



MEETING AGENDA

WELCOME (10 MINUTES)

This week we continue our series, *Light in the Darkness*. In our culture, when we talk about hope, it's often just wishful sentiments. Perhaps, "I hope you have a great vacation!" or "I hope our team wins!" But the biblical concept of hope goes beyond wishful sentiments to absolute confidence. When the Bible says Jesus' return is our blessed hope, that doesn't mean that we hope he comes back or wish he would come. Rather, we are certain he will come through for us and he is coming back.

- Please don't forget to take attendance via the attendance reminder email. It's so important!

ICEBREAKER (10 MINUTES)

David said our hope starts with what we know. Do you have a favorite verse of Scripture that you believe with all your heart; perhaps a verse that has been an anchor verse for your life that has given you hope in difficult times?

INTRODUCTION (5-10 MINUTES)

What was one idea from Pastor David's message that particularly stood out to you? Share that with the group.

Biblical hope comes from obediently walking with God and experiencing firsthand his character, power and faithfulness. It begins with a simple step of faith, and grows with every step thereafter. Share with your group a time in your life when you experienced God's character, power or faithfulness.

INTO THE WORD (25 MINUTES)

1. Read Daniel 3:14-19.

How would you describe Nebuchadnezzar in this story? What do you notice about him?

What most stands out to you about the three young men and how they responded to Nebuchadnezzar's threats?

How would you describe the courage and confidence of these three young Jewish men?

H.O.S.T. Guidance: Nebuchadnezzar was full of arrogance and thought his threat to the young men would cause them to shudder or melt in fear. He scorned the god of these men and dared them to think they could be delivered by any other power but his own. These young Jewish men trusted their God explicitly. They answered Nebuchadnezzar as if they had faced such a threat every day. They had no hesitation or wavering, but believed God could and would rescue them. Yet they allowed room for God to respond differently than they expected. That, in itself, demonstrated great faith! Their answer was so confident and detached from fear, that Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury.

2. Read Titus 2:11–13.

What does Paul say is our instructor, teaching us to “renounce ungodliness and worldly passions”?

In what ways can this be your “teacher”?

What are we instructed to do in this present age?

What, according to this passage, should we hope for?

H.O.S.T. Guidance: The teacher is the grace of God. The truth that God loves us and has saved us from our sin, apart from anything we could do to earn it, should teach us to live a godly life in response. God has looked beyond our sin to the sacrifice of Jesus, so how can we live any longer in sin? (Rom. 6:2) We are taught to live blamelessly as we wait for Jesus' second coming. Our “blessed hope” is that we will see Jesus in all his glory and all that is wrong will be made right.

3. Read 1 Peter 3:13-15.

What's your takeaway from v.13-14?

In v.15, Peter assumes something within us will be obvious to the people around us. What is that assumed quality? In what ways does your life demonstrate that quality?

What character traits should be evident in us as we share this quality with others? How did Daniel and his friends exhibit those traits?

H.O.S.T. Guidance: We should not live in fear of anything that might happen to us. No enemy can triumph over us. Even when trouble comes, and it will, we are favored by God. We should not live in any fear. Peter assumes our hope in Jesus will be in us and evident to the people around us. As people notice our hope, they will ask us from where that hope comes. We should be prepared at all

times to tell people how Jesus is our hope and to respond with gentleness and respect. Daniel and his friends always responded to the Babylonians with gentleness and respect. What an example for us to follow!

APPLICATION (25 MINUTES)

What do you know deep within you that gives your life hope? Take a moment and each person share something that they know about God that gives them an immovable hope.

We can interpret and respond to our current circumstances through the lens of faith or we can interpret our God through the lens of our current reality. Daniel did the former, but it's easy to do the latter. Think of one current reality for you that becomes more hopeful when you look at it through the lens of faith. Can you share that with your group?

Which of the four "hope killers" do you most struggle with?

1. Anxiety over what might happen
2. Being fixated on the present
3. Dependent on outcomes
4. Forgetting the link between challenges and growth

What one idea from David's message can help you with that particular hope killer?

H.O.S.T. Guidance: Be sure to leave some time to close your meeting with the question below. Pass out the Invite Cards that were in your H.O.S.T. Kit.

Has God placed on your heart two people in your life who need hope? Can you invite them to our Easter services? Spend some time as you close in prayer, praying for those people who need the hope of Jesus.

PRAYER (10 MINUTES)

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for the hope we have in Jesus. We are people of hope because of your love and your promises. We can live with absolute confidence in you. Please help us to live godly lives in response to your love. And please give us the courage and opportunity to invite our friends and acquaintances to our Easter services, that they too, might find their hope in Jesus. Amen.