

hope.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Welcome!

Over the next several weeks I invite you to enjoy this study of Hope. Whether this is your first time going through a group Bible study, or you're a seasoned Bible study expert, I believe you'll be refreshed and encouraged as you read God's Word.

In these lessons we'll look at key passages that deal with hope from the top down – God's plan and how He sees us...and hope from the bottom up – Our perspective and how we see Him. Through the pages of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation the story of hope is constant theme, and the theme revolves around God's plan to redeem us through His Son, Jesus. Since the dawn of time and man's fall from grace in the Garden, we've been looking for hope. And yet, with all the looking and longing don't we each know someone dear to our heart who has lost their hope? Perhaps even you have felt a sense of hopelessness to some degree in your own life.

This study grew out of my own personal experience with losing hope and finding it again. My story brought me through the pain of infertility, struggles with depression, an abusive marriage, and the destructive impact of addiction. For years I walked through my days under the cover of "Christian" woman and wife...but I had a nagging sense in my heart that there was really no hope for healing in my life and relationships. I believed in the big picture of hope - That God had redeemed us all - that there was a future and a hope for all who called on His name - that one day all would be made right. Hope in God for the big stuff? No problem. But in my day-to-day life, I had lost hope on a smaller scale. Hope for me. For my marriage. For my heart. Hope for me on a personal level? I had all but let that go. I've learned a lot through my journey, and I'm still learning so much every day. I'm looking forward to sharing in God's Word with you!

Let's grow together!

For starters, you're part of this first edition of the Hope Study! Thank you! As my first foray into writing a study, we'll be writing and digging into the Scripture together. Each time we gather you'll receive the new week's study materials to add to this notebook. You'll want to have the following with you during the week as well as at our Bible study get togethers:

- Your Bible – I'll be quoting mostly from the NIV, but any translation is fine. I recommend that you get a good Study Bible – I like my NIV Study Bible or the MacArthur Study Bible
- A Journal – or pages added to this notebook to journal in
- Pen and highlighter

In my role as a women's pastor I get asked a lot of questions, but there's one in regards to Bible study that comes over and over: "What do you use to help you study the Bible?"

That's a great question! Here's what I use...

- A Good Study Bible – I mentioned that above, but it's so helpful, I didn't want you to miss that. Ryrie, ESV, Scofield, NIV, MacArthur, these are among the best and the only ones I actively recommend.

And these websites:

- BlueLetterBible.com
- BibleGateway.com
- StudyLight.org

You could purchase any one of a number of excellent commentaries, dictionaries, and lexicons, but all the ones I use are freely accessible at the above websites and even on your phone as an app! Go, have fun, and check some out. A great way to start is to go to their home page and type a word like "hope", and do a search on it.

Here's how you will want to approach your study time:

Listen. As you read you are not only seeing the words of God but are listening to what He has said. Each study session is created to give you time in the Word – just you and God. No commentaries. No explanations. This might seem hard for you if you're brand new to reading the Bible, but it's a skill you'll develop. I'm confident of that. Pray before you begin –not sure how? Read Psalm 119:18, Proverbs 1:7 or James 1:5 – then read the Bible passage and follow that lesson's notes to guide you in thinking through and understanding what you've read. Then...

Look. Look again at the Word and make some observations to understand deeper. What figures of speech are there to understand? What about the culture of the time? Are there any allegories? Who was the intended audience? Who was the writer? The Bible was written largely from a Hebrew Middle Eastern mindset – that's very different from our 21st century western mindset! We'll want to

understand the Scripture from the author's point of view and not through the lens of this modern era and our sensitivities. Use your journal to write these observations down.

LIVE. Finally, what does it all mean for us personally? Clearly, the nature of this study on Hope is to not only understand verses on "hope" or just see examples of hopefulness in the Bible, but to move from the words on the page through our hearts and out into our lives. God's word isn't just a great book. It's not inspirational literature or self-help.

God's Word is alive and powerful. It's sharper than a sword as it slices to the core of our hearts and reveals what's really true about us in light of who God says we are. How empty it would be to first approach the Word with a "what can this do for me today?" mentality! And yet, we also must not just read to understand...we must read to apply. And that will mean making a shift in our thinking and most likely a change in our behavior as well. Not every verse was written to you, but every word was written for you, and there's a difference. One of my favorite Bible teachers, Kay Arthur, says it this way:

"When you know what God says, what He means, and how to put His truths into practice, you will be equipped for every circumstance of life."

— What can you expect? —

This is a Bible study. Simply put, we'll be studying the Bible.

We'll **Read** the Bible. We'll **Write** from the Bible. We'll prayerfully **Respond** to the Bible.

This study is organized around our bi-weekly meetings. There are at least 13 days between each of our group Bible studies. I've set up this study the lessons will take about 30-40 minutes each to complete. If you read through your study, taking time for church, your Life Group, or other mid-week study, you'll find it much better than doing the entire study the day before we meet! You have 168 hours in your week...imagine if you tithed (giving 10%) from your time. That would be 16.8 hours a week in study...that's more than two hours a day! What if you gave even 5% of your time? Or 3%? Just set aside the time, and you'll be so happy you did.

By the way, don't think you're the only one who gets behind and has to do all that catch-up the day before...or the day of! It happens to me too! And never, ever skip coming to our study because you didn't do the study...come!! We have great fellowship and teaching for you to receive! Why not pray right now and ask the Father to help you make time and priority for this study? Pace yourself and get an accountability partner to help so you stay committed to being in the Word daily.

Are you ready?

I am! I have prayed over every moment of time in my preparations, and I have prayed for you, dear sister, as well. My heart is that we would come away from our time of Bible study not just with a better understanding of hope, but that we would above all things know our Father and His truth.

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:31

Ready to be free? Me too! Let's abide in His Word together! See you soon, and until then, know that you are loved and prayed for,

Jennifer Richmond

Women's Pastor, La Mirada Christian Church

p.s. You can reach me at Jennifer@LaMiradaChurch.com or 562.755.4964



Hope Study Teaching Notes

~ Session One ~

Welcome!

Why do we actually **study** the Bible?

What should we look to get when we study?

Critical Thinking -vs- Critical Spirit

My Part and God's Part

Let's Take a Look - Psalm 33:1-22

Written to _____ Written by _____

Why? _____

What does it say about God? _____

What does it say about me? _____

Discussion Questions for Week One

Welcome! Let's get to know one another!

What are you looking forward to in this Bible study?

When you were a child, did you find it easy or hard to hope for your future? Why?

Who has been the most inspirational and hope-giving person in your life? (Someone you personally know or someone you have never met...historical or present day)

Setting aside time every day to be in the Word, in prayer and in Bible study is such an important part of your spiritual growth. Do you have any questions about how to do this? Any tips to share on doing a Bible study even with a busy and demanding schedule?

Starting tomorrow, you'll have studies written to give you time in the Word and to draw you closer to God over the next two weeks. Set aside 30-40 minutes a day to read and complete your study for that day. Got a busy day? No problem. Combine two days together the next time you can study.

Need help?

Call on God. Ask God for wisdom and understanding. James 1:5

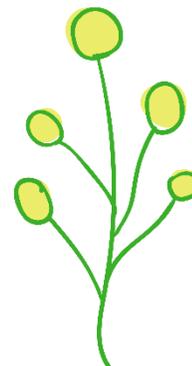
Call your small group leader(s) Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Call a friend in your small group

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Call or email Pastor Jennifer. 562.755.4964 Jennifer@LaMiradaChurch.com



"My Hope is Built on Nothing Less"
by Edward Mote, 1797-1874

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil.
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

His oath, His covenant, and blood
Support me in the whelming flood;
When every earthly prop gives way,
He then is all my Hope and Stay.
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

When He shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh, may I then in Him be found,
Clothed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne!
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.



You are loved
AND
prayed for.

~ Day ONE ~

It's a great day!

