

Light & Hope in the waiting

John 1.1-5

Key Points:

- Waiting is not always easy and can often feel uncomfortable. One of the reasons is that waiting brings us face to face with a tensions we're all living in - despair and hope.
- Our experiences influence how we live, and can often pull us towards despair. In John 1.1-5 the writer starts with creation (*'In the beginning'*) with echoes of Genesis 1. He is neither an eye-witness, nor an historian drawing evidence together. It is God's revelation rather than experience that informs & directs John here. God's revelation is not informed by our experiences!
- God's revelation here is that Jesus, the light of all humanity, is shining in the darkness. Where the world & our experiences can pull us towards despair (darkness), Jesus, the light of the world, draws us towards hope (light). John 1.5 reveals that the darkness is trying to overcome the light - but it has not, will not and cannot win. In our darkness, Jesus is with us, and he's saying 'come with me'.

Questions:

1. Advent is a time of waiting. From the early church onwards it was a time of both waiting to celebrate Jesus' birth and looking forward to Jesus' return. Are you actively waiting for Jesus?
2. Do you find waiting easy? Why do you find it hard? [share some examples!]
3. Do you experience the tension between despair and hope?
4. How do your experiences influence the way you live? E.g. the taste of sprouts influencing your choice of Christmas vegetables. How do your experiences impact your faith, and what you believe about God? Is this a good thing?
5. Read Genesis 1.1-5 and compare with John 1.1-5. What are the similarities? What point might John be trying to make about who Jesus is?
6. Jesus, the light of the world, draws us towards hope. Think back to some of the examples in Question 2, what might God's hope look like in those situations?
7. *'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it'* (v.5). How might this verse, this Revelation from God, impact the way we experience waiting? What about disappointment, or suffering, or hopelessness?