

Hope in Jesus

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[0:00] All right. Hey, good to see you guys. My name is Donnie, and I'm one of the pastors at One Harbor. I'm typically in Moorhead, so if you're visiting, you won't have to look at this on a regular basis, so that's encouraging. This morning, as Jesse alluded to, is a little bit different than normal.

It's a bit more of like a family meeting. We officially start One Harbor Havelock next Sunday, but man, I love that you're here if you are visiting because you get a chance to kind of look under the hood and see what we're talking about, see what we're thinking about on this morning, which I think will be helpful. This is pretty incredible what's happened in this space. I don't know how many of you guys have seen it before, but this is a remarkable transformation. I'm just, was thinking so much this morning when I pulled in and just kind of just walking around and, you know, seeing everything that was happening. You know, when Jill and I started One Harbor like nine, a little over nine years ago in a living room, we didn't have any of this. I mean, I'll tell you how, like the situation we were running. We had, we took a dog's toy basket and dumped it out, and that's what we used to collect the offering, and this little tiny basket was way too big for the amount of money that was coming in, so that's how things started. I mean, we didn't have any kids ministry. We didn't have, I mean, we had one kid that we would bribe with chocolate, and we basically say like, hey, you need to be quiet for like 30 minutes, and at the end, you get chocolate, and if

I went over, he would raise his hand and interrupt me to let me know that I'd gone too long, you know, and it was time for him to get some candy, you know. So I know that things aren't quite finished yet, right? I know your kids ministry's still getting finished. I know the parking lot's still getting finished. I get all that, but man, this is a really good start. You guys have got incredible space here. You've got more than most people start out with, and that's incredible, and I want to say too that the hours and hours of intentionality, you know, way before this even started putting paint on the wall or any of that, I mean, just the thoughtfulness behind how do we create a space that really, you know, can feel like home for people in, you know, Havelock and Newbern and all the rest. Man, you guys have paid attention to the details, and that stuff really matters, and it's important. It's good. You've also got a bunch of, like, the right people in the right places, which is good. That's good, right? That's important. You've got a lot of really good equipment. I mean, the stuff is really nice. It was a really long time before we had anything that was new, anything. Like, we were borrowing stuff from people's grandmas. Like, I was driving around the state picking up stuff people had left in somebody's yard. Like, that's what we were working with for so long. It's so, man, really, really cool. Right equipment, right people, lots of attention to detail. All the stuff is great, but that's not the most important stuff, right? And so I want to talk a little bit about what the most important things are, you know, when we're thinking about doing what we're doing here. You know, we're here to make a difference in Havelock and Newbern. We want to stay faithful. We want to stay humble. We want to stay hopeful that God is going to use us to be a blessing. And so I want to talk about, you know, how easy it is to miss some of the more important stuff. I want to especially hone in on one of the most important things that is easy to miss and that you can have all of this and still not have. And that's this idea of hope. It's where we place our hope. The word hope, from a Bible standpoint, means it's where we put our expectations. It's where we put our trust. It's where we put our confidence. And so I just want to take a few minutes. This isn't going to be super long. I hope, knock on wood, but I want to just take a little bit of time to talk about this idea of hope. So the first thing I want to say is it's super easy to hope in the wrong things, like really easy. We see it all over the Bible. They're always putting hope in the wrong stuff.

I mean, examples like leadership, you know, and leadership's a really easy place to put your hope in the wrong thing. Like, oh, we've got the right leader. Now we're going to be just fine, you know. In fact, Paul, he writes to this church in Corinth, and he says in 1 Corinthians 2, verse 1, he says, look,

when I came to you, because Paul understands how people think, people are going to be quick to put their hope on him. So he said, here's what I did, brothers. I didn't come, you know, proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. Like, I didn't come like that.

No, no, I decided to know nothing among you except Christ and him crucified. Paul recognizes that, that there's a propensity in people to put their hope on leadership, and that's always going to let you down, you know. At the end of the day, as good as leadership is, nobody's as good as Jesus. And so that's an easy place to put your hope, you know. I was on the fence even to this morning about what to talk about here, and I had a whole nother, like, message done, like, excited about it. And I just felt like it fell under that, like, I felt like it fell under that lofty speech or wisdom category, and I was like, man, that's not helpful. That's not helpful. So I scratched all that, so this is what you got. It's tempting for me as a leader to want to show off.