Scripture Focus: Matthew 21, Mark 11, Luke 19, John 12

Cross references: Zechariah 9:9, Isaiah 62:11

"Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

Matthew 21:9



Do you remember the last time you felt like everything was simply perfect? It was a great day...a perfect day! Like the scene from the "Sound of Music" when Maria's twirling and singing across fields of green under a perfectly blue sky, *"The hills are alive...!"*

Let's set the stage for our first lesson by peeking in on what was probably at the time one of the most thrilling days of all history. A day so filled with hope that, had she been there, Maria would have been twirling and singing and romping her happy heart out. A day that if you were alive and had witnessed the events in person, would have been one of those, "I remember exactly what I was wearing and who I was with" kind of days! The day is referred to as "The Triumphal Entry" or "Palm Sunday", and it surely felt triumphant! It was great day for HOPE . . .the ultimate day! The kind of day that makes you think, "Maybe it's all going to be ok now." Read the following verses and compare the details of this great day noting below any interesting details...**who** was mentioned, **where** did this take place, **when** is the event happening, etc. Especially interesting is that the author of each of these books* is reporting on the exact same event. Do you see any details in one account missing from another? Jot your thoughts and observations here:

WHO

WHAT

WHEN

WHERE

- Matthew 21:1-11*
- Mark 11:1-11*
- Luke 19:28-44*
- John 12:12-19

**These three books of the Bible are referred to as the "synoptic gospels" because they summarize the events of Jesus' life from a similar point of view.*

If ever there was a "things are all going to be ok" kind of day in the Bible, surely this was it!



You're in Jerusalem...maybe you've been to visit Jesus...seen a healing...heard of hundreds more. All your life you've lived under the oppression of the Romans, and the weight of the history of oppression is a defining part of your life, your family, your past and foreseeable future. And now, you're seeing Jesus come through Jerusalem. His name is murmured in the crowd...and called out...and shouted...JESUS!! Jesus!! Hosanna! Hosanna! Salvation has come!! If people "high-fived" back then, I think there would have been high fives all around! This was quite an event! Imagine a sporting event where your team was the big winner...you might have a sense of how this day felt. Jesus - in person - the Man Himself! Be still my heart! Whataday! Take a minute to imagine and write about the scene. Close your eyes, breathe it in, and

imagine. . .

- What are you hearing?
 - What are you seeing?
 - Who is with you?
 - How do you feel?
- 1) *Could it be?* Is this the Savior? Is everything going to be alright? After reading these four accounts of the Triumphal Entry, what three similarities in the writer's accounts strike you? What differences?
- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 2) As you read through the passages above from the different accounts (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) you may have noticed footnotes that marked when an Old Testament book was quoted. It is so exciting to see that 500 years before Jesus came riding through Jerusalem, his triumphal entry was predicted!

Read Zechariah 9:9

- How is the coming "king" described? _____
- On what is he riding? _____

Does this strike you as odd? It does me. Kings are proud. Stately. Commanding. Riding in on a powerful, white steed...not a lowly donkey.



Read Isaiah 62:11

- Who is coming?
-

- What are they shouting?
-

Remember what the people were shouting while Jesus rode in on that donkey? They were shouting, “Hosanna!” and hosanna means?? That’s right . . .

“Salvation has come!!”

Everyone’s excited! Who wouldn’t be? Miracles! Powerful, authoritative teaching! A huge following! Crowd frenzy! All this culminating as they surely knew He must be a prophet! My goodness, they “hailed Him as their coming King!” So much excitement and hope and they’re all there to witness it firsthand! Salvation has come! What does this have to do with **hope** for you? Salvation has come. Have you ever just wanted those words to be true for you or a friend? Write your thoughts here about that moment in your life:

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- 3) As we begin our study and focus through God’s Word on hope, what are you hopeful for? What are you interested in gaining from this study? In a few weeks, you’ll be looking back on this first week. You’ll have learned some, shared some, gained insights and prayerfully, matured in your personal walk with God. What would you like to gain? Write a few sentences expressing your hopes for this study on hope.

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By the way . . .

There are eleven days in this study. Days 6 & 7 are combined so you can read them in one or two sittings. Also, the final days are a bit longer than the rest, so be sure to plan ahead. The big meat of our study is in those days, so be sure to set aside the time for them.

~ Jennifer



If you have time...

Do a word study on the word “hosanna.” You can use your Bible study books, websites, an internet search. What interesting things came up for you? What does that word mean in Greek? In Hebrew? Was it ever used before in the Bible? Anywhere else in history? Write what you find here:

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When skeptics ask...

Did Jesus really fulfill prophecy? If someone claims to be someone or be able to do something, he better make good on that, right? If not, he’s a fake or a liar. Two of the objections to Jesus being the Savior are that he wasn’t really who he claimed to be and he didn’t really fulfill prophecies from the Old Testament. If someone were to challenge you today about Jesus, what prophecies about Him could you point to after having done this study that would help them see that he was who he said he was? Write those verse references here so you’ll have them handy in the future. Also, highlight those verses in the Bible with a color that will help you remember these verses in the future. (We’re going to assume that the person you’re talking to is willing to accept the Bible as a reliable historical document at this point. There’s plenty of evidence to support that it is, but we’ll not be going into that quite yet. If you’re interested in learning more about this topic, please get “Evidence That Demands a Verdict” by Josh McDowell at your bookstore.)

What about you? Do you have a skeptic in your life? Maybe you **are** the skeptic. Can I assure you of two things, my friend?

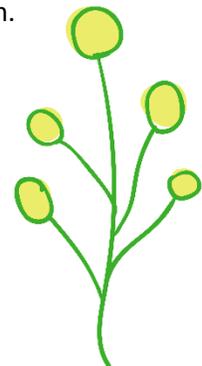
One – Jesus loves skeptics! Doubters, double checkers, “faith challenged” - you are in good company.

Two – Ask! Dig! Check things out! I am confident that the Word of God will hold up to any scrutiny.

Please don’t hesitate to reach out if you’d like to talk about things. I’d be happy to listen.

You can call me any time.... 562.755.4964

Jennifer





Hope
deferred
makes the
Heart sick.

But a
desire fulfilled
is a
Tree of
Life!

~ Day TWO ~

And then, everything changes..

Scripture Focus: Matthew 26:47-27:66: Proverbs 13:12: 1 Pet. 5:7

Cross references: Zechariah 9:9, Isaiah 62:11

"The Via Dolorosa - The Way of Suffering"

- 1) Read Matthew 26:47-27:68 which tells of Jesus' arrest through his death. Write down word or phrase or even draw the **emotions** that you imagine the disciples (picture yourself as one) and Jesus might be feeling at each section. (Your Bible has these verses divided and labeled, so use these as a guide.)

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- 2) Re-read Matthew 26:56 "...then all the disciples deserted Him and fled..." (NIV)
Who or what were they running from? _____

Honestly, would you have fled? Why or why not?

|

- 3) What **one word** sums up for you how you think the followers of Christ felt when Jesus was betrayed and escorted away from the garden? _____

- 4) How about you? What information or feeling about things would you have needed to firm your resolve to stay?

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5) Read Proverbs 13:12...Write it here:

Double underline the words: "heart" and "sick"

Does this verse from Proverbs capture the mood the disciples must have been feeling? It surely does for me.

Dejected. Dashed. Discouraged. All their hopes – deferred.
Only they don't know their hope is simply deferred.
From their perspective their hopes are completely
gone.

6) Where is your heart today, my friend? Have you fled physically or emotionally or even spiritually from the pain and shock of the circumstances you're surrounded by? Are you heartsick over a devastating loss? A broken relationship? A prodigal child? A crushing diagnosis? Take a moment to speak aloud to God what you are feeling. He hears. He sees. Name the "hope deferred" on your heart today and lay it before the Father. "Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you." (1 Pet. 5:7 NLT)

My deferred hope: _____

7) Now...Go back above to Proverbs 13:12...What does it say comes when desire/longing is fulfilled/comes?

8) What words does this imagery of a "tree of life" bring to your mind? Write several here:

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Today, as we close this portion of our study, would you take a moment to pray that God would reveal to you the truth of His hope.

His Hope.

Not your idea of hope.

Not what your friends might say.

Not what your pastor, or mentor, or a book says...

Think of God and what He wants you to understand about His Hope.

