

HOPE *Rising*



HIGHLANDS FELLOWSHIP

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Icebreaker: If you could have an endless supply of any food, what would you get?

Hope Rising
Luke 24:13-35, Eph. 4:23
04/28/2019

Main Point

Jesus' resurrection gives us confidence that God is with us in all that we do.

Opening Doors

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Growing up, what were your dreams or goals?

Are your dreams and goals different now from when you were younger? Explain.

What do you do when life doesn't go as planned: go with the flow or fight it?

The way we react in tough seasons of life often reveals the source of our hope. For some people hope is found in a spouse, a job, or even children. However, our hope is to be found in one place alone - Jesus Christ. In today's text, we read about two disciples who had lost all hope until Jesus appeared to them.

Digging In

Ask someone to read Luke 24:13-27

As the two were walking from Emmaus, why did they not recognize Jesus? (vs. 13-16)

What were the disciples' expectations of Jesus? (vs. 21)

When Jesus died on the cross so did their hope in Him as their "deliverer". The disciples found themselves in an uncertain situation.

Ask someone to read Luke 24:22-24

Why did the men have a hard time believing the women's account of the tomb being empty or that Jesus was alive?

Ask a volunteer to read Luke 24:28-31

What significant realizations did the disciples have when they recognized Jesus?

After hours of confusion and despair, the revelation of Jesus in their midst meant that He really had risen from the dead, that He was the long-awaited Messiah and that He was establishing His kingdom. They had heard it prophesied and hoped the time was near, but now that hope is a reality.

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Ask someone to read Luke 24:33-35

What is significant about the response of Cleopas and his friend once they knew that Jesus was alive?

Once the disciples recognized Jesus, they had the irresistible urge to share with other what they knew to be true. They immediately went back to Jerusalem, shared their experience, and heard other testimonies from their fellow believers.

Ask someone to read Ephesians 4:23

How does our mindset influence our perspective?

Pastor Allen talked about Cleopas & his friend; they were devastated and depressed thinking that all hope was gone. Then they realized Jesus was with them and hope began to rise. It completely changed their perspective.

Ask someone to read 1 Peter 1:3

What promise is found in this verse? How does this encourage you today?

Jesus' death and resurrection gives us a living hope, not only in the everlasting future as is promised to us in Scripture, but today. We trust that God is working in our circumstances to bring beauty from the ashes.

Taking It Home

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scriptures apply directly to their lives.

Where would you say you have been placing your hope?

What can you do this week to put yourself in a position to have your eyes opened to Christ in a fresh way?

How might you share the hope of this week's message with someone so they too can find beauty in the ashes?



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Prayer Requests

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Icebreaker: If they made a movie of your life, what would it be about and which actor would you want to play you?

Hope Rising: When the Speed of Life is Out of Control
Exodus 20:8-11; 31:17; Psalm 23:1-3
05/05/2019

Main Point

When we prioritize the practice of weekly Sabbath rest, hope rises.

Opening Doors

Use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

When you need a day of rest, what activity are you most likely to do? Why?

Would you say rest is something you get plenty of or not enough? Why?

When you were growing up, what example (if any) of Sabbath rest was given to you?

Sabbath rest is one of the Ten Commandments and we know that Jesus practiced Sabbath rest. Throughout Scripture, taking a rest is a priority. In this week's message, we considered that what it comes down to is that Sabbath rest is a matter of whether or not we really trust God.

What are some reasons taking a regular Sabbath rest is difficult?

Digging In

Discuss the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Ask someone to read Exodus 20:8-11

Of all the Ten Commandments, they all begin with 'Do Not' except for this one, which begins with 'Remember'. Why do you think He tells us to remember the Sabbath? What, specifically, are we to remember about the Sabbath?

What does verse 9 indicate about how God wants you to spend your week?

What did God say about the Sabbath?

Ask someone to read Exodus 31:17

Why did the Lord rest on the seventh day?

