

# Advance

Conference 2018

## **A Bible Study on Hope**

In Preparation for The Navigators of Canada National Gathering

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## Introduction

Hope. Famously, Auschwitz survivor Victor Frankl states that no one can live without hope. Tour these terrific songs I've listed below. Did you note how they express that most people's hope is derived from favorable circumstances, from finding oneself 'on the sunny side of the street?'

However today, as ever, dark clouds shroud a hope based on sunny circumstances: leaders that don't deliver, human, housing, economic and ecological crises and so on. Each morning as 'the world survives into another day,' people hope against hope.

As disciples we drink from a hope sourced in a deeper well. "Christ in you the hope of glory," as Paul puts it in Colossians 1:27. The Bible pulses with hope amid dark times and lionizes hope as a foundational virtue along with faith and love.

For Christ followers hope is huge. I invite you to dive deep into this wellspring. As you meditate on God's word, may the Spirit renew your hope experience in Christ. On the pages that follow you will find a Bible study on Hope put together by Tom Howse and a team of reviewers. May this study also re-energize your missional mojo as a witness, a discipler and a laborer. "But as for me, I watch in hope for the LORD, I wait for God my Savior; my God will hear me" – Micah 7:7.

Tim Ernst

On the Sunny Side of the Street, Louis Armstrong - <http://bit.ly/1vGUJk0>

End of the Line, Travelling Wilburys - <http://bit.ly/1nqY9Nz>

Everyone Watched the Wedding, Jim Cuddy - <http://bit.ly/2BevzRZ>

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This Bible Study may appear onerous, but it is not. The biblical passages are included in the study, which makes it appear longer than it is, but this saves you the time of looking them up.

Also, because they're right in front of you, you can mark them up, highlight, underline, ask questions, and write comments—whatever you normally do when studying the scriptures. Also, feel free to bring in other scriptures.

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## Session 1

### Finding Hope When Things Look Hopeless

Hope is essential to our well-being.

*“In 1957, Dr. C. P. Richter of the Psychobiological Laboratory of Johns Hopkins Medical School carried out an experiment that attempted to measure the motivational effects of hope. The experiments involved placing rats into cylinders of water 30” deep and 8” wide. After a short time, half of the rats were momentarily rescued—lifted out of the cylinder for a few seconds, then put back into the water. The other half were not. The group that was given hope swam for more than 3 days. The other rats drowned almost immediately.” (See C.P. Richter Study on Learned Helplessness)*

Hope is a major theme of the Bible. Paul encourages his readers to develop three foundational traits – faith, hope and love. Faith comes from the life of Christ. Jesus tells us that if we believe in Him we will do even greater things than He has done. Amazing.

Love comes from the death of Christ. *‘Even while we were yet sinners’*, He died for us. His love is undeserved, unconditional and eternal.

Hope comes from the resurrection of Christ. Even when things look bleak and hopeless, as they did at the crucifixion, God is in control and is working His good purposes.

These traits are seen in how we behave, not merely in how we feel or in what we say. Although it’s difficult to separate them – where you find one you often find the other two – we’re going to focus on hope in this study. Let’s begin by asking a few questions:

1. What are some things people mean when they use the word “hope”?
  
2. Take a look at a 4 ½ minute video that explains biblical hope. To find the video, go to *“thebibleproject.com”*. Click on *“Explore”*. Click on *“Series”* and find *“The Advent Series”*. Scroll down and you will find the video on *“Hope”*. What do you think about the line: *“Biblical hope looks to God’s character alone as a basis for trusting that the future will be better than the present”*?

3. What are some other things that people look to as a basis for their hope?

Now let's take a deeper look at hope. Read the following passage about the Israelites in Egypt. As you do, mentally go back in time and place yourself there among the Israelites. Remember that you began in Egypt as a small clan and were highly favored by the Egyptians. You had a future and a hope, but things slowly changed. Your numbers greatly increased and now the Egyptians see you as a threat. Pharaoh has forced you into slave labor for his massive building projects. Hope is scarce. Or is it?