Read Psalm 37:4. Write it here:

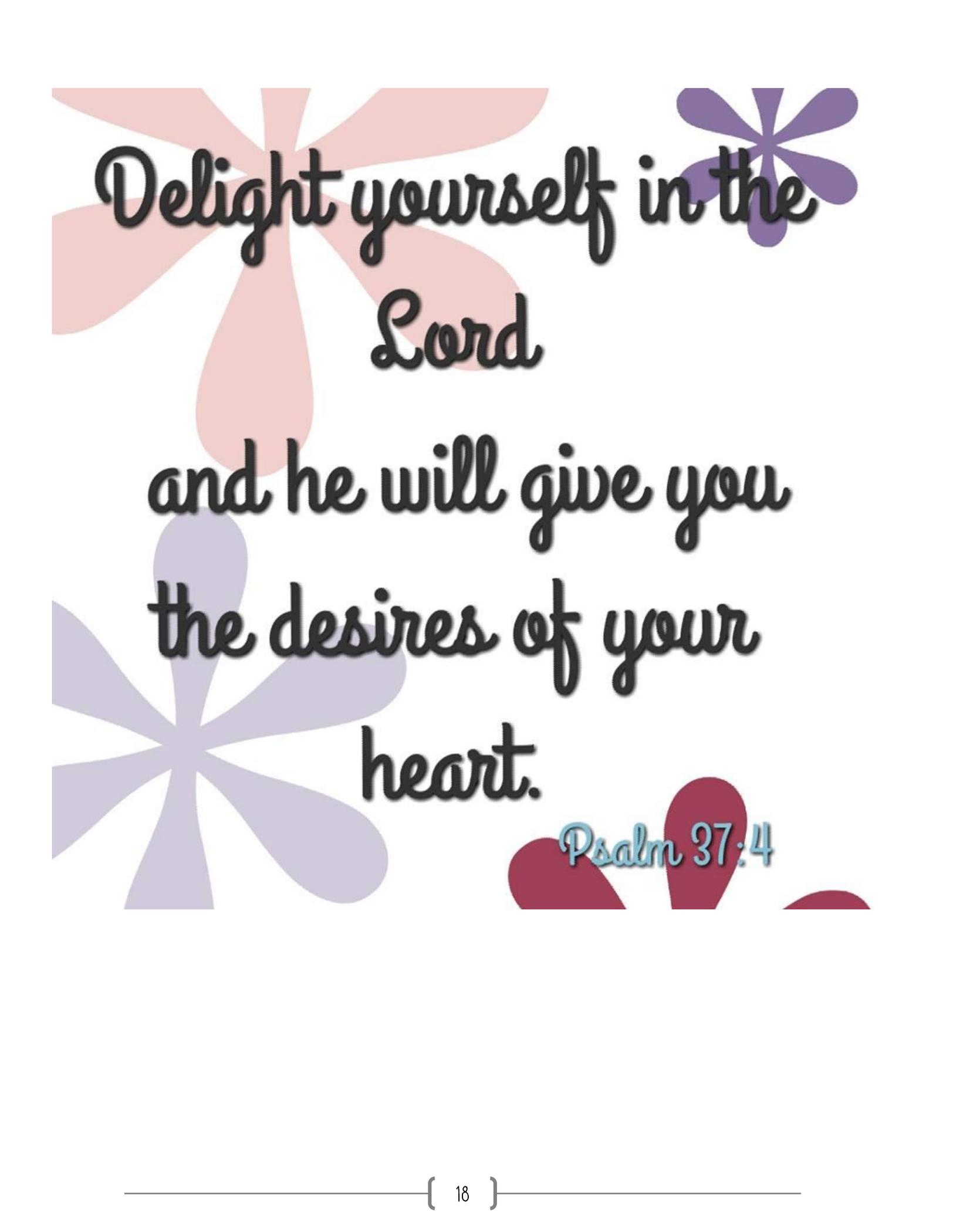


What comes before our longings being fulfilled? _____

i'm praying for you, sister. that you would not be clouded in any way in your understanding. i'm praying that you would have a clear idea of what it means to have all your longings fulfilled.

i'm praying that you would allow God to fine tune your longings so that what you desire would be what He desires.





Delight yourself in the
Lord

and he will give you
the desires of your
heart.

Psalm 37:4

~ DAY THREE ~

Where's Your Hope During the Dark Fridays of Life?

Scripture References: Matthew 27:32-66: Psalm 13 and various others for personal study

— *Either* you've been there or you know someone who has, but during many seasons in our lives, feeling confused and discouraged by the events going on in life is not the exception...it really seems more like the rule. You've heard the saying, "It's always darkest just before the dawn." Maybe a friend offered that phrase to cheer you up. And as sweet as that is, in real life the sun doesn't always feel like it's come up. Life is hard. Good people get very sick and leave us too soon. Unexpected losses rob our dreams. A prodigal child breaks our heart. A spouse breaks their vows. So many times we simply feel at a loss to wrap our minds around the difficulties around us. Where is God? Is there any hope? Sister, as we've been reading through these events, my prayer has been that you would not just read the words from the Bible but enter into the moments with your heart. That you would think about the details and really feel what these disciples must have felt. It's been dark. It's Friday. **Read Matthew 27:32-66 and write in your journal your observations as you read.**

Where is the hope?

It's gone.

It's in a tomb.

It's sealed up.

Guarded by the enemy.

It's Friday....and hope has dwindled. It's Friday, and it's darker than the darkest day and there doesn't seem to be any hope at all for any dawn that would matter. Even if the sun came up, it would still be dark. Hang in there with me and read on...You see, way back before our King of kings was born, the first great king of Israel, Jesus' great-great-great-great-grandfather David, shared his desperate broken heart in Psalm 13. It might just be the darkest, saddest, most desperate of all his psalms. He cries out:

¹ *How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever?*

How long will You hide Your face from me?

² *How long shall I take counsel in my soul,*

Having sorrow in my heart daily?

How long will my enemy be exalted over me?

No matter where you are as a Christian in your faith journey, no matter how weak or strong you feel your spiritual maturity is, you can reach such a desperate place that you actually feel you've been completely abandoned by everyone —even God. Psalm 13 is exactly this feeling. Take a moment to read Psalm 13 journaling your thoughts and observations as you read.

