

W2 | D7

HOPE THAT CANNOT BE OVERSHADOWED

CHRIS JONES

is the founding and lead pastor of Redeemer Community Church in Bloomington, Indiana. He's been married to his wife, Krystal, for 25 years, and they have three children.

Summer of 2022 was a high point in my life. I was on sabbatical, getting some much-needed rest and an abundance of quality time with my family and the Lord. Psalm 16:5–6 became the theme of that season: “Lord, you are my portion and my cup of blessing; you hold my future. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance” (CSB). The Lord was helping me embrace my limitations and see his goodness in both the highs and lows of life and ministry. I returned from that season of rest with renewed hope and joy in the provision and promises of God in my life.

But immediately upon my return, it was all put to the test. The hopeful light of that season was replaced with discouraging darkness. My first day back as lead pastor came with the news that a staff member was preparing to leave. This was followed by the departures of several church members, leaving a wake of grief and pain. It was a season of discouragement unlike any other I had experienced in my years of pastoring.

Aside from the ministry pains, my wife was bearing the weight of caring for her father, who was suffering from dementia. Together, we shared the burden of praying for our oldest son, who remained close to our family but had distanced himself from the church and his faith a couple years before. We found ourselves facing so many discouragements

and challenges. By November, it felt like all the light of the summer was on the verge of being overshadowed.

But then the season of Advent came with the reminder “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:5). This is one of the great gifts this season presents to us. It invites us to remember that no matter how dark things might seem, light has come and is coming again, and darkness cannot overcome it. Advent bade me to not forget the lessons of the summer and to embrace that even amid discouragement, the boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places, the Lord holds my future, and I still have a beautiful inheritance.

Jesus was so good in that season to lead me to cling to him and the hope he brings, even if it meant waiting for things to actually feel hopeful. And he was gracious to not make us wait too long. Within a few months, a spirit of joyful hope returned to our church. Even more beautifully, the Lord brought our son to faith in one of the most amazing transformations I have seen.

Whatever you are facing in this season, however dark things might seem, remember that light has come and is coming again, and darkness cannot and will never overcome it. The beautiful inheritance we have in Christ cannot be overshadowed. ✨

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