**Exodus 1:1-2:10 (NIV)**

*<sup>1</sup> These are the names of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt with Jacob, each with his family: <sup>2</sup> Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah; <sup>3</sup> Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin; <sup>4</sup> Dan and Naphtali; Gad and Asher. <sup>5</sup> The descendants of Jacob numbered seventy in all; Joseph was already in Egypt.*

*<sup>6</sup> Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, <sup>7</sup> but the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful; they multiplied greatly, increased in numbers and became so numerous that the land was filled with them.*

*<sup>8</sup> Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt. <sup>9</sup> "Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become far too numerous for us. <sup>10</sup> Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country."*

*<sup>11</sup> So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. <sup>12</sup> But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites <sup>13</sup> and worked them ruthlessly. <sup>14</sup> They made their lives bitter with harsh labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their harsh labor the Egyptians worked them ruthlessly.*

*<sup>15</sup> The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah,*

*<sup>16</sup> "When you are helping the Hebrew women during childbirth on the delivery stool, if you see that the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live." <sup>17</sup> The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live. <sup>18</sup> Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, "Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?"*

*<sup>19</sup> The midwives answered Pharaoh, "Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive."*

<sup>20</sup> So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous.

<sup>21</sup> And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.

<sup>22</sup> Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: "Every Hebrew boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live."

**2** Now a man of the tribe of Levi married a Levite woman, <sup>2</sup> and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. <sup>3</sup> But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. <sup>4</sup> His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.

<sup>5</sup> Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her female slave to get it.

<sup>6</sup> She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. "This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said.

<sup>7</sup> Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?"

<sup>8</sup> "Yes, go," she answered. So the girl went and got the baby's mother. <sup>9</sup> Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you." So the woman took the baby and nursed him. <sup>10</sup> When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water."

1. As an Israelite enslaved in Egypt, what are some thoughts or emotions you have that describe your plight? What hope do you have for a better future?
  
2. How do you think Moses' mother felt when she learned she was pregnant? What are some thoughts and emotions she might have had?

3. Yet she decides she will try to save her son's life. She exercises hope.

*For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. Romans 15:4*

She obviously didn't have the scriptures – or did she? Where do you think she got her hope? What does that tell you about hope?

4. Why do you think endurance is linked with hope? Have you ever not endured – you've given up hope in some area? What caused that?

5. She decides to take a risk and formulates a plan to save her son, but she faces massive obstacles, both external and internal. What were some of her external obstacles? Her internal ones? What do you think was her biggest obstacle?

6. She has no resources – or does she? What resources did she have?

7. How do you normally respond in difficult situations – do you tend to focus on all you don't have, or on what you do have? Why?

8. There must have been other women who had baby boys at this time, but we don't hear about them. Why do you think that is?

9. What stands out to you about how she carried out her plan?

10. God is not mentioned in these 10 verses – Ex. 2:1-10. Why do you think that is? What role do you think God played in this?

11. The outcome appears to be '*more than Moses' mother could have asked or imagined*' (Eph. 3:20). What would have been the impact on her and her family if she hadn't exercised hope? On her fellow Israelites? What was both the short and long term impact of her exercising hope?

12. Why do you think God places such a high value on hope?

13. What are some things that stand out to you about hope – what it is, where we get it, what keeps us from exercising it, etc.?

14. If we exercise hope, does it mean we will receive what we hope for? Explain.

15. What is God's role in providing us with hope? What is our role?

16. Some people see hope as wishing or waiting for things to somehow improve. What do you think Moses' mother would say about such a view of hope?

17. Is there a specific insight that stood out to you about hope?

18. Is there currently an area in your life where you can apply that insight? How?

## Session 2 People Who Struggle Just Like Us

We looked at what happened when one person chose hope and courage over despair and fear. Exercising hope is never easy, but think about the consequences of not exercising hope. No matter what the circumstances, God is there, which means hope is there.