Sometimes we have to hit bottom, go through dark waters, or face devastation in our lives to really see Him even though He's been there all the time. We'll dig deeper into the Psalms later in our study. But I wanted you to give you a peek today. The Psalms are honest - often anguished cries of brokenness. Oh, there's plenty of happiness too, but the heights of the happiness are more real because of the depths of the anguish.

~~~~~  
**W**hy is it that we relate to people who share their uglies with us? Their mishaps and mess-ups? If you went to a luncheon and heard a women's speaker address the ladies in attendance, and all she said was how lovely and picture-perfect her life had been to date, how would you feel? Jealous? Irritated? Discouraged?

We relate to testimonies of hope through hardship because we have a sense in our heart that the way things are isn't how it was supposed to be. Somehow this all feels broken. Someone expected this or that to happen and their expectations were foiled by injustice or illness or war or death...but here's the other deal, what we read in the Bible is not mere "story." It's reality, and it's truth, and it's not only written to ground us **in** reality and truth but to prepare us for an even **better** reality and truth – eternal life with Him! When we grasp the big picture of our eternal hope, then even on the darkest "Friday" seasons of our life we can surely have substantial hope.

Here's the thing, God made us for story and stories are compelling only if they move us through from a problem to a solution. From despair to hope! They're only compelling if they have a hero facing off and defeating a villain. They're only compelling if we can actually relate on some level to the challenges being faced. That's where we find hope. If they got through it, maybe I will too.

Tomorrow is the day everything changes as we get to read about the Resurrection, but keep in mind, you have the advantage of already knowing the outcome...Jesus does win! Love does win! Hope is realized and boy, is it ever!

But today in our reading we're just going to park it here on Friday. On darkness. On the not knowing. On the heaviness of waiting.

Let's be ok to meditate on the hard reality that sometimes – many times – what we want to happen in the way we had hope would happen...just. Does. Not. Happen.

Choose one or more of the following passages to read and journal about. Answer the following questions and be prepared to share with your Bible study group your thoughts on hope based on what you read.

- Genesis 3:1-24
- Genesis 50:1-21
- 2 Chronicles 34:1-33

1) Who are the main people focused on in this account?



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2) What has gone wrong?

|

3) What's going right?

|

4) What role (if any) did the people involved have in making things right?

|

5) What was God's role?

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6) Think about what you are experiencing today as the "wrong" in your life or perhaps in the life of a loved one. After today's readings in the Word what insight have you gained?

|

7) Where do you see hope in the chapter you read?

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It's not always nice reading the dark parts of the story. But the point of this Bible study isn't to make you proficient in the nice parts of the Bible. The point is to tighten your relationship with and response to your heavenly Father! To bring Him glory and to better live out the great calling to love Him with your heart, soul, mind and strength and to love others in the same way! How can we truly do that unless we know Him? How can we best serve others and minister to them unless we have a deep reservoir of His Word from which to draw! That's the important focus. Pray that today's study continues to cement in your mind the truth and comfort of God's word so you can better offer hope to others.

Remember, the darkness of the tomb comes before the most joyous light – it truly was darkest before the dawn. And in the words of that famous minister, "It's Friday...but Sunday's comin'!"

*I love you, sister, and I can't wait to fellowship with you at our next study!  
I'm praying for you today in whatever "Friday" you are facing*



you make known to me  
the path of life; you  
will fill me with  
JOY IN YOUR PRESENCE,  
with eternal pleasures  
AT YOUR RIGHT HAND.  
*psalm 16:11*

# ~ DAY FOUR ~

## The Resurrection!

Key Scripture References: Luke 24:1-12, Psalm 22, Psalm 16, Acts chapters 2 and 13

It's been a heavy couple of days...are you ready to rejoice?

Read Luke 24:1-12 highlighting your Bible and taking notes in your journal as you read.

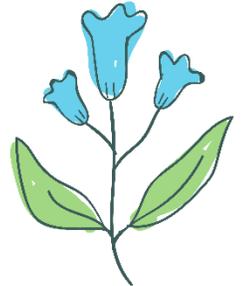
- 1) Aside from the obvious (Jesus is Alive!) what details did Luke include that were interesting to you?

WHO

WHAT

WHEN

WHERE



Read the following verses:

Luke 9:21-22

Luke 9:43-45

Luke 18:31-34

Luke 20:14-15

What did Jesus predict?

Now read these:

Psalm 22

Isaiah 53

Psalm 16:9-11

What did the Jewish Scriptures (Old Testament) predict?

Did you know that pictures and prophecies of the death and resurrection and Jesus conquering Satan are throughout the Old Testament? Really! In fact, literally from the first book! Read Genesis chapter 3.

- 2) What prophecy to you read here? (Key words: snake, crush, head, heel)

- 3) In Psalms you can find several foreshadows, but no psalm is quoted more frequently in the New Testament than Psalm 22. A thousand years before Jesus, David painted a powerful image of the Promised Savior (Messiah) hanging on the cross and even more details. Open your Bible to Psalm 22 and read and write notes detailing what the verses say about His death:

Psalm 22:1

Psalm 22:7-8

Psalm 22:14

Psalm 22:16

Psalm 22:18

John 20:27

What does Psalm 22:31 say about God's righteousness?

*If you have time ...*

As you read Psalm 22, note the footnote letters on each verse in your Bible. These will take you to the New Testament fulfillment of each of these verses. Take a minute to jot below those fulfillments written about in the gospels. For me, this is one of the most exciting times in my Bible study! Like finding the corners of the puzzle...then the edges...the middle pieces all start coming together!

I love God's Word!



Read Psalm 16. David, the “man after God’s own heart”, wrote this Psalm that pointed to Jesus’ conquering of death. Psalm 16 is quoted by Peter in Acts chapter two when he’s addressing the crowd in Jerusalem only a few weeks after Jesus was resurrected. Paul also quotes from Psalm 16 in Acts 13:32-35 when he’s reviewing Old Testament scripture with Jews and Gentiles reminding them that, “What God promised our fathers he has fulfilled for us...by raising up Jesus.”

4) What did Paul say in Acts 13 that God had promised?

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5) Re-read Luke 24:6 and write it here:

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Grab your favorite color highlighter or pencil and mark the most powerful words in this verse to you.

Jesus and the prophets before Him had predicted his death AND resurrection many times. A helpful search on [www.BibleGateway.com](http://www.BibleGateway.com) is to look up “resurrection” and read all the verses that mention it. Then **highlight** these in your study Bible in a color that will help you see them in the future. Also, your study notes from your Bible will point back to the Old Testament on many of these verses in the New Testament so you can connect the prophecies and their fulfillments.

What’s on your heart today, my friend? Reading through the prophecies fulfilled, hearing what God says about righteousness, how does this bring you hope? Write your thoughts here. Maybe take a minute to artfully pen the words to a verse that particularly spoke to you.





# ~ DAY FIVE ~

## Who does that?

Key Scripture References: Matthew 20:17-19: 1 Corinthians 15:14-19

**Who predicts their own death?**

**Who predicts they'll be raised from the dead?**

**Who makes such bold statements like, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!" — Matthew 20:17-19**

**Hint: This is one of those times when the correct answer is "Jesus."**

Jesus predicted these very specific events. But if things didn't turn out the way He said they would, He'd have been remembered as a charismatic but delusional teacher or a deceptive liar. The matter of truth in Jesus' claims has to be dealt with. Not only that, but if we don't get this right, then we may as well pack up this study and go read a romance novel instead. **This is the hook on which everything – ev.er.y.thing. – hangs!** C.S. Lewis (If you've never read his stuff, get thee to a bookstore! He's my favorite author!) said it this way in his now famous "trilemma":

Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a **fool**, you can spit at him and kill him as a **demon** or you can fall at his feet and call him **Lord and God**, but let us not come with any patronising nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. . . . Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God. (*Mere Christianity*, 55-56)

- 1) According to C.S Lewis, what are the three options in this trilemma?
  - a. Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_ or
  - b. Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_ or
  - c. Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_



And the apostle Paul in his letter to the church in Corinth said:

*And if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless. And we apostles would all be lying about God—for we have said that God raised Christ from the grave. But that can't be true if there is no resurrection of the dead. And if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! **And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world.** (1 Cor 15:14-19 NLT)*

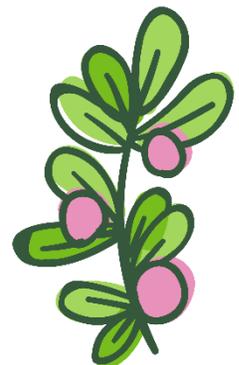
- 2) According to Paul, what are we if Christ did not raise from the dead?
- \_\_\_\_\_

Do you see how everything hinges on this one event, the resurrection?

