



▶ DAILY DEVOTIONAL.

Saturday/Sunday, 5/5-6/18

“A New Hope”

1 Peter 1:13-25

Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”

Since you call on a Father who judges each person’s work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For,

*“All people are like grass,
and all their glory is like the flowers of the field;
the grass withers and the flowers fall,
but the word of the Lord endures forever.”*

And this is the word that was preached to you.

Family Activity: Our big idea this week is hope. If you can, get two identical balloons and fill one with helium and the other just with air. If you can’t get balloons this week, use your imagination. On the outside, it can look the same when we don’t have hope and when we do (hold up the two identical balloons). When we don’t have hope and life gets tough, we can sink under the pressure (let go of the balloon filled with air — it will fall to the ground). When we have God’s hope and things get tough, we can rise above it (let the balloon with helium go — it will head to the ceiling).

Discussion Questions:

- Who do you know that shows hope when they have a tough time?
- What can help you remember to have God’s hope when you are having a tough time?

Monday, 5/7/18

“Resurrection Hope”

1 Corinthians 15:51-58

Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed — in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

“Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?”

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

- The last verse of Charles Wesley’s hymn, *Idumea*, goes as follows:

*Waked by the trumpet sound
I from my grave shall rise
And see the Judge with glory crowned
And see the flaming skies!*

In the previous verses of this hymn, one encounters Wesley’s struggle with the reality of human mortality. It ends in this last verse with an incredible proclamation of hope in resurrection, borrowing Paul’s language from his first letter to the Corinthians. The hope of resurrection, and of being face-to-face with God, is our ultimate hope in Jesus. Paul says that in this hope death has lost its victory over us — that death does not have the last say. How does Jesus’ victory over death, and the hope of resurrection, affect your understanding of God and his purposes? How might this ultimate hope of resurrection affect how you live day-to-day?

- What do you think Paul means by telling us to “stand firm” and “let nothing move you”? How can you give yourself fully to the work of the Lord?

Prayer: Holy God, thank you for the gift of hope and the promise of resurrection! Help me to live my life without fear and trusting in your promises. Give me strength to give myself fully to your work each day. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Tuesday, 5/8/18

“Hope, Together”

Hebrews 12:14-15

Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

- Seeking to live a life of holiness is one way that we live into the hope that Jesus gives us. To be holy means to be set apart. What do you think it means to be “set apart”? What would it look like for you to live a life “set apart”?
- Living a holy, set-apart life can be difficult in our current cultural context. We all need help with this. The author of Hebrews encourages us to help each other in living holy lives, seeing to it that no one falls short of the grace of God. Think about the people you are connected to in the church. What are some ways you can be an encouragement to them as you seek to live holy lives together?

Prayer: Holy God, thank you for loving us, and for making us to be holy. It can be hard to live faithfully when there are so many distractions, so I pray for your grace to live into your holiness. Help me also to seek the help of others, and to be an encouragement to them. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Wednesday, 5/9/18

“Sure Hope”

Job 17:15

*... where then is my hope —
who can see any hope for me?*

Hebrews 6:19-20a

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf.

- The book of Job recounts Job’s struggle with the loss of everything he knew and loved, despite being faithful to God. The book of Job, however, isn’t really about Job. It is about God. The book ends in a mysterious and thought-provoking way, making the point that Job, though faithful, had yet to scratch the surface of who God is. Have you ever found yourself in the place of Job? Have you ever felt hopeless? What was that like? Where did you see the presence of God in the midst of that experience?
- The book of Hebrews makes the case that our ultimate hope is to be found in Jesus, the anchor of our souls, who has prepared the path for us to be in the immediate presence of our Creator. Think about what an anchor does. An anchor holds a boat firm and secure in the midst of the storms and the waves. The anchor does not cause the storm to dissipate or go away. Our faith in Jesus enables us to endure any of life’s struggles, by anchoring us in the hope of Jesus’ redemptive and restorative work. What struggles do you experience in life? How can you “anchor” yourself to Jesus? How does hope in Jesus affect your daily life?

Prayer: Holy and Loving God, anchor me in your hope and empower me to be a beacon of your hope and trust with everyone I meet today. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Thursday, 5/10/18

“Hope Through Trust”

Romans 15:13 (NIV)

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.

- Sometimes in life, it is hard to have a hopeful outlook. We may find ourselves in a place that isn't all that hopeful. People may offer advice that isn't all that helpful when it comes to being hopeful. This verse shows a clear relationship between trust and God. How can trust in God help you find hope? Meditate on this question or dialogue about it with a partner.
- I would bet most people, myself included, would believe that hope leads to peace and joy. For example, if you have a hopeful outlook, you will be peaceful and joyful. The scripture suggests the exact opposite. It says when God fills us with peace and joy, we are made hopeful. How can you allow God to fill you with peace and joy to live with a hopeful attitude as a servant of God?

Prayer: God of hope, fill me/us, our church and community with peace and joy so that we can truly be a hopeful people. Let me/us dwell in your peace and dwell in your joy for the remainder of our days.

Friday, 5/11/18

“Outlook of Joy”

Matthew 13:44 (NIV)

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

- I want you to imagine for a moment that you have just received a surprising phone call. When you answer, someone tells you that you have just inherited one billion US dollars. You don't believe it but when you check your bank account, it's true! What is the amount of joy you would feel in that moment when you realized you became a billionaire? The scripture compares this amount of joy to attaining the kingdom of heaven. The reality is that we have already been given this type of treasure by God. In fact, your life is a treasure from God. How does understanding our life as a treasure from God help fill us with joy?
- I like to believe many people saw this field, but it just so happened that this man was the only one who was clever enough to spot the treasure. Sometimes I think our faith is like that. Many in the world fail to see the value of a relationship with God. However, there are some who passionately pursue God with joy. How do we gain perspective to see God's promises as joy throughout our life?

Prayer: Loving God, create in us a unique perspective in this world. Help us to see the things of this world through Your eyes. Let us not miss the joy that you offer for our lives. Amen.

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