When we exercise hope, not only do we benefit, but so do our loved ones and countless others. Moses' mother had no idea she would be inspiring people like us thousands of years after she was gone.

Let's look at some other examples of hope.

### **Genesis 15:1-6 (NIV)**

*15 After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision:*

*"Do not be afraid, Abram.*

*I am your shield,  
your very great reward."*

*<sup>2</sup> But Abram said, "Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" <sup>3</sup> And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir."*

*<sup>4</sup> Then the word of the LORD came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir." <sup>5</sup> He took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."*

*<sup>6</sup> Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.*

### **Romans 4:18-22 (NIV)**

*<sup>18</sup> Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." <sup>19</sup> Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. <sup>20</sup> Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, <sup>21</sup> being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. <sup>22</sup> This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness."*

1. What do you think it means when it says *“Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed”*?
2. How do you think Abraham developed this hope?
3. How do you know how much weight to give to circumstances in exercising hope? How would you know if you’re misreading a verse or a promise, or taking them out of context?

**Genesis 16:1-4 (NIV)**

*16 Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar; <sup>2</sup> so she said to Abram, “The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her.”*

*Abram agreed to what Sarai said. <sup>3</sup> So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. <sup>4</sup> He slept with Hagar, and she conceived.*

*When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress.*

4. In Romans we are shown Abraham as a man of great hope. But in the above passage it appears Abraham’s hope faltered for a time. He and his wife tried to fulfill God’s promise on their own. What do you think caused Abraham’s hope to falter?
5. How do you think he regained it? (You may want to read Genesis 16 – 21.)

6. What causes your hope to falter at times?

7. What do you do to regain or to strengthen it?

**Romans 5:2-5 (NIV)**

<sup>2</sup> *through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.* <sup>3</sup> *Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;* <sup>4</sup> *perseverance, character; and character, hope.* <sup>5</sup> *And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.*

8. How do you normally feel about suffering? Why?

9. What do you think it means to “*glory in our sufferings*”? Why would anyone do that?

10. What do you learn about handling suffering and gaining hope from this passage? Do you have a personal example of this?

Let's look at some thoughts on hope from the Psalms.

**Psalm 25:3–5** *No one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame, but they will be put to shame who are treacherous without excuse. Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for my hope is in you all day long.*

**Psalm 25:21** *May integrity and uprightness protect me, because my hope is in you.*

**Psalm 31:24** *Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord.*

**Psalm 33:17-18** *A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save. But the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him, on those who hope in his unfailing love.*

**Psalm 33:20** *We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield.*

**Psalm 33:22** *May your unfailing love rest upon us, O Lord, even as we put our hope in you.*

**Psalm 42:11** *Why are you so downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my God.*

**Psalm 52:9** *I will praise you forever for what you have done; in your name I will hope, for your name is good. I will praise you in the presence of your saints.*

**Psalm 145:15** *The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. (The Hebrew word for "look to" means "hope, wait.")*

**Psalm 147:11** *The Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love.*

11. From these verses, what are some ways one grows in hope?

12. What do you do to grow in hope, to live a hope-filled life?

13. The Psalms give some insight into David's self-talk. What is the connection between our self-talk and the hope we have? How would you rate your self-talk during difficult times? Why is it like that?

14. The words “those, all and we” are used in these Psalms. What is the role of community in growing our hope?
  
15. “I” is also used. What is our individual role in growing our hope?
  
16. David’s hope is strong in these Psalms. In *1 Samuel 27:1*, however, David appears to falter in his hope – “*One of these days I will be destroyed by the hand of Saul*”. His hope falters even though Samuel told him he would be king. He flees with his men to the Philistines. How could such a godly man as David falter in his hope? What effect does it have on you knowing David’s hope faltered for a time?

**1 Samuel 30:3-6 (NIV)**

<sup>3</sup>When David and his men reached Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. <sup>4</sup>So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep. <sup>5</sup>David’s two wives had been captured—Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. <sup>6</sup>David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God.

