

Courageous Hope

Welcome to the third week in our 6 week series on 'Courageous Living'. As you look back on the series thus far, how has God been speaking to you or what has he been challenging you about? Have you been feeling *encouraged* to courageously live out your faith in Jesus?

After our last study, do you have any stories of how you expressed courageous faith in the past week?

Intro to hope & the things hoped for

Exercise: As we start thinking about hope, grab a piece of paper and a pen, and spend a few minutes by yourself listing all the things you hope for. They don't all need to be especially spiritual or a Sunday school answer, so write down all the things you genuinely hope for at the moment (no one else needs to see your list).

As you consider your list and the things you hope for, do those hopes come from a place of excitement of what the future holds or from a place of discontentment with your present circumstances?

What impact does having these 'hopes' have on your life, and the way you live now (ie: does the list spur you on to action or paralyse you into inaction, cultivate discontentment or excitement etc)?

Keep your list handy, as it might be worth sharing some of those as prayer points with your group at the end of the study for them to be praying about.

Hope - biblical definition

Romans 8:24 succinctly states that '*hope that is seen is no hope at all*', after all, '*who hopes for what they already have?*' So hope is forward looking, anticipating what is yet to come. Examine the following verses and consider – what are some biblical hopes or reasons for hope?

- Psalm 147:10-11
- Galatians 5:4-5
- Ephesians 1:18-19
- Colossians 1:27
- 1 Timothy 4:10
- Titus 2:12-14
- Titus 3:6-7
- 1 John 3:2-3

When you consider those things hoped for, how many of them are uncertain (ie: they may or may not happen in the future)? How many of them are yet to be fully realised, but are to be realised based on concrete past events or truths?

With this in mind, how then does the biblical understanding of hope differ from worldly or personal hopes?

Romans 5

Read together Romans 5:1-11

What is the great Christian Hope? In what ways has this already been obtained but is also something we hope for in the future?

According to this passage, what is the benefit of a jubilant hope in the midst of present tribulations? How do you understand this to work practically in the midst of struggles you may face? Do you have any testimonies of how you have experienced this for yourself?

Courageous hope manifests itself

‘In the Bible, hope is never a static or passive thing. It is dynamic, active, directive and life sustaining...it doesn’t leave us idle, drifting or just rocking on the front porch. If our hope is biblical and based on God’s promises, it will put us into gear’ - J. Jampton Keathley

How should a Biblical hope overflow into our lives and how we then live?

What are some of the outworkings of hope mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 1:3, 1 Timothy 4:10, 1 John 3:2-3?

So, when you look at how you live your life – does it shout of the hope you have in Jesus? How so?

As we have been reading about and discussing biblical hope, how is God calling you to live differently from this point forward? How can this group help support and hold you accountable to these things?

Spend some time in prayer, using the benediction of Romans 15:13 as a template: *‘May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit’*