- 3) When it comes to our hope we have NONE and are to be pitied more than anyone if the resurrection didn't happen. Log in to Facebook, or go to a self-help book, or watch a talk show...what do you find in abundance there? Quotes and ideas about living a happy, fulfilled life...Quotes that offer encouragement, advice and hope. But – and this is a big 'but' – what is that advice founded upon? Anything of real significance? What do you think? What is the world's hope founded upon?

- 4) Before we move any further in our study about hope, would you go back to one of your very first entries? Go back to page 11 where you wrote why you wanted to do this study and what you hoped to gain from it. Take a moment to re-read that, and if you need to, write it down here: What do you hope to learn...

- 5) If you were asked today how you knew God was real and active in your life, what would you say? Actually, if you were asked why you believed any one particular thing about God or Jesus or the Bible, what would you say? What Bible verse or life experience would you share?



## Consider this . . .

If your hope in your future is based on who you believe God to be, your hope is just wishful thinking, and as Paul said “your faith is useless” and you are to be “more pitied than anyone in the world.”

If the resurrection didn't happen, all the warm feelings...  
all the good thoughts about Jesus are empty.



If Christ didn't actually raise from the dead, then what we believe is as meaningful as a child's belief in the Tooth Fairy.

Hope is tragic if it's just wishful thinking.

Our next session will dig deeper into this. For now, close your time with prayer. Ask God to give you a heart to understand and the words needed to share your answer with others.



**Jesus** RESTORER OF HOPE Lord of Lords  
 THE WORD Holy One  
 Bread of Life Master BRANCH  
 STAR ALPHA & OMEGA Teacher  
 Dayspring Prince of Peace  
 MORNING Son of Man COMFORTER  
 everLASTING SHILOH Anchor  
 FATHER The Almighty Light  
 Counselor TRUE VINE of the  
 MESSIAH THE LIFE HIGH World  
 Giver of Life PRIEST  
 BRIGHT & Blessings THE BELOVED  
 FAITHFUL & TRUE WITNESS Shield ROCK  
 Mediator Wonderful Counselor  
 King of Kings  
 The Resurrection The Amen  
 Immanuel  
 LAMB OF GOD Healer I AM LIVING WATER  
 Good Shepherd Savior Redeemer  
 Advocate The Way, the Truth & the Life  
 ONLY BEGOTTEN SON

# ~ DAYS SIX & SEVEN ~

## True Hope or Wishful Thinking?

Key Scripture References: Hebrews 6:18-20; Luke 24:7; 1 Peter 3; Psalm 34; 2 Corinthians 11:22-33;  
Philippians 4:13

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*Every week* I meet with women who are seeking out prayer and counsel regarding a heartache or trial they are going through...

A sister in Christ who wept and asked, "I just don't see any light at the end of this tunnel. Is there any hope?"

The young married woman sitting next to me, grasping tissues in her trembling hands, pouring out the story of her broken marriage, "Why did he leave me?"

The mother of a prodigal daughter hung her head and cried heavy, tired tears while we sat in her family room, "Will she ever come home?"

The woman caring for her elderly mother with chronic sickness, "I'm completely overwhelmed. When do I get to breathe?" 0020

At the core of every questioning, hurting heart is this:

*"Is there hope?"*

Yes, my friend. There is hope. But hope is bigger than God fixing the problem. It's more lasting than God stopping the pain. And honestly, in the moments of anguish most of us just want God to be some kind of cosmic Advil™ or calming Zolofit™. This is understandable. But God's plan is to redeem your life...not just rescue you from your problem.

Think about it: The vast majority of messages we are hearing or reading or watching on TV from motivational people tell us to think positively, keep on hoping, even to trust "God." Great concepts on the surface, but what is the core? Why can we think positively? Why can we hope? In whom really are we hoping?



My friend has lived in Los Angeles for 60 years. She remembers when the LA Colosseum was built. She remembers the iconic Sixth Street Bridge which has connected the valley with Downtown Los Angeles since the 1930's. You've seen the bridge in movies and TV shows like "Terminator", "Grease", "Lost", "Columbo", and "The Great Race." As strong and stable as the bridge appeared over the years, inside that bridge a rare chemical reaction was happening causing the structure to begin to crumble from the inside out! It looked fine, but, on the inside it was quite literally becoming a death trap. When the day came to demolish the bridge,

Angelinos were invited to come out and take a stone home, but guess what? Hardly a stone was available. The insides were so decrepit that most could only take home handfuls of dust.

This is what happens when we hold on to worldly hopes or even “Christianish” hope quotes that reduce the Bible to inspirational literature or a self-help book. We are stepping out on a bridge of faith and hoping in something that only looks stable but is empty on the inside. Worse: it’s a death trap if we’ve missed the target of our hope. My prayer in preparing this study has been that we’d think bigger and deeper and wider about God and what having hope in God actually means; that by digging into the Word we’d understand the truth upon which our hope is founded. This might challenge your views. It may bolster them. Either way, don’t you want a completely true faith built on real hope? I know I do!

We have to circle back here. No matter how often, we must circle back and keep this truth at the foundation of everything. Read how the author of Hebrews puts it:

*Therefore, we who have fled to Him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God’s inner sanctuary. Jesus has already gone in there for us. (Hebrews 6:18b-20 NLT)*

- 1) Why is our hope a “strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls?” because:

|

Jesus has already gone into God’s inner sanctuary for us. He died and rose again! He is our High Priest! That’s what our hope is founded upon! It’s not wishful thinking – although we might feel like it. It’s confident thinking. Edward Mote penned this hymn, and I think it sums it up so well...

*My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.  
“My Hope is Built” by Edward Mote*

Jesus really did rise from the dead! Our hope is sure!

- 2) What about you? Write a few thought here about your hope and what it’s anchored in:

|

- 3) If we’re going to talk about hope then we need to talk about something worth hoping in and hoping for, right? Hope is the hook on which everything hangs. According to this verse, why is our hope sure?

|



Now re-read Luke 24:7 and write it here:

|

- 4) Underline and maybe even write a little number by the three key things (the verbs) that the “Son of Man” (Jesus) had to do.

✓ D \_\_\_\_\_

✓ C \_\_\_\_\_

✓ R \_\_\_\_\_

Delivered. Crucified. Rise.

Check. Check. And big-time Check! Don’t you love the feeling of marking things off on a check-list?

Done and Done.

- 5) If someone were to ask you why you believe in God or how you know He lives, would you be able to answer with confidence the reason you have this hope? Read 1 Peter 3:15 and write it here:

|

- 6) Be ready and prepared to give an answer...Do you feel ready? Now go back and read the verses that came before verse 15. Read 1 Peter 3:8-14...Why would people even ask you about the hope you have?

|

- 7) Go back and underline verse 14. Actually, double underline it! “...even if you should suffer...”  
Gasp.

It’s not pleasant to think about is it? But we’re going to stand out in this world because our behavior is different WHEN – not if – we are persecuted. We’re going to get asked questions about how we’re living because we’re doing life God’s way, not the world’s. I submit to you, my sister, that if you’re not getting questions about your faith, you’re doing it wrong. Our lives as believers should be

noticeably different than the lives of those around us. So different that people will be drawn to us and wonder what is going on. THAT'S when we're ready to give an answer.

- 8) Read Psalm 34 and focus on verses 12-16. You want to love life and see good days? According to this Psalm, quoted by Peter in chapter 3, what must you do? Write at least six behaviors you'll need to exhibit in your life:

|

As Jesus began to prepare his disciples for his death and resurrection, He gave some stern warnings about what was to come and what life would be like. We looooooove the Bible verses that say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me..." or "...be of good cheer for I have overcome the world." We like these verses so much that we're even willing to hear them quoted completely out of context. But how empty is our hope, how trite and fluffy, how "pitied above all" if we cherry pick these phrases and ignore the truth. Read 2 Corinthians 11:23-33

- 9) List some of the ways Paul was persecuted:

|

- 10) Read Philippians 4:10-14 Why can Paul say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me?" (Don't forget what you just read in 2 Corinthians):

|

Our hope is sure, not because of our wishful thinking but because we serve a God - even get persecuted for Him – who makes good on His word. He said Jesus would be crucified, die, and be raised...and check-check-check. He did all three. If you would like to dig even deeper into the sureness of our hope in Christ and the proofs of his resurrection, I encourage you to get one or more of the following books:

- "The Case for the Resurrection" by Lee Strobel
- "Evidence that Demands a Verdicts" by Josh McDowell
- "More Than a Carpenter" by Josh McDowell

If you would like a free copy of "More Than a Carpenter", please email me at [Jennifer@LaMiradaChurch.com](mailto:Jennifer@LaMiradaChurch.com), and I will gladly send it to you. These are just three among hundreds of great books written to defend the truth of the resurrection of Jesus. You do not need to know every fact and detail and be able to debate a skeptic, but learning more will be of great benefit to you.