The Israelites would have observed the Sabbath on a Saturday, but American Christians have typically taken a Sabbath on Sundays. Does it matter which day of the week you observe the Sabbath? Why or why not?

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If Sunday is our traditional Sabbath, is that interrupted by volunteering at church on Sunday mornings? Why or why not?

The Hebrew word for Sabbath means 'to rest' or 'to cease'. The Lord God 'rested' on the Sabbath, not because He was tired as we get tired, but because He had finished His initial work of creating. The Lord gave rest for us as an example to rest from our work, to contemplate what we have done and what God has done for us.

Ask someone to read Psalm 23:1-3

In this Psalm, David centered himself on the reality that the Lord is his shepherd. When you think of God as your shepherd, what aspect(s) of God's character or actions does this imagery highlight? What are some of the needs that a shepherd meets for his sheep?

What did David say that the Lord "makes" him do in Psalm 23:2? What sort of imagery does this bring? How does that passage relate to your 'green pastures'?

Taking It Home

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture apply directly to their lives.

How does taking rest in spite of difficulties demonstrate trust in God?

Which of the three points of application made in this week's message stand out to you the most. Explain. (Three points below)

- Adopt God's rhythm for life
- Find activities and people that refresh
- Move into environments that refuel the soul

What is a need in your life right now that you long for God to meet? How might Sabbath rest help you find His hope for that need?



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Prayer Requests

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Icebreaker: If you had to describe yourself using three words, they would be...

Hope Rising: When All You Have Left is Prayer
Luke 11:5-13
05/12/2019

Main Point

When we pray with a kingdom mindset, hope rises.

Opening Doors

Use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is the most outlandish thing you have ever asked for as a birthday or Christmas gift? Did you get it?

When you pray, do you find yourself asking for extravagant things or “small” things? What are some of the things for which you ask? How has God answered some of your prayers?

This week, we are reminded that prayer is the primary connection with God. While he wants us to approach him with our requests, we will see that prayer is more than just a ‘wish list’ or ‘to-do list’ for God.

Digging In

Discuss the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Ask a volunteer to Read Luke 11:5-8

Did someone teach you how to pray? If so, how? If not, how did you learn?

Why do you think Jesus chose this parable to teach about prayer? What is your main take-away from this story?

Ask someone to read Luke 11:9-10

How does this apply to our communication with God?

We are told to keep asking, seeking and knocking – indicating that we should be in constant or persistent prayer. What did Jesus say the results of asking, seeking, and knocking would be? Share an experience when you found this to be true.

Is there ever a time to stop praying for something or someone? Explain



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If we persistently pursue God, He will make us into kingdom people. When we have a Kingdom mindset, the things we ask for are the things God wants us to have—things that bring Him glory—like faith, wisdom, love, grace, strength, and so forth. Our prayers will focus less on the stuff we want and more on the relationship with Him.

Ask someone to Read Luke 11:11-13

How does this passage give you confidence in God's answers to your prayers?

Jesus concludes verse 13 with the promise of the Holy Spirit. Why does God give us His Holy Spirit? Are you aware of His presence in your life?

Just as children should expect the best from their earthly parents, when we pray expectantly, we know our Heavenly Father will give us His best. His presence and power assures us we will receive an answer for which we pray.

Taking It Home

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture apply directly to their lives.

Where would you place yourself on the pray-er continuum that was discussed in this week's message: Explain (Types of pray-er below)

- Disappointed pray-er
- Developing pray-er
- Devoted pray-er

What will help you to move from one place on the “pray-er continuum” to the next?

As a group, commit to praying for each other regularly and together each week as you meet.

Think about connecting with someone in your group to be your prayer partner.



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Icebreaker: If you were an ice cream flavor, which one would you be and why?

Hope Rising: When Facing Life Alone
Ruth 1: 8-9; Philippians 4:12-13; Acts 2:42-44
05/19/2019

Main Point

When we seek contentment in Christ alone, hope rises.

Opening Doors

Use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

How do you define contentment?

In your own experiences, what have you discovered to be the key to your contentment?