17. How did David regain his hope? (You may want to read all of 1 Samuel 30.)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
18. Abraham and David, like Moses’ mother, had no idea they would be inspiring us years later. Who are some others who have inspired your hope, either other biblical characters, or people you know or have read about? How have they inspired you?

19. *"Faith without works/action is dead."* What is the connection between our hope and our actions?

20. Are you satisfied with the current level of hope in your life? If so, why? If not, why not?

21. Do you have any further thoughts or questions about hope from this session?

### Session 3

## Becoming Conveyers of Hope

One of the things we're seeing about hope is not whether or not we have hope – it's whether or not we're feeding and exercising the hope we have. Our hope can grow weak and falter if not attended to.

And God at times seems silent, as if He is not there.

In the movie Ray, the story of singer Ray Charles, we see Ray as a young boy slowly going blind. His younger brother has tragically drowned, his father has run off and Ray lives alone with his Mom in a cabin. It's not a pretty picture, but Ray's Mom is determined that he learn to stand on his own and make something of his life despite his disability and poverty.

In one scene Ray, now completely blind, runs into the cabin, trips and falls and cries out in pain for his mother. She's deeply concerned, but doesn't rush to help him. Ray cries louder. She watches him with deep concern but still does nothing. She remains silent.

When Ray finally realizes no help is coming, he stops crying. Then, as if for the first time, we see him use his hearing to gain some sense of control of his situation. He hears water boiling on the stove, he hears the fire, and he hears a cricket on the floor, which he slowly moves toward and picks up. His pain is forgotten; he's learned to handle it on his own. He's learned to use his hearing. His Mom is overjoyed.

Her silence didn't mean she's not there or doesn't care or can't help. But helping would have hindered him from learning and growing and maturing.

Let's look at another perspective and see what some of the prophets have to tell us about hope. Think about what each of these passages is saying.

#### **Isaiah 40:31**

*But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.*

#### **Jeremiah 14:19**

*Have you rejected Judah completely? Do you despise Zion? Why have you afflicted us so that we cannot be healed? We hoped for peace but no good has come, for a time of healing but there is only terror.*

#### **Jeremiah 14:22**

*Do any of the worthless idols of the nations bring rain? Do the skies themselves send down showers? No, it is you, LORD our God. Therefore our hope is in you, for you are the one who does all this.*

**Jeremiah 17:13**

*LORD, you are the hope of Israel; all who forsake you will be put to shame.*

*Those who turn away from you will be written in the dust because they have forsaken the LORD, the spring of living water.*

**Jeremiah 23:16**

*This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you; they fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD.*

**Jeremiah 29:11**

*For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*

**Jeremiah 31:17**

*So there is hope for your descendants," declares the LORD. "Your children will return to their own land.*

**Lamentations 3:18**

*So I say, "My splendor is gone and all that I had hoped from the LORD."*

**Lamentations 3:24-26**

*I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.*

1. What stands out to you about hope from these verses?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. The prophets talk about great hope as well as what seems to be no hope at all at times, and even false hope. What does that tell you about hope?

Jesus is truly our hope. Let's see what these verses tell us about that.

**Luke 4:16-21 (NIV)**

<sup>16</sup> *He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, <sup>17</sup> and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:*

<sup>18</sup> *“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.*

*He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to set the oppressed free,*

<sup>19</sup> *to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”*

<sup>20</sup> *Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone  
in the synagogue were fastened on him. <sup>21</sup> He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is  
fulfilled in your hearing.”*

3. How is Jesus our hope from these verses?

4. How has He been your hope?

5. What type of good news would give hope to the poor?

6. Who do you think are the poor? The prisoners? The blind? The oppressed? Can you put the names of people you know in some of these categories?

As you read the following passage, think about how Jesus gave hope to others.

**John 4:1-30 (NIV)**

**4** Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John— <sup>2</sup> although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. <sup>3</sup> So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

<sup>4</sup> Now he had to go through Samaria. <sup>5</sup> So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup> Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

<sup>7</sup> When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" <sup>8</sup> (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

<sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

<sup>11</sup> "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" <sup>12</sup> Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?"

