

Get Your Hopes Up Series

Hope for Love

Say, Last week we began the Get Your Hopes Up Series. While there are many take-aways from that sermon, the following statement is a good one to build off of for this week's discussion – "Being people of faith is synonymous with being people of hope in a Christ-followers life." (Allow time for people to reflect on last week's sermon if needed.)

Say, Michael mentioned that "Love is the deepest expression of God's character."

Ask participants to reflect on that and describe what that statement means to them. (Allow some time for them to share.)

Say, This week's focal passage is Romans 5:1-8.

Ask, is anyone willing to read this for us tonight?

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
Romans 5:1-8 ESV

Remind them that the therefore in v. 1 refers back to Romans 4.

Say, We are not justified by our actions (works) but by His grace. Hope is rooted in God's character and faithfulness.

Say, There are three loves that were covered in this week's sermon.

Hope for brotherly love. (this is the simplest form of love) (It is being accepted by others)

Allow members to share what they remember about this type of love. Make sure that these are mentioned. (Accepting of others; shared mission and calling; shared name (family), shared team; tight knit friend; know how to push your buttons, but don't most of the time; know your weaknesses and strive to make you better; siblings, bff's; created by circumstance, not so much choice.)

Ask members to share the names of some people they consider to be this kind of friend in their life.

Remind them that Jesus is a better brother - while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Say, The second type of love hoped for is **Hope for otherly love** (don't look that word up in Webster's.)

Ask for members to share what they remember about this type of love. Make sure these are mentioned (Companionship; romantic love; the experience of two becoming one; not looking for someone to complete us but a uniting of souls where nothing is hidden.)

Say, Marriage is a picture of the Holy Spirit in our lives where nothing is hidden. It is like holding up a mirror and showing your reflection. (Be sensitive to those in the group who may be struggling in their marriage; are divorced and know

Say, The HS is a better companion. There is nothing hidden from Him in our lives.

Say, The last hope shared was **Hope for Fatherly love.**

Ask, What are some descriptions of this kind of love? (The love of a parent; Unconditional love; whether biological or adopted, the love is unadulterated; faith in our heavenly, adoptive Father)

Ask, How have you experienced God as a better Father?

Say, Many struggle with how we were reared and have a tendency to pass on those same traits. We fail to trust God as a better Father and revert back to our past experiences. Sometimes that means that we can focus on efficiency and expediency and rush others to grow and become whom God wants them to be rather than allowing the Holy Spirit to do His work in their lives. We also do this with our children at times and can rush kids into losing their sense of wonder.

Say, these two verses reflect on the fact that God is a promise keeping God and loves His own. In fact, He loves His own so much that He sent His Son to cover our payment because we cannot cover it on our own. He is a covenant keeping God.

Read Deut. 7:9

“Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations,”

Deuteronomy 7:9 ESV

Read or have someone read - 1 John 4:9-10

“In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

1 John 4:9-10 ESV

Allow members to share related thoughts and prayer requests. Take time to pray for and encourage one another.

Say, As a form of encouragement hear this - Get Your Hopes Up for Love first fulfilled through Him, following Christ's model of brotherly love, allowing the Holy Spirit to guide you into otherly love and then allow God to mold you into His example of Fatherly love.