In what circumstances do you most typically struggle to be content?

In this week's message, we explored how to find hope when we are facing life alone. We can learn from the examples of Ruth, Naomi, Boaz, and Paul—all who experienced different facets of singleness.

Hope rises when we seek contentment in Christ alone.

Digging In

Discuss the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Ask someone to read Ruth 1:8-9, 16-17

After losing their husbands, what did Naomi tell her daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah, to do? Why do you think she encouraged them to return to their home?

From verses 16-17, what is the significance of Ruth's response to Naomi?

What challenges do you think the singleness of Ruth and Naomi caused them?

Ask someone to read Philippians 4:12-13

How does Paul's view of contentment compare with the modern world's view of contentment?

When we struggle to be content, what are we saying about our view of God and our relationship with Him?

Read verse 13 again. What made Paul's contentment possible? On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being highest) how content are you? Why?

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What is the closest you've come to experiencing the type of contentment Paul describes in this verse?

When we are focused on living God-honoring lives, our contentment is measured by what God is doing in us rather than what we have. In order to understand true contentment, we have to reject the notion that it has anything to do with accumulating material possessions or earthly successes.

Ask someone to read Acts 2:42, 44

Why is it important that we gather in community?

What is hard about connecting with others in community?

Taking It Home

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture apply directly to their lives.

Think about Jesus' time on earth. How did He model the three points of application for us? What can we learn from Him? Explain. (Points below)

- Be patient while you grieve
- Don't go it alone
- Learn to be content.

Why do you think it is necessary to be intentional about being content? What can you do to help improve your contentment level this week?



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Prayer Requests

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Additional Notes

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Small GROUP COVENANT Highlands Fellowship CHURCH Date _____

Leaders _____ Ph.# _____

Hosts _____ Ph.# _____

Small groups thrive on participation! The purpose of this covenant is to help you to discuss and clarify your group's goals, expectations, and commitments.

Small GROUPS: THEIR PURPOSE

Small Groups exist to promote spiritual maturity through meaningful Christian relationships and study of God's Word (Romans 8:29 & Hebrews 10:24-25). It's a goal of each small group to balance the five purposes. (Worship, Evangelism, Discipleship, Ministry, Fellowship)

SHARE

Each week we'll take time to share what is happening in our lives. At first, this may feel awkward or intimidating. Don't over-think it and don't feel you have to share your deepest darkest secrets. Just get to know each other and let the conversations develop over time.

STUDY

Each week we'll study a section from God's Word relating to the previous weekend's sermon or an appropriate spiritual growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life.

SUPPORT

Each week we'll learn how to take care of one another as Christ commanded (John 15:9-13). This care can take many forms such as *prayer, encouragement, listening, challenging one another, and meeting real needs.*

SERVE

Spiritual Growth is fostered not only by what we gain through the support and input of others, but also through service to others. The role each of us fills is important to the health of the church and for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus to our community (Ephesians 4:11-16). It is our hope that you can find and/or be affirmed in the ways God has designed you to serve, and make a difference in God's Kingdom.

WE AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING VALUES

Clear Purpose To grow healthy, spiritual lives by balancing the 5 Biblical purposes in your Small Group.

Group Attendance To give priority to the group meeting (call if I am absent or late)

Safe Environment To create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved so we will be careful with being judgmental, giving quick answers, and offering our simple fixes to complex situations.

Be Confidential To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group.

Conflict Resolution To avoid gossip and to immediately resolve any concerns by following the principles of Matt. 18:15-17 which begins with going directly to the person with whom you have an issue. Prov. 26:20, Eph. 4:29

Spiritual Health To challenge and encourage one another to live a healthy and balanced spiritual life that is pleasing to God.

FIVE MARKS OF A HEALTHY GROUP

For our group to be healthy, we need to . . .