<sup>13</sup> Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

<sup>15</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

<sup>16</sup> He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

<sup>17</sup> "I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. <sup>18</sup> The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

<sup>19</sup> "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup> Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

<sup>21</sup> “Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup> You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup> Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. <sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

<sup>25</sup> The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

<sup>26</sup> Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”

<sup>27</sup> Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”

<sup>28</sup> Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, <sup>29</sup> “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” <sup>30</sup> They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

7. Think about this woman. What do you think her life was like before meeting Jesus? What would her future look like? How do you think she felt about her life? How did others view her?

8. What do you think she thought about Jesus when she first saw him?

9. He doesn't begin with her sin or Him being the Son of God. Why not? Both facts are true.

10. What are some of the ways Jesus gave her hope?

11. How is she different after meeting Jesus?

12. What hope did he give her? Put verse 29 in your own words.

13. Do you see faith and love here? Where?

14. What is the difference between faith and hope?

15. What did you learn here that would help you in giving hope to others?

**John 4:31-42**

<sup>31</sup> *Meanwhile his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.”*

<sup>32</sup> *But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.”*

<sup>33</sup> *Then his disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?”*

<sup>34</sup> *“My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. <sup>35</sup> Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. <sup>36</sup> Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. <sup>37</sup> Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. <sup>38</sup> I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.”*

<sup>39</sup> *Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” <sup>40</sup> So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. <sup>41</sup> And because of his words many more became believers.*

<sup>42</sup> *They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”*

16. Hope is contagious. How did her village receive hope?

17. Why would they have listened to her?

18. What hope does he give his disciples?

19. What hope do you get from this chapter?

20. Jesus uses “*living water*” in giving hope to this woman, but in the previous chapter with Nicodemus, a Pharisee, He uses “*born again*”. Why do you think He does that?

21. What do you learn from Him about being a conveyor of hope to others?

**1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)**

*<sup>15</sup> But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect*

22. If you were asked by a non-believing friend about the hope you have, what would you say?  
(It might be helpful to have an actual person in mind.)

23. What stands out to you from this session?

## Session 4 The Foundation of Our Hope

The resurrection is the ultimate illustration of our hope. No matter how bleak things looked – God’s beloved Son was killed – that’s not the end of the story. There is still hope. The crucifixion was followed by the resurrection.

During the darkest days of apartheid, Desmond Tutu was at a meeting to discuss what looked like a hopeless situation. Things were bleak. Nelson Mandela was languishing in prison, unjust laws were in effect, political activists were being murdered and massacres were becoming a common occurrence. Change appeared impossible.

During a break Tutu went for a walk in the garden. It was winter and everything was brown and dead. It mirrored how he felt. But as he looked he realized that in a short time spring would come and that garden would be changed into something lush and alive. Spring always follows winter. That gave him hope.

And in time apartheid in South Africa was transformed – not easily or without great struggle - but everything changed. (See *God Has a Dream* by Desmond Tutu)

Easter Sunday always follows Good Friday. God showed He is and always was in control, even though circumstances may not appear that way. There is always hope, no matter how bleak things may look.

Let’s see what we can learn about hope through the resurrection.

### **Mark 8:29-31 (NIV)**

<sup>29</sup> “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Messiah.” <sup>30</sup> Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

<sup>31</sup> He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.

### **Mark 15:25-32 (NIV)**

<sup>25</sup> It was nine in the morning when they crucified him. <sup>26</sup> The written notice of the charge against him read: THE KING OF THE JEWS.

<sup>27</sup> They crucified two rebels with him, one on his right and one on his left. <sup>[28]</sup> <sup>29</sup> Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, “So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, <sup>30</sup> come down from the cross and save yourself!” <sup>31</sup> In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among

themselves. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself!"<sup>32</sup> Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe." Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

1. Imagine you were one of Jesus' followers at this time. You had come to believe He was the promised Messiah. You were filled with unimaginable hope for the future. Then you see Him killed. Evil has won. What's going through your mind? What emotions are you feeling? How has this affected your belief in God? How has this affected your hope?
2. But He had spoken about this suffering and about rising from the dead. Why do you, along with the other disciples, have such trouble believing what He said?