11) In 1 Peter we read to “always be ready to give an answer”, and this is true. However, read Luke 21:5-19 when Jesus was preparing his disciples for the persecution to come. What does he say in verse 14 NOT to worry about?

|

12) If you feel concerned that you wouldn't know exactly how to answer someone who challenged your faith by denying the resurrection, I want to encourage you that the you can ask for wisdom! Jesus will give you what you need. Read James 1:5 and write it here:

|

Take time now to pray - maybe even write out your prayer — and thank God for this deliverance!

*What a day! What a promise! What a hope we have!  
It's real. It's true. It's sure!*

*Thank Him for His power over death and His promise.*

Write your prayer of thanks here:



Each session we'll share  
heart-felt stories from women  
like you who have been  
through difficult times. . .

Times that have tested their  
faith and brought them to a  
deeper understanding of  
what real hope means.



# A Story of Hope from Rebekah Canamar



*Lost, lonely, hopeless, abandoned. As far back as I can remember my daily life was merely to survive.*

*I endured and witnessed physical and mental abuse throughout my life. I didn't have much hope of things getting better. Why would I? My parents didn't protect me and they allowed such things to happen. I was born into a Mormon family. There I remained for my entire childhood, teenage years, and into adulthood. Growing up in a religion that teaches all about family and love, my family home life mirrored the opposite. I was completely empty and broken.*

*I longed for a loving family. A family I was sure that God had for me somewhere. Secretly, I hoped to be adopted by somebody who wanted me. From a very young age I remember flittering around in search of a family to latch onto, longing to belong. This continued into my adult life.*

*Growing up Mormon I did everything I was supposed to do. I did all that was required of me. I went to church every Sunday. I attended all activities. I held Leadership positions. I served a Mission. Why was I so empty and dark on the inside? I was everywhere I was supposed to be, working so diligently, yet I still had a longing to belong. My self-worth was dependent on and a direct result of my behavior and my works towards ultimately glorifying myself.*

*At 24 years old, I had just returned home from a 19-month Mission for the Mormon Church. Within 2 weeks of returning home God plucked me out of it. It was as if He said, "My daughter, you do not belong here." And He turned me around from walking inside the doors of that Mormon building. It was the first time I was so sure about what I was doing. And I never went back.*

*Within the next 2 weeks, God introduced me to a 6-year-old little girl and her family who would quickly show me who He is.*

*He is an Amazing Father who scooped me up into His arms and wrapped them around me as if to say, "I love you, my daughter, and I will never let you go." And I felt Him hold on to me with such love and adoration. God proved Himself faithful.*

*And, He did so in the most unconventional way with me. He gave me the family I so desperately searched for oh, so long ago. He brought a daughter, in need of parents, to parents, who were in need of a daughter. I was adopted into a surrogate family who loves me unconditionally. And, He continues to grow that family.*

*I had worked so hard for somebody, including God, to love me. But, it wasn't about me anymore. It was about Jesus. His grace is sufficient. It is enough for me and I didn't need to do anything to earn His love. God is faithful to provide. He brought me into the family of God.*

*~ Rebekah Canamar*



look at the **NATIONS AND WATCH**  
— **AND BE UTTERLY AMAZED.**

for i am going to  
**DO SOMETHING IN**  
your days **THAT YOU**  
**WOULD NOT** believe.  
even if you **WERE TOLD.**

habakkuk 1:5

# ~ DAY EIGHT ~

## How'd We Miss This?

Key Scripture References: Habakkuk 1:1-5: Acts 13:40-41: Psalm 40:15

*Have* you ever been caught off guard by an event in your life? You missed all the warning signs?

When my son was in junior high school, I got a call from the principal. "Mrs. Richmond, I'd like to meet with you about a serious matter involving your son."

Gut punch.

My mind raced with the possibilities of what could have happened. I met with the principal and was informed that my son was involved with two other boys in possessing marijuana and pills of some kind.

Gut punch.

Nothing could have prepared me for that moment. I never saw it coming. I could never have guessed my little boy, my good kid, could be involved in something like this. As I sat across the desk in the principal's office, I received the news and tried to grasp the details of what I was hearing. Like a scene in a movie playing out in slow motion, I sat there as the principal's words rolled over me, swirled around me, and attempted to penetrate my mind...my son had been caught doing drugs.

Were there signs? Yes.

Did I miss the warnings? Obviously I did!

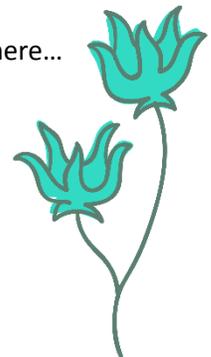
Could I have been more on top of this? Surely I could have!

What could I have done differently? So many things!

What were the clues that led up to this moment that I might have seen coming? Maybe I could collect those hints and share this with other parents so they'd be more likely to intercede in their own children's lives?

- 1) How about you? What event in your life caught you off guard? Write it down here...

|



2) Looking back now, were there signs you missed? What were they?

|

3) Knowing what you know now, are you able to see the signs better? Have you been able to pass along your experience with others and help them see the signs? What would you tell another mom or friend today because of what you experienced?

|

4) Here's the deal, we're not the only ones who miss obvious signs. In Habakkuk chapter 1 verse 5 the Lord tells his prophet that things are coming that he never could believe. You'll be "utterly amazed", "astounded", in "wonder" God says. You're never going to see this coming! Read Habakkuk 1:5 and write it here:

|

And, "sho 'nuff" as my grandma used to say - *stunned*.

Perplexed. Astonished. *"You would not believe, even if you were told."* Habakkuk 1:5

5) Paul quotes this prophecy from Habakkuk when he is speaking to the people in one of his sermons. Read Acts 13:40-41 What is Paul's warning? Write it here:

|

When you're in a season and you're in between darkness and light...in that waiting place...wanting to hope, holding to hope and yet, hope has not yet been realized, are you like this? Are you looking for signs? Reviewing your past? Worried about your future? Perhaps in the midst of the waiting you need to be reminded of the verses from our study today and to take your confident stance for the future based on God's faithfulness in the past. Read Psalm 40 (NIV)

6) What did David do in verse one? He:

---

7) What did God do in verses 2-3? (4 distinct things)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

8) What happens to those who trust in the Lord?

\_\_\_\_\_

9) What behaviors characterize the person who trusts in God? (v 4)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

10) When you're waiting and hoping why not anticipate God's goodness? Read verse 5 again and write it here but, make it personal...what wonders has God done already in your life? If you could only list a few of God's blessings what would they be?

|

*Waiting is hard. Wondering if we're missing the signs can be distressing. As we close our study today, just pray for a heart like David's to wait patiently and to recount God's blessings in the meanwhile.*



praise be to the  
god and father  
OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST!

in his great  
**MERCY HE HAS GIVEN**

US NEW BIRTH INTO A LIVING

hope through the resurrection  
OF JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD

1 PETER 1:3

# ~ DAY NINE ~

## Everything Is Going to Change - Part 1

Key Scripture References: Luke 24:13-35: Isaiah 43:18-19: 1 Peter 1:3

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When you get married.

When you're pregnant with your first child.

When you graduate college and get your first big job.

What do people say? "This is going to change everything."

And it does. You think you're prepared. You think you'll be ready. But really. No way. You've seen marriage before. You've read the books. You've been around kids. Heck, you may have even had very young siblings to tend to as you grew up. You've prepared for this job for a long time...but nothing can compare to the total shift in your reality that you experience after "I do" or "It's a girl!" or "You're hired."

Your "success" in this new season of your life is going to be connected to your willingness to totally embrace the newness, learn, grow, change, adapt and think and see in new ways. Right?

- 1) What new season (marriage, job, having a child, changing churches, etc.) in your life caused you to have to reevaluate your priorities? In what way?

|

So, my sister, here we are at a great moment in our study when everything changes. Can you feel it? As you read the accounts in Scripture are you feeling excited for the newness coming? Those tears of sorrow...now tears of joy...the posture of the grieving is now the dance of the redeemed!



- 2) Read 1 Peter 1:3 and write it here...This is a verse you should definitely memorize!

|

Read Isaiah 43:18-19 *"Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it?"* - Isaiah 43:18-19 (KJV)

When the Lord asks, "Shall you not know it?" He is saying, "Do you want to open yourself to My new thing? Are you willing to embrace it?" In the context of this verse, Israel was dealing with enslavement to the Babylonians, and God is getting them ready for big changes and reminding them of His mercies and their special relationship to Him as the "chosen nation."

