

Prayer:

Father - open our minds and hearts. Help us to see how simple this is for You, but help us to understand how hard...impossible this is for us, on our own, without You. through this, drive us back to Christ, to understand how utterly incapable we are to have hope, but How perfectly capable Christ is to give us hope. Help us to see that once our hope is grounded in You, help is also grounded in knowing you better.

This semester's sunday school time has three purposes. Through each week, hopefully you will find your life intersecting with one or more of these purposes.

- 1) If you don't know Christ or don't know Him well, through these study's, you will come to know Him better. Heed the warning of **Acts 17:30-31**

“Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now commanding men that everyone everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He determined, having furnished proof to all by raising Him from the dead.”

- 2) You will find help for yourself, area's you have struggled in, publicly or privately. You will see that God not only has answers for you in His word, but His heart is that you would love Him and trust Him in those most difficult of times. **Matthew 11:28-30** should be your companion at this moment.

“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

- 3) You may have already been through these seasons, and you think, as we go along, “where was this when I was struggling”? **2 Corinthians 1:3-7** needs to be your companion right now. God is or has worked to prepare you for the service to others, who are suffering now. Hear Him, as He calls you, and equips you through His word, and be prepared to go into those uncomfortable moments, when He calls you to share His work, love, and compassion to a world that desperately needs Him.

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.”

Today is about HOPE and HELP (Ps.121)

John 3:36 (choose someone to read)

“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on Him.”

Romans 2:5 (choose someone to read)

“because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgement of God”

Romans 3:10 (choose someone to read)

“There is none righteous, not even one.”

Romans 6:23

“For the wages of sin is death”

Someone who sins, someone under wrath is called.....(sinner)

WHERE'S THE HOPE? (SO IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND)

Romans 5:8-9 (choose someone to read)

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners (enemies), Christ died for us. Much more then (since), having been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.”

As Acts 17 reminded us at the beginning, your repentance is required.

(talk about Repentance card)

So God has justified us, and saved us from His wrath. Does He really care when we feel hopeless?

Romans 8:28-30 (choose someone to read)

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers; and those whose He predestined, He also called; and those whom He called, He also justified; and those whom He justified, He also glorified.”

1 Peter 5:7 (choose someone to read)

“casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.”

Other verses on hope

2 Corinthians 4:7 -8

1 Peter 1:6-7

Ps. 121

Ps. 119:37

Ps. 143:11

Exodus 34:6-7a

Micha 7:18

Romans 5:2-5

Deut. 31:7-8

Ps. 71:20

Ps. 119:107

Hebrews 13:5, 6, 8

Matthew 11:28-30

Pa. 91:15

2Corinthians 1:3-7

Ps. 46:1-3

Ps. 119:25

Ps. 119:156

Exodus 3:7-8

Lamentations 3:22-23

Philippians 4:19

II Corinthians 4:16-18 (choose someone to read)

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. **So we fix our eyes** not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”

If this verse is one guide in scripture to hope, what do we discover in this verse?

- no denial of physical struggle, difficulties...
- true renewal happens where?
- light and momentary afflictions? Compared to what?
- How do we do this? (σκοπεω)(skopeo - to take aim, fix your gaze)
- where is our focus to be?
- does this come natural? need for intentionality.

HELP!

Transition to Change

1) Unbiblical Methods Lead to Failure

- 1) Deliverance Ministries
- 2) Mysticism
- 3) Medication
- 4) Self-Improvement Formulas
- 5) Moralism
- 6) Recovery Programs

2) The Gospel is the Key to Change

Galatians 3:3

- 1) Remember what God has done for you
- 2) Your standing with God is secure in Christ
- 3) The Gospel promotes holiness
- 4) Remember who you are (Romans 6:11)
- 5) A liberating Truth (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- 6) Christ is better than the sins which tempt us (Is 55:1-2)
- 7) Christ empowers us to bear fruit

3) Your Responsibility toward change

- 1) Getting the balance right (p.36)

- 2) What is the purpose of God's law (Galatians 3:24, Titus 2:14)
- 3) Scriptural examples of the call to gospel obedience
 - a) Romans 6:12-13
 - b) Romans 12:1-2
 - c) Mark 8:34b
- 4) Our motive for obedience is crucial (1John 4:19)
- 4) When will change take place?
 - 1) God is the author of change (Philippians 1:6)
 - 2) God uses means to accomplish change
 - a) the church (1 Timothy 3:15, Ephesians 4:12)
 - b) scripture (John 15: 7-8)
 - c) prayer (p.53-54)
 - d) trials (Ps. 119:67,71, James 1:2-4)
 - e) counsel and admonition (Romans 15:14, Galatians 6:1-2, Proverbs 12:15)
- 5) Conclusion
 - 1) God's power
 - 2) our responsibility