

Hope

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Notes

What does it look like to live our everyday lives in the Kingdom of God? It means living with hope from Jesus, both for ourselves and for others. When tragedies happen, it shows that things aren't right; we live in a fallen, imperfect world in need of redemption through Jesus.

1 Corinthians 13:13

Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.

Hope is the bridge between our faith and God's love. Without faith, we're stranded with nothing to hold on to. And through hope, we go from loving God, to loving people, to loving God more, to loving people more, and this becomes an upward spiral that transforms us.

Hope means loving people enough to be present with them in the middle of their pain. It means letting them know that they're not alone. You may not have the right words and you may not know what to do, but just by being present with someone, you can offer them hope.

Matthew 5:13

You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.

The people Jesus was speaking to here would've understood the many uses of salt in their ancient time. One use for salt was as a supplement to fertilizer to help crops thrive. And that is what we are called to do as Christians: help others thrive in the Kingdom of God. And when you go through a season where you've lost some of your saltiness, let others be the ones to help you thrive.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing.

Our hope is meant to make people question what is different about us. If our hope isn't bringing others to the Kingdom, if it isn't bringing people to God and introducing them to His love, it is useless. And if we begin to lose our hope, our compassion goes with it; we begin to care only about ourselves.

Psalms 119:105

Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.

Matthew 5:14-16

You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

2 Corinthians 4:7

We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves.

Everything is scarier in the dark. But turning on a light takes that fear away. God's light brings hope and freedom to those who experience it, and He calls us His light.

Clay pots were like the plastic bags or to-go containers of Jesus' time. They were used and then thrown out. No one would have stored their treasure in a clay pot. But God sees us as vessels who can bring light to a world in need of His hope and love.

Group Questions

- What is hope?
- When have you experienced someone helping you keep your hope in a difficult time?
- What happens if we begin to lose our hope?
- How can you help other people thrive in the Kingdom of God?

Prayer

The hope we have in you is like nothing else. Give us opportunities to use the gifts you've given us to help others thrive in your plan for them.