- 1) Gospel-Centered Hospitality. (1 Peter 4:9, Hebrews 13:2)
- 2) Gospel-Centered Authenticity. (Matthew 5:8, James 5:16)
- 3) Gospel-Centered Service. (Matthew 20:25-28, Gal. 6:1-2)
- 4) Gospel-Centered Mission. (Matthew 28:19-20 Eph. 4:11-16)
- 5) Gospel-Centered Bible Study. (Acts 2:46-47, Titus 2)



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GUIDELINES & COVENANT

- Dates** We'll meet on _____ nights for _____ weeks. Our final meeting of this quarter will be on _____.
- Time** We'll arrive between _____ & _____ and begin the meeting at _____. We'll spend approximately _____ minutes in singing (optional), _____ minutes in study/discussion, and _____ minutes in prayer/sharing.
- Children** Group members are responsible to arrange child care for their children. As a group we can also brainstorm various ways to address the need of childcare. If we need ideas, we can talk with someone from the small group team.
- Study** Our studies will focus on the same topic covered in the previous Sunday's sermon or an appropriate spiritual growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life as we balance the five purposes.
- Prayer** Praying for one another.
- Homework & Attendance** Joining a Small Group requires a commitment to attend regularly and to participate in the discussion. Obviously, allowances are made for sickness, vacation, work conflicts, etc.

If we cannot come to a meeting, we will call _____.

- Desserts** -
- Social & Service Project(s)** -
- Other** -

We agree together in Christ to honor this covenant.
(To be decided by each person on or before the third week.)

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 12. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 13. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 14. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 15. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 16. _____ |
| 8. _____ | 17. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 18. _____ |



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WHAT'S NEXT?

Whether your small group has been meeting for some time or is brand new, "what's next?" is a question we all ask. Below is a list of ideas to think about as you and your group determine what's next. This study was designed to create conversations; continuing to build relationships with each other is the heart of small groups.

- Participate in Love Week: You've heard Allen, your campus pastor and community outreach coordinator talk about Love Week and the importance of "loving our neighbor". Make plans now to participate in one of the numerous opportunities your campus has organized or get your group together to meet the needs that you see around you.
- Spend time together to get to know each other better.
 - Have a bonfire with smores and prayer.
 - Get outdoors - go hiking or have a cookout. Think about what it is that you enjoy doing and invite others along.
 - Share a meal together. Gather for lunch after Sunday services, meet for potluck at someone's home or running by your local fast food joint, grab a bag and meet at the park - these are just a few thoughts on how getting your group together can be convenient.
 - Support your group's children by checking out their ballgame one evening; hang out on the bleachers, catch up with each other, pray for each other.
- Continue to meet and discuss the weekly sermons. Rotate your meeting spots. It doesn't have to be in a home; meet at the lake, the bowling alley, your local coffee shop, restaurant.

These are only ideas to get you started; we're confident that you have great ideas as well. Take time to collaborate and decide what is the best way your group can build relationships with each other. Remember, these are your people! Hang out with your people, support your people, love your people.

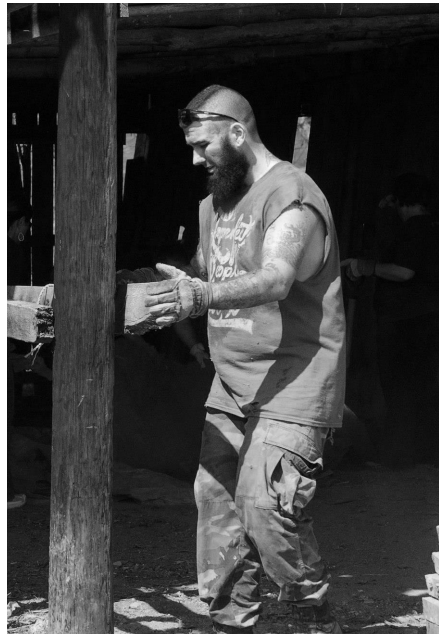
We are here to serve you. If we can be of any assistance along the way, please contact your Small Group Coordinator or Campus Pastor with any need you may have.