[5:12] It's tempting for me as a leader to want to show off. It's tempting for people who are led to want to put their hope in leadership. And so that's an easy one. That's an easy place to get your hope wrong.

Another thing you can do is put your hope in success in ministry. This is one that happens a lot in the Bible, and it's a mess. I'll give you a great example. In Luke 10, Jesus has just sent his disciples out for their first little mission trip, sends them out two by two. They go out, some crazy stuff happens. They come back, and that's where we'll pick up in verse 17. It says, the 72 returned with joy.

Joy. That's interesting. We'll just, we'll get back there in a second. They returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name. He said to them, well, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I've given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Man, this sounds great. And Jesus says, nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you. No, I don't rejoice in that. No, rejoice that your names are written in heaven. This is a powerful moment for these disciples, right? One moral of the story is that Jesus can always one-up your story, right? Jesus is the ultimate one-upper. You guys know people like that? Like, you tell them a story, and they got a better one. You know, you tell them a joke, they got a better one. Like, that's Jesus here. They're like, the demons, he's like, ah, I saw Satan fall like lightning. Like, he's seen more, right? He's experienced more. But there's more to this. What we see is how quick these disciples began to trust in the wrong thing. The little phrase there, they returned with joy, it may mean nothing, or it may mean that they went out, they came back with more joy than they left with. It was noteworthy, whatever it is. The amount of joy they came back with was worth noting. It was worth writing down. They returned with joy, right? It seems like the only thing that changed was these miracles. And I know what we're thinking. Like, yeah, they saw demons. They saw miracles. It's all this cool. Like, yeah, that's fine. But they, sorry. But what they left with, what they left was Jesus. They left Jesus. They were with Jesus, like Jesus in the flesh. And then they went, and they came back with more joy than they'd had when they were just with Jesus. Are you tracking with this? It seems like success in ministry, they did some cool stuff, is what gave them joy. And that's a really dangerous trajectory to get on.

That is a dangerous drug to start taking, right? When success in ministry begins to become the thing that gives you joy, that's a really dangerous place to start. Being excited about miracles is great. Finding your joy in them is different.

[7:56] It seems like being with Jesus or belonging to Jesus wasn't enough. Somewhere along the way, belonging to Jesus wasn't enough anymore. And so now they had to have Jesus remind them, your names are written in heaven. Guys, that's the thing to get excited about.

That word rejoice, it means to experience and be conscious of God's grace. So you've got these disciples with Jesus in the flesh, and they were more conscious of grace when they were not with Jesus, but they were doing ministry, and it was working. That's bad. If you and I get, if we get a high off ministry, if we achieve some feelings of like, man, now we're experiencing the grace of God when we're seeing like success in ministry, and we don't get that when we're just with Jesus, I'm telling you, it's a dangerous thing. To be more cognizant of God's grace in good times than bad times is a dangerous road to go down. And it's true for them, it's true for us, it's true for me.

It's a big one for all of us leaders, pastors, especially after weeks like last week, we had Easter. It was incredible. Across one harbor sites, we had over 3,000 people. That's amazing.

We got to be really careful that we don't start going, oh yeah, that's amazing. No, Jesus is amazing. Jesus was amazing. We were sitting around with a handful of people. Everybody thought we were a cult, and we were using a dog's toy basket to collect the offering, you know? Jesus was just as amazing. This was just as worth it. Nothing's changed. That's exciting and awesome. We can be thankful for the opportunity to share Jesus with so many people, but we're not finding our joy in that. Because then we'll start doing sick, weird things to try to keep that. Does that make sense? Yes. We're really tempted quickly to begin to rejoice in the wrong things. In the beginning, for us, salvation is enough. Think about when you first became a Christian. You realized, I was dead in sin. I was destined for hell, and Jesus has set me free. Jesus has saved me. Jesus has given me life. Man, you want to tell the whole world about it. And then that starts to drift and wane, and you start needing something more, right? And you start moving on to ministry to try to fill this gap in your heart that Jesus used to fill. This lady named Kathy Keller, her husband, Tim Keller, wrote an article. Sorry, leads a church in New York. And Kathy wrote this article a few years ago. [10:23] It's like one page. Anybody can read it. You can Google it. It's called The Dangers of Faking It in Ministry. And literally, one page, get like six boxes of Kleenex and just read it. It will wreck you.

