

Get Your Hopes Up**Romans 1:8-17 | Romans 15:13**

Say, This is the first in a series dealing with the truth of hope.

Ask, What are some reasons we tell people not to get their hopes up? (It's not realistic; prior disappointment; fear of getting hurt; we don't feel deserving; Murphy's Law – if anything can go wrong, it will; self-protection)

Say, Michael pointed out in the sermon that “Biblically, it is bad advice to tell people not to get their hopes up.”

Have someone read Romans 1:8-17 - First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you. For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

Romans 1:8-17

Say, Paul is still trying to communicate hope to those listening. Remember that Paul is writing from prison talking about hope!

Ask, What do you think your hope level? Full? or Empty?

Ask, How would people describe you? Would they describe you as hopeFULL or hopeEmpty? (for this question, do not allow them to choose something in the middle. Force them to answer either full or empty.)

Say, Cynicism is actually anti-hope/negative pride.

Ask, What about Self-confidence? - (Michael reminded us that self-confidence is actually anti-hope as well. Who needs hope when I have me!

Say, Pessimism is abusive humility.

Ask, How do you think Realism is really only statistical humility?

Say, Humility without hope is just another form of pride.

Ask, Do you remember how Michael said Blind optimism is really just ignorance? (The example he used is someone who is overly happy/gleeful at a funeral.)

Say, God optimism and God confidence is rooted in the humility of our own sin and Christ is the giver and the gift. Knowing and believing this moves us to be Hopeful in God.

Say, The first point of the sermon is **Hope is good for you.**

Ask, How do you think Paul was able to be hopeful and praying without ceasing while in prison in Rome?
(Acknowledging that God is in control.)

Ask, How are some ways that you acknowledge that God is in control of every circumstance you find yourself in? (allow the group to share)

Say, **Hope is good for others.** When we place our hope in God, others can be encouraged by that as well.

Ask, When has someone else's hope in God been an encouragement to you?

Say, Sharing in the gospel is good for all and Michael mentioned that is mutually encouraging faith. One of the beauties of being in covenant fellowship with others is that we can be encouraged by one another.

Say, The third point of the sermon is **Being people of faith means we are people of hope.**

Faith and hope are synonymous. They go hand in hand.

Have someone **read** Hebrews 11:1 - *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*

Read Matthew 18:1-4 *At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

Ask, Why do you think Jesus directed their question of "Who is the greatest?" to focus on a child?

Say, Having great faith is to be like a child. A child has humble faith because they don't know it all already yet.

Ask, Are you consistently hopeful?

Say, the final point is **We must be known for Good News.**

Say, Paul is not ashamed of the gospel because his Hope is in Christ.

Ask, What does life look like when our hope lies in the opinions of others? (we will always be adjusting to their version of the truth rather than the truth of the gospel.)

Say, When our hope is in Christ, we are compelled to share the good news of Christ as a result of what He has done for us. And we want others to experience this freedom that comes only through Christ.

Allow time for the group to share how others can be praying for them this week.

Encourage your group by sharing the hope that you have discovered in Christ.

Close in prayer.