The verb יָדַע (yaw-dah) "know" in the Hebrew language is far more than head knowledge or comprehending. It has to do with the total surrender of yourself. It's the same word used in Genesis 4, "And Adam **knew** Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain . . ." This "knowing" is a total receptivity, a total embrace. God is saying, "I'm going to do a new thing. Will you embrace it? Will you receive it into your life?"

Jesus asked questions as well. Oh, boy did he. We're not going to read every question he asked. But if you wanted to do that you'd be busy reading over 300! Yep. Jesus asked over 300 questions! We'll talk about some of them at our next get together. For now, we're going to move our lessons on hope forward by looking at the situation two men were in which prompted one of what I think was Jesus funniest questions. Yes. Jesus was funny. He asked questions...and he was funny...even sarcastic. Let's see:

- 3) Read Luke 24:13-35 As you read, take note of the W/W/W/W of this account and record the details here:

Who are the people mentioned in this account?

What basically is happening?

When is this taking place? (after what big event)

Where is it happening?

- 4) Read Luke 24:13 "...now that same day..." What day was this? \_\_\_\_\_

- 5) Luke 24:14 What do you think these two were talking about? The weather? The latest sandal styles? Ha! Write a few thoughts down here about what and WHO you think they were discussing...

Re-read Luke 24:15-16 Do you feel the anticipation here? Jesus HIMSELF joins these two! When I was a child, I remember my grandmother chiding me when I was being unkind to my sister, "Would you talk like that if Jesus was standing right there?" What? No way! Yikes! I didn't want Jesus to pop in and stand there hearing the mean things I was saying. No way. But what if Jesus did walk in right in the middle of when you were talking or shopping or at your child's ball game or . . . ?

These two disciples get to actually experience this!! Wow! Wow! Wow!

Here they are in the throes of the drama and their animated discussion and none but the Firstborn of All Creation, the Bright and Morning Star, the High Priest, the Mediator between God and Man...shows up and asks, "Hey, what's up?" Do you feel the sweetness here? Even the humor?

Ok, maybe not in those exact words...but c'mon...you gotta love the timing of the Lord Most High here and admire his humor a bit, right? I mean, of all the entrances He could have made - lights flashing, a big poof of smoke a la Houdini, an accompaniment of angels announcing his return, borrowing Elijah's flaming chariot and swooping down on that...but nope. He just slips right up on the path and joins them.

*Oh, Jesus how I love you for this simplicity.*

Once again, arriving on the scene in the least expected way.

But, what's this? Read on "...they were kept from recognizing Him?" (NIV) Why? Why on earth would this be necessary? Is this something God does? Does He keep people from seeing or recognizing? The Greek word here for "kept from recognizing" literally means that their eyes were "held." Jesus was holding their eyes and keeping them from perceiving who he was.

- 6) Why? What reason do you think Jesus was doing this?
- 7) Read Exodus 7:1-5 – What did God keep from happening and allow to happen here?
- 8) Read Numbers 22:21-31 – What did God keep from happening and allow to happen here?
- 9) Read Acts 9:1-7 – What did God keep from happening and allow to happen here?

10) God can keep people from having soft hearts? \_\_\_\_\_ (yes/no)

11) Opened eyes? \_\_\_\_\_(yes/no)

12) Recognizing Him? \_\_\_\_\_(yes/no)

Why? Doesn't God want us all to know Him? Yes.

But, sister, In. His. Time.

In His Way.

For His Glory.

13) Read Isaiah 55:8-11 – What does this say about God's timing and His methods?

|

14) What about you? Are you willing trust that God's "thoughts are not your thoughts", and that this is a good thing? Are you willing to see that this truth brings comfort and hope? When, like the disciples talking on the Road to Emmaus, you are not yet seeing the big picture, are you ready to acknowledge God's sovereignty and timing? Take a moment to write out your thoughts about this and give this to God in prayer:

|





Forget the former things;  
do not dwell on the past.  
See, I am doing a new thing!  
Now it springs up; do  
you not perceive it?  
I am making a way in the wilderness  
and streams in the wasteland.

ISAIAH 43

# ~ Day TEN ~

## Everything Is Going to Change - Part 2

Key Scripture References: Luke 24:13-35: Isaiah 43:18-19: 1 Peter 1:3

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Re-read Luke 24:17-19

Jesus asks the two: "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"

I love that God likes to hear right from us what we're thinking about.

- 1) Think about a trying time you've had recently and imagine Jesus coming alongside you and asking you as you were wrestling with your thoughts or sharing them with a friend. If He had asked you the same question, what would you have said?



- 2) Read Genesis 3:8-11. What question does God ask Adam and Eve?



God knows the answer before He asks the question. But, like a parent who already knows the answer to, "Anything interesting happen at school today, son?" having already received a call from the principal, God wants to hear from us personally. Think about what that says about His character. He wants true relationship with us. Jesus, at this moment could have walked upon the disciples and said any number of things, but by simply walking alongside and asking to hear from them He accomplished many things...two in particular stood out to me. Read the two observations I made, and be thinking about what YOU think this says about God's character:

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My first observation:

**He gave them the chance to share their own heart out loud.** There's something about hearing your own heart out loud that is so helpful. When I was writing this study my husband graciously listened while I read and re-read each section to him not only for his feedback, but for the help that reading aloud provides. By hearing my own heart out loud it helped me tighten up my thoughts and clarify my points and find silly errors. Surely Jesus knew their hearts (Jer. 17:10; Matt 12:25; John 2:25), but what clarity they provided when they spoke the truths about Him.

3) Review Luke 24:19-24 and write down the facts they cited about **who** they believed "Jesus of Nazareth" to be and **what** they witnessed happen to him:

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4) Look over your list and think about the ways they referred to Jesus. They called Him "prophet" which He surely was, but what could they have called Him? Check below:

\_\_\_ Friend                      \_\_\_ Rabbi (teacher)                      \_\_\_ Leader  
\_\_\_ Messiah                      \_\_\_ Healer                      \_\_\_ ? \_\_\_\_\_

5) They had enough respect to refer to Him as a "prophet", but why not call Him as He was...as He claimed to be? Read Matthew 16:13-20 and John 4:25-26 Who did Jesus affirm that He was? (Hint: it's not a trick question)

\_\_\_ Friend                      \_\_\_ Rabbi (teacher)                      \_\_\_ Leader  
\_\_\_ Messiah                      \_\_\_ Healer                      \_\_\_ ? \_\_\_\_\_

There are hundreds of questions you might have to answer in a given week and innumerable questions you'll likely have answered by the time your life is over. Some pretty frivolous, some pretty serious. Let's rate a few:

6) On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being highest priority/consequence and 1 being nearly inconsequential, how would you rate the following - I even left a couple blanks for you to write in!

# \_\_\_ "What's your favorite ice cream flavor?" ~ the ice cream shop kid

# \_\_\_ "Plastic or Paper?" ~the grocery store gal

# \_\_\_ "What's your major?" ~a friend in college

# \_\_\_ "In-N-Out or McDonald's?" ~a hungry friend who has the audacity to even propose the question! ;-)

# \_\_\_ "Will you marry me?" ~your sweetheart

# \_\_\_ "Who do you say that I am?" ~Jesus

# \_\_\_\_\_

# \_\_\_\_\_

*In* this pluralistic and “tolerant” society where statements like: “Hey, don’t judge me!” and “My truth is as good as your truth.” and bumper stickers like: “COEXIST” define the worldview of the vast majority, it is not a popular concept to teach that there is one way...One True Way. It takes strength of conviction to assert this and acknowledge that Jesus was THE Promised One...THE Solution...The Way, the Truth and The Life - but we must, if we’re honest, not only answer the question Jesus Himself asked, but be willing to live our lives in way that matches what we claim to believe.



At this point, they had just heard that He had resurrected...or did He? Were the women right? Could it be? I believe these two disciples were not quite ready to finish the equation. That’s why they recounted all those details and left His title at “prophet.” Oh, they could add up all the prophecies, they could count up all their eye witness accounts, but they weren’t ready to complete that equation with a bold equals sign. Are you?

Everything we’ve read + everything we’ve witnessed + everything we’ve heard = \_\_\_\_\_

My second observation:

**He modeled what was soon to come - their new relationship with the Holy Spirit!**

7) Read John 14:16 -- Who did Jesus say was coming? \_\_\_\_\_

This word for Holy Spirit in Greek is “paraclete” which means comforter, advocate, helper...but also, and literally “one who comes alongside!” What?! So exciting! Jesus was here walking alongside these disciples, hearing their heart, letting them speak their minds...and in a few moments he would confront their “slow hearts” and open their eyes...this is precisely what the Holy Spirit does in our hearts!

8) What else do you see that Jesus was doing by asking a question instead of announcing His presence?