It really will. She talks about how ministry can make you a worse Christian. And I found that to be true. There's just something about ministry that begins to take your heart into a place that it just shouldn't go. Success in ministry is kind of like getting bumped up to first class on a plane. If that's ever happened to you, it's happened to me a few times. Really hard to go back from there. Right? And the worst is if they get set like on the row right behind first class and you can see into that and you can see what they're eating. Like what they get. The treatment. I mean, people are getting back rubs. I mean, like this, this, that is a, like, you're like, you're like with cattle back here. And I mean, it's just, it's a whole, it's bad to have that and then lose that. Right? It's the same thing with ministry. It's a dangerous drug. Right? Now, by rejoicing in the wrong things, I don't mean that you and I are going to get tempted to rejoice in bad things. I mean, it's not like you've got these, you know, disciples rejoicing and getting drunk and hanging out with prostitutes and crazy stuff. Like, it's not bad things that are going to be tempted to steal the show in our heart. It's, it's, it's good things. It's good things like friends getting saved. It's good things like, you know, whatever, making an impact in the community. Those are going to be the things, right? David counts his army. Was it bad that he had this big army? No, it was just bad that he began to trust in how many people he had. That's good things, right? The natural thing is to begin to confide and to trust in these, these good things. Martin Luther said this, he said, whatever your heart clings to and confides in, that is your God. That's your God. You can put all the crosses you want everywhere. You can hang around your neck and put and do whatever you want with them. But at the end of the day, it's what your heart clings to and confides in. That, that's who your God is. Jesus knows the ups and downs of ministry. At one point he had estimated 20,000 plus people in attendance, listening to him preach. Must have been a good moment to be one of those first disciples. Look how far we've come. And then they all walk away. Jesus knows the ups and downs of ministry, right? And so we need to listen to him here. At the end of the day, Jesus doesn't just say, you know, don't rejoice. He helps, he helps us see what to rejoice in. It says, those very next verses in Luke 10, verse 21, in that same hour, Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit. He says, don't rejoice in that stuff. Watch what I do. He rejoices in the Holy Spirit. He says, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you've hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. Look how you did. God, you were good. You were gracious. You're loving.

[13:12] All things have been handed over to me by my Father, Jesus says. And no one knows who the Son of, the Son is except for the Father or who the Father is except the Son or anyone and anyone whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Then turning to his disciples, he said privately, blessed are the eyes that see what you see. For I tell you, many prophets and kings desired to see what you see and did not see it, to hear what you hear and did not hear it. Jesus said, look, don't rejoice in success in ministry.

Rejoice and thank God that he's shown grace to you and he's loved you and he's written your names in the book of life, right? So that's the big idea. We've got to be on guard against hoping and rejoicing the wrong things. There's a big difference between being thankful for things like this building, being thankful for things like all the equipment we have and all the awesome people we

have.

You can be thankful for all that. We should be thankful for all that. There's a difference in being thankful for it and beginning to hope in it. You put your hope in it and if it goes away, you become hopeless, right? You know, oh, we don't have that one leader anymore. That, I tell you what, you ever seen, you know, you've never seen anybody park a car like Freddie.

You know, well, Freddie's not parking cars anymore. What's going to happen now? Like, you know, God will work out a miracle. You know, like something will happen, right? I'm not suggesting Freddie doesn't park cars. He's doing a great job, but I'm just saying it happens really easily. You and I begin to put our affection and our hope on the wrong things. So what is the hope for Havelock and Craven County and New Bern? And it's not you. It is not me. It is definitely not one harbor. It's not this building. It's not the next building. It's not any of that stuff. Our hope is in Christ in us. That's what scripture tells us. Christ in us. Jesus in us. The hope of glory. Our hope is not in the stuff we have. It's in who has us. It's not in what we have. It's in who has us. That's where we hope. We used to be hopeless, right? Ephesians 2.12 says, remember, you were once separated from Christ. You were alienated from the commonwealth of Israel. You're strangers to the covenant of promise, having no hope. Hopeless. You were without God in the world.

