

“A bruised reed he shall not break, and a smoldering wick he shall not quench.” These are powerful words of hope.

John and Elizabeth are the parents of a child and pregnant with their second one. After some tests last week, Elizabeth and John found out that their child-to-be will be “deformed.” John is devastated by the news. Elizabeth is sad, but hopeful. This child-to-be is wanted and loved. She is a blessing regardless of a deformity or not. John and Elizabeth are connecting with doctors who may be able to do some corrective surgery for their precious child-to-be. Family, friends and loved ones are praying for John and Elizabeth, their one child and the one to be born in a few months. Hope is increasing day-by-day.

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Fred, as an educator, uses multiple methods and means so that each student in his class will learn the lesson being presented. Like all teachers, Fred uses his creativity so that “no child is left behind.”

And then there is Sandy, 44. Sandy has been unemployed for almost a year. Daily she takes steps toward seeking employment. She goes through ups and downs and many frustrations. Her friends and network of support keep encouraging her. They hold hope for her when she experiences it in short supply.

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The good news today is this: God wants faith, hope and love to increase within us and among us. It doesn't matter how small, fragile or weak these may be.

God wants peace, joy and kindness to grow within us and among us no matter how sparse.

God wants justice, care for the poor, and support for the needy to take place no matter how limited our resources.

As Disciples in Mission our challenge is to be people of hope....people who see hope....people who instill hope....no matter what the situation is. When Isaiah says that the Lord's servant will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick, he is speaking about Jesus. In light of our gathering here today, Isaiah is also writing about us.

My sisters and brothers: this week compliment rather than criticize. Thank rather than complain. Smile rather than frown. Who knows what difference we can make as Disciples in Mission?