy. Amen.*

December 21, 2014 Isaiah 61:8-11

**God’s Favor**

1. We foster a culture of spiritual entitlement which is opposite of what God describes.

*For I, the Lord, love justice; I hate robbery and wrongdoing.* **Isaiah 61:8**

2. God’s promise is not fulfilled in private but is visible for everyone to see.

*All who see them will acknowledge that they are a people the Lord has blessed.* **Isaiah 61:9**

3. The response of people who know God is one of unashamed and outward praise and devotion.

*I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God.* **Isaiah 61:10**

4. God’s favor is a challenging place that favors growth!

*For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow so the sovereign Lord will make righteousness spring up before all nations.* **Isaiah 61:11**

Christmas Presence

He made his home among us. John 1:14

Study

*(Weekly Readings that are related to the sermon theme)*

* **Monday Ezekiel 36:33-36**
* **Tuesday Isaiah 14:1-2**
* **Wednesday Habakkuk 3:18-19**
* **Thursday Luke 2:1-21**
* **Friday Luke 2:22-40**
* **Saturday Revelation 21:1-8**

*The word of God is living and active sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

**Hebrews 4:12**

Meditate

Do you feel like you deserve God’s favor? Why or why not?

Do you think many people in culture feel like God owes them something?

At Christmas what is the most public display of God’s favor?

What prevents us from living lives of praise in response to God’s favor?

What are we most ashamed of when it comes to our faith?

How can you see God’s favor as a challenge in our growth?

*Lord we have accepted a cultural understanding that we deserve your love and you owe us a good life. We acknowledge this is errant thinking and seek your forgiveness. We are challenged by where your favor will bring us, but we will accept the challenge and respond the way Isaiah did-with joy and expectation. We honor you Jesus. Amen.*

December 24, 2014 John 1:14

**God Is Closer Than You Think**

1. God became one of us and lives with us.

*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.* **John 1:14**

2. It is a remarkable and noteworthy existence.

*We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son…*  **John 1:14**

3. It is a direct reflection of God’s love for us.

*Who came from the Father…* **John 1:14**

4. No one loves us like God does-the incarnation proves that.

*Full of grace and truth.* **John 1:14**

Christmas Presence

He made his home among us. John 1:14