**Luke 24:1-11 (NIV)**

**24** On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.<sup>2</sup> They found the stone rolled away from the tomb,<sup>3</sup> but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.<sup>4</sup> While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them.<sup>5</sup> In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?"<sup>6</sup> He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee:<sup>7</sup> 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'<sup>8</sup> Then they remembered his words.

<sup>9</sup> When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others.<sup>10</sup> It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles.<sup>11</sup> But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.

3. Why do you think they had such trouble remembering Jesus' words about suffering, dying and rising? Do you think they had as much trouble remembering His other words?

4. Even as believers, would you say we can base our hope on our circumstances or emotions instead of on God's words? Why do you think that is? Or why not?

**Luke 24:25-32 (NIV)**

*<sup>25</sup> He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" <sup>27</sup> And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.*

*<sup>28</sup> As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. <sup>29</sup> But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.*

*<sup>30</sup> When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. <sup>31</sup> Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. <sup>32</sup> They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"*

5. Why do you think these men were "slow to believe"? Does that describe you as well? Explain your answer.

6. In verse 27 Jesus explains the scriptures are about Him – who He is and what He's done – as opposed to being about us, what we should do. What effect does that have on your hope?

**Luke 24:36-49 (NIV)**

<sup>36</sup> While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

<sup>37</sup> They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. <sup>38</sup> He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? <sup>39</sup> Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

<sup>40</sup> When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. <sup>41</sup> And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" <sup>42</sup> They gave him a piece of broiled fish, <sup>43</sup> and he took it and ate it in their presence.

<sup>44</sup> He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

<sup>45</sup> Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. <sup>46</sup> He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup> and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup> I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

7. Imagine you were there in that room. What's going through your mind when Jesus shows up? What effect has His appearance had on your hope?

8. What hope do we have to offer to others?

9. Think of 2 or 3 non-believing friends. How would you go about offering hope to each of them?

**1 Corinthians 15:12-20 (NIV)**

*<sup>12</sup> But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? <sup>13</sup> If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. <sup>14</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. <sup>15</sup> More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. <sup>16</sup> For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. <sup>17</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. <sup>18</sup> Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. <sup>19</sup> If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.*

*<sup>20</sup> But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.*

10. From this passage, why does Paul feel the resurrection is so important?

**Galatians 2:20 (NIV)**

*<sup>20</sup> I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

11. Think of Paul's life before Christ. What was it like? In the verse above, note Paul's use of personal pronouns like "me", not "the world". What impact did the death and resurrection of Jesus had on Paul?

12. What does the resurrection mean to you – your hope? How has it changed your life?

**Romans 12:12 (NIV)**

<sup>12</sup> *Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.*

13. How does hope help us in affliction? Do you have a personal example to share?

**Colossians 1:23 (NIV)**

<sup>23</sup> *if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.*

14. What are some things that might cause you to ‘move from the hope in the gospel’?

15. What do you think it means that ‘this gospel has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven’?

**Colossians 1:27 (NIV)**

<sup>27</sup> *To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

16. How do you think Paul feels about sharing the gospel – sharing hope?

17. How do you feel about it? Why?

**1 Timothy 6:17 (NIV)**

*<sup>17</sup> Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.*

18. Why do you think Paul writes this verse to Timothy? What other things do people put their hope in besides wealth?

19. Do you struggle with putting your hope in these other things? Why?

20. Think back through all 4 sessions on hope. What have you found most helpful?

21. Is there an area of your life where you can apply that? How?

22. Is there someone you know who needs some hope? What can you do to help them?

23. Is there something about hope that these sessions haven't covered? What is it? Why do you see it as being important?

24. Is there anything you'd like to say to God as you finish these studies?