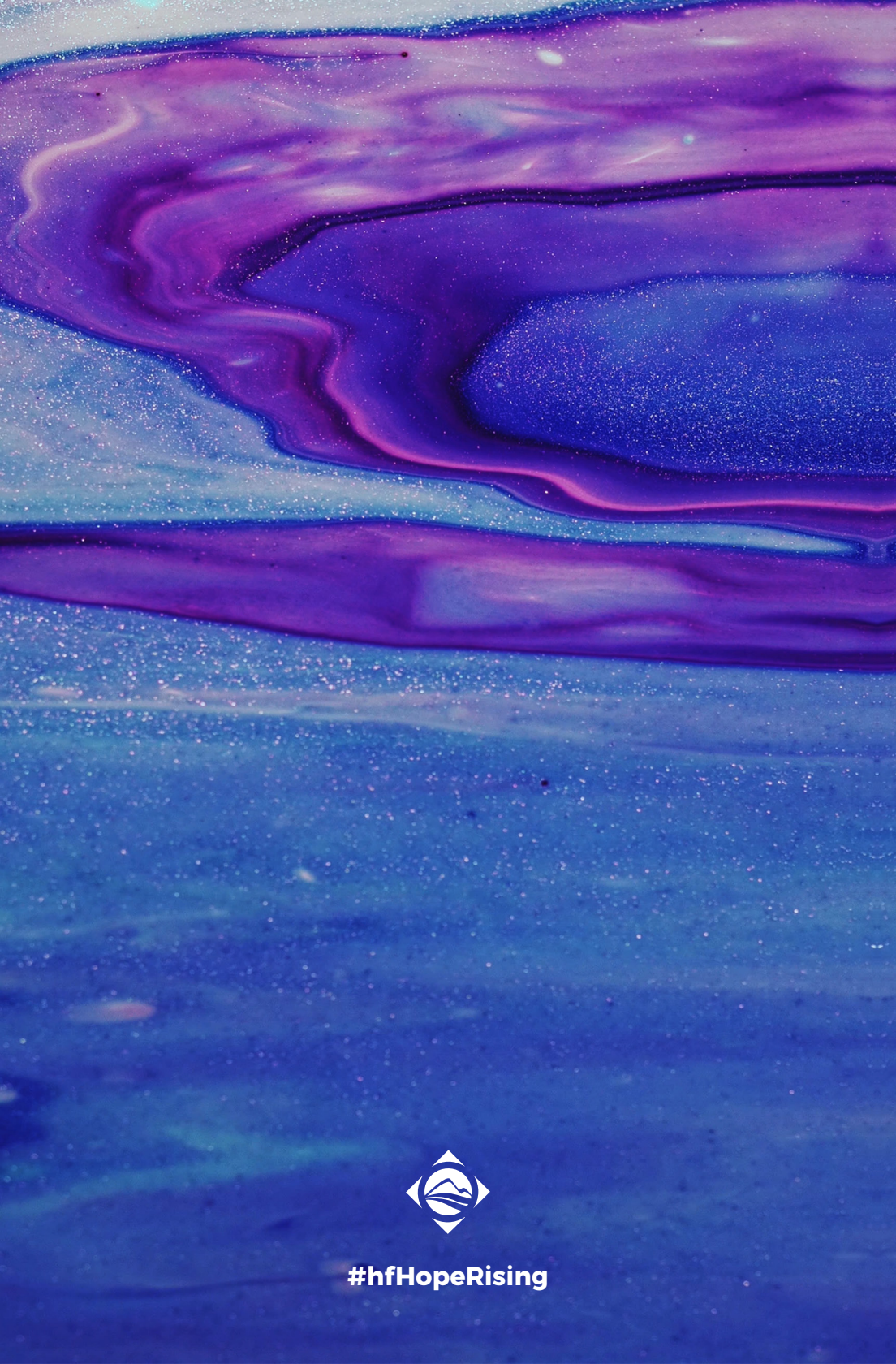


LOVE WEEK

SAVE THE DATES! Week of June 3

This will be a great opportunity for small groups to get together and love on our communities.





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