Then Jesus speaks up after they recount the details: “He said to them, ‘How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!’” (Luke 24:25)

9) And again, he asks a question – a good, pointed, rhetorical question...read Luke 24:26 and write that down here:



What’s the answer to this rhetorical question from verse 26? \_\_\_\_\_



## How do we know?

Well, we just go back to Scripture – the only Scripture these disciples would have known – what you and I call the “Old Testament” they would have called the “Tanakh.” This is all the books from Genesis through Malachi – and guess what? Everyone one of them pointed to Christ:

- Christ is the Seed of woman and in Genesis 3:15 we are told He will one-day crush Satan.
- In Exodus we find the story of the Passover Lamb, and Christ is the sacrificial Lamb given for us.
- In Leviticus we read of the high priests making sacrifices for the people, and Christ has become our High Priest, making the perfect sacrifice to atone for our sins.
- In Deuteronomy Moses prophesied of a prophet who would come that would be greater than Himself. Jesus is that Great Prophet.
- In the book of Joshua, Joshua met the Captain of the Lord's host. That man is Jesus Christ.
- In Judges, the leaders were judges who delivered God's people, each of them typifying the Lord Jesus.
- Boaz, the kinsman who redeemed Ruth's inheritance, is a picture of Christ.
- David, the anointed one, pictures Jesus and Jesus is described as being the Son of David.
- In 2 Samuel when the king is being enthroned, the entire scene is descriptive of the Lord Jesus.
- The books of Kings speak of the glory of God filling the temple and the Chronicles describe the glorious coming king, both referring to Jesus, the King of Kings.
- Ezra depicts Jesus as the Lord of our fathers.
- Job says clearly that the Redeemer is coming!
- Esther offers a picture of Christ interceding for His people.
- Christ appears time after time in the Psalms, including when David describes Him as "the Shepherd."
- Isaiah details His glorious birth.
- Jeremiah reveals that He will be acquainted with sorrows.
- Joel describes Him as the Hope of His people.
- Amos tells us that Jesus is the judge of all nations.
- Obadiah warns of the coming eternal kingdom.
- Jonah offers a picture of Jesus being dead for three days, then coming back to life to preach repentance.
- Zephaniah says that He will be the king over Israel.
- Zachariah is the prophet who speaks of Jesus riding on a colt.
- Malachi is the one who calls Him the Son of Righteousness.

Can you see it? The entire Old Testament points toward Jesus as Savior, and if you miss that, you've missed the entire point of the Scriptures. Jesus is the Messiah and the fulfillment of prophecy.

*(Taken from "A Portrait of Christ" by Love Worth Finding Ministries - used by permission).*

All Scripture  
is breathed out  
by God  
and profitable for teaching,  
for reproof, for correction,  
and for training  
in righteousness

2 Timothy 3:16



# ~ DAY ELEVEN ~

## Everything Is Going to Change - Part 3

Key Scripture References: Luke 24:13-35: Isaiah 43:18-19: 1 Peter 1:3

Review Luke 24:28-29 – Highlight in your Bible and/or journal key verses to you.

By this point, they had been walking for quite some time. The road to Emmaus was about seven miles (Luke 24:13). At a normal walking pace across this unpaved road it would be about a three-hour jaunt. Three hours discussing with Jesus! Three hours relating their experiences! Three hours! Wow! What a walk that must have been, and sure enough, when they get to a point where Jesus seems to be leaving them, they just cannot get enough of Him, “Stay!” they ask. And get ready, this is where it gets wonderfully amazing! ... “so He went in to stay with them.” Luke 24:29 (NIV)

### The Ah-Ha Moment to End All Ah-Ha Moments!

- 1) Review Luke 24:30-32 Jesus joins the two and does what with them?

*Just to clarify: In your Bible translations it says “bread” in verse 30 and you’re thinking of a loaf perhaps like a baguette or shepherders bread? But this was still during the Passover Holy Days, so they would not have been eating any bread made with yeast because the laws they followed forbid the use of yeast during these holy days. For more details on the Passover, read Exodus chapter 12. So, when you picture Jesus breaking the bread and passing it to them as it describes in verse 30, imagine a crisp matzah cracker, not a fluffy loaf of bread.*

He took the bread... Gave thanks... Broke it...

Was it at the sound of the matzah cracking? Was it the sight of Jesus breaking the bread? Was it a glint in Jesus’ beautiful eyes? In the Greek, the word for used here is ἐπιδίδωμι (epididomi), which means that **while He was in the act of distributing** they recognized Him. He blessed, and having broken, was giving it to them, when, in an instant, their eyes were opened!

- 2) Reread Luke 24:32 According to this verse, what was happening in their hearts?

- 3) When was it happening?

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
This isn’t the first time – and surely not the last – when Scripture being recounted brought about a powerful response!

4) Read Nehemiah 8:8-12 – What happened when the people heard God’s Words?

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5) Isaiah 55:10-12 – What power does God’s Word have?

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6) Read Jeremiah 15:16 – How did Jeremiah feel about God’s Words?

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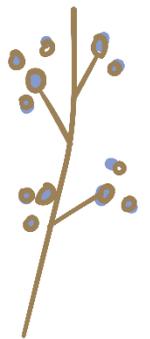
7) Romans 10:14-17 – How do we get faith?

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Take a moment to thank God for the power of His Word and the fact that He gave it to us!  
Thank you, Father for your love for us and for the  
joy, peace, faith, and power that Your Word brings!

8) Read Luke 24:33-35 Write three words or phrases that stand out to you in these verses. Or, if you love to draw, sketch the scene here...

|



## Urgency.

There's power in a sense of urgency. Important things can wait. Urgent things cannot. When it's urgent you stop what you're doing, redirect your thoughts, your plans, your mindset... and just go and do.

### **It's. That. Urgent.**

..... Do you feel the sense of urgency here in verse 33? .....

The crumbs from Jesus' freshly broken bread had barely fluttered down to the table...whoosh! Jesus has vanished and these two who had spent the better part of the day in deep, contemplative discussion, as they walked the path from Jerusalem to Emmaus now leave nothing to discussion...they. Are. Gone. G'bye! Out the door. This is too urgent to wait. No need to discuss, confer, review...we're outta here! Back to Jerusalem!

Back to the Eleven (actually probably just Ten since Thomas wasn't there).

And this time? No contemplative walking pace. I imagine these two bolting as quickly as the Prodigal Son's father ran down the road to greet his wayward son! Wayward sons these two may well have been had they not encountered the Risen Lord. But they surely did more than encounter Him. They had a faith-solidifying experience that altered their lives from that point forward.

Back to Jerusalem. Back to the grieving bewildered disciples. Back past the point where Jesus first joined them. Back past the spot where they had departed Jerusalem...Back to the lamp-lit room where the dejected disciples and several others had gathered, bursting through the door, they shouted,

*"It is true!"*

Let's pause here in their announcement.

- 9) Re-read Luke 24:34 After they announce, "It's true!" What do they say next? Write the next two details here:

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

*SIDE NOTE: He appeared to Peter? Where earlier in the Luke account does it say this? (It doesn't.) When could this have happened?*

- 10) Read 1 Corinthians 15:5 (NIV)

*Jesus appeared to \_\_\_\_\_ and then to \_\_\_\_\_*

*Are you seeing the value in reading ALL of Scripture? When you read full books you'll connect the full picture and see details that bring it all together.*



WHY SO DOWNCAST, O MY SOUL?

*Hope in god*

FOR I SHALL AGAIN  
PRAISE HIM  
MY SALVATION  
AND MY GOD.

*Psalm 43:5*

*Sister*, I want you to grasp the hope affirming sweetness of this moment. Jesus could have appeared to the leaders of the day, the rulers and kings, the famous and powerful – and any smart writer would surely spin the account to include these types of people. But “His ways are not our ways!” – not by a longshot!

The resurrected Jesus appeared first to a woman who had been demon possessed and next to a loud-mouthed, rash man who had been the first to deny him and deny him loudly and publicly – Peter. Next he appears to two disciples heading out of town whose earthly significance only matters enough to have one of them even named, Cleopas. Jesus’ final days on earth echoed his pattern of His earthly ministry, that He came “to seek and save those who are lost.” (Luke 19:10 NLT)

*Have you felt that you don't matter?* Have you felt out of hope because surely you’re not important enough for God to notice or care to be with you? Perhaps you’ve prayed with a friend who is struggling with her sense of value. She feels unworthy – too damaged – too insignificant .... Here in these few short verses, this amazing account is your reminder to yourself and to that friend that you matter and there is hope.

- 11) From the previous days’ studies, which verse or passage brought you the most hope? Write it here and commit it to memory so you’ll have it on your heart and the tip of your tongue should you or a friend need to be reminded of the powerful hope we have because of Jesus Christ.

\_\_\_\_\_

As you meet with your study group this week, be prepared to share this verse with your group. I wonder if God will give someone else the same verse?

May God richly bless you as you wrap up your time in the Word today. I am praying for you and I’m looking forward to seeing you soon!

Your sister and hope-filled friend in Christ,

*Jennifer*

