



COMMUNITY OF HOPE

Sermon Discussion Questions

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Series: God of Hope

Week 1: "May the God of Hope"

1. ICE BREAKER: The message began today by talking about memorable and recognizable icons and brands. Many of us still remember brands and commercials from our childhood. What's one old commercial or advertisement that you still remember?
2. Read our Scripture for this week, Romans 15:13:

¹³May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

This verse, as the theme verse of Community of Hope, is probably familiar to you. When you read it again today, which word or phrase is particularly standing out to you? Why?

3. N.T. Wright writes, "Hope, for the Christian, is not wishful thinking or mere blind optimism...It is a mode of knowing... within which new things are possible, options are not shut down, new creation can happen....And this is the point where believing in the resurrection of Jesus suddenly ceases to be a matter of

inquiring about an odd event in the first century and becomes a matter of rediscovering hope in the twenty-first century."

Talk about Wright's definition of Christian hope, compared to our cultural understanding of hope. How are all of our hopes based on the resurrection of Jesus? What does this mean to you personally?

4. The biggest danger in our spiritual life is forgetting God. This has been true of God's people since the Old Testament. Moses warns the people in Deuteronomy 4:9 *"Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live."*

Do you feel the tendency to forget God in your own life? When are you most prone to forget? Why do you think this is such a common occurrence across human history?

5. When we start forgetting God's goodness, there are four main consequences in our lives:
 - 1) I start claiming credit for what God has done in my life.
 - 2) I stop asking God for help.
 - 3) I stop trusting God in difficult times.
 - 4) I become pessimistic about the future.

Discuss these four effects of forgetting God's goodness. Which one do you feel most prone to in your life? Describe what this looks like for you. What happens when these actions start to take root?

6. The key spiritual antidote to forgetting God is to remember. First, remember who God is. Read John 4:8 and Exodus 34:6-7a.

What do these verses teach us about who God is? How would you describe who God is in your own words to someone who is feeling despair?

7. Next, remember what God has done. Remembering what God has done is our testimony - our story of God's faithfulness to us personally! Read Psalm 77:11.

Think over your life. Share a story of God's faithfulness to you. What has he done for you? How can you keep this story in front of you so that you'll never forget it?

8. Finally, remember what God promised He will do. Read Romans 8:28. God promises to work ALL things together for good of those who love Him - even the worst things.

Do you find it hard or easy to remember this promise? Why? Have you ever seen this to be true of a difficult situation in your own life? Describe how God turned something bad for your good, remembering that we don't always see this in fullness until eternity.

9. George MacDonald said, "Yet I know that good is coming to me--that good is always coming; though few have at all times the simplicity and the courage to believe it."

React to this quote. Can you believe this? If not, what stands in your way? What would change in your life if you believed, truly believed, that good is always coming? What are some daily practices or habits that could help with this belief?

10. PRACTICE: Put on some prayerful music. Take time to get quiet for a moment. Have someone read Psalm 23 aloud. Then read it again silently to yourself.

*The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.*

*You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,*

*and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.*

Ask the Holy Spirit to highlight a phrase or verse that is important for you in this season. Underline it, and ask God why this is important.

Once everyone is finished, share the phrase or verse, and pray for each other.