[15:26] That's what I was like. That's what you were like. The gospel is about how God moves us from hopelessness to being full of hope. Now we have the hope, right? I mean, there's dozens and dozens of Bible verses like this, but Romans 5.2. Through him, we have also obtained access by faith into the grace in which we stand. By faith, just faith. We didn't have to spend any money. We didn't have to jump through any hoops. We didn't have to keep the Ten Commandments for 12 months straight. We didn't do anything. Just by the grace of God, he lets us stand in his presence, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Colossians 1.27. To them, God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

1 Timothy 1.1. By command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope. It goes on, it goes on, it goes on. There's so many verses that show us that our hope is actually to be found in Jesus alone.

Why does it matter where we find our hope? Because hope is extremely powerful, and we're dead in the water without it. Hope is like a motor on a boat. You get offshore, you lose that, you're in a bad way, right? You'll ever hear of anybody being 30 miles offshore and lose engine power, and they float back home. Like, that didn't happen. Like, there's not even a giant, like, you know, pile of rocks out there, but they'll find it and run into it. Like, you never float to a good place, you know? Hope is extremely powerful. I've, my wife and I have fought some big battles this last week. Together, we're not fighting, she's not the battle, I'm not the battle, but we're together fighting a pretty massive battle that we didn't see coming. And it has caused our hope to be shaken to the core. And so we spent a lot of time this week praying for each other, and just preaching the gospel to ourselves, right?

Hope is extremely powerful, and when you lose it, you're dead in the water. There's a direct correlation between hope and courage. There's a direct correlation between hope and courage. Proverbs 13 12 says that hope deferred makes the heart sick. When your hope is shot down, it's like, it feels like the sky's falling. It's one reason why people with lots of stuff, and lots of fame, and lots of all these things in their lives. Hope is powerful.

[17:59] We get heart sick when our hope is deferred. But, hope's also powerful in the other way. I love what 2 Corinthians 3 12 says. Paul says, since we have such a hope, not just a little baby hope, no, we have such a hope. Oh, we're very bold. There's a direct correlation between hope and courage.

And so it does matter where you and I put our hope. We can't just go, oh, this doesn't really matter. We got a building, we got people, we got stuff. No, no, no. This matters more than all the people and buildings and stuff. Because you can have that brand new boat sitting offshore, and everything looks great, but if you don't have any engine power, you're done. Hope's like that, right? So, so what should we do with hope? This is the last few thoughts. The first thing I want to suggest to you is don't lose it. Don't lose hope. You know, here's, here's, here's what I can tell you, and this is not me being some mind reader. This is just me looking over my shoulder for the last nine years. A couple things I can guarantee. First, you're going to face some hard days if you're serious about loving this town. You're going to face some days. You're going to face some hard moments.

They're going to test you on that. Really test you. Because it sounds real cool. Like, let's go love Havelock. Let's love New Bern. Let's love, you're going to be tested on that. I can guarantee it. What I, what I want you to hear is, in those moments, take heart. Listen to what Jesus says in John 16, 33. I've said these things to you, that in me, in me, you may have peace, hope. In me, in this world, you will have tribulation. In Havelock, in Craven County, New Bern, and so on, you're going to have tribulation. No doubt about it. Doesn't take a mind reader to know that.

What does Jesus say? Take heart. I have overcome the world. Jesus does not say, you know, I've said these things to you so that in ministry, you may have peace.

[19:58] No. In leadership, you may have peace. In the building, you may have, no. Those are all, those are terrible places to put your hope. No. In me, I've overcome the world. So when you face hard days trying to love and serve Craven County, man, take heart in Jesus. You're going to face hard times in your personal life. It's not just ministry. It's going to be your personal life, too.

I mean, we've gone through more than we ever thought we'd go through. Take heart. What does Paul say in 2 Corinthians 4, 6 through 18? So we do not lose heart.

Look, our outer self, it's wasting away. That's how it feels. But our inner self is being renewed day by day. This light and momentary affliction. And we, I mean, a lot of us know what Paul went through. I mean, we wouldn't call that light and momentary affliction. Well, it's preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison. We look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen. Things that are seen are transient. They're temporary. Things that are unseen are eternal. We don't lose heart. We keep, we keep our, keep our eyes fixed on the right thing.

Don't lose hope. Don't misplace hope. Don't put it on the wrong thing, right? It would be easy to do that right now. That's why we're talking about it right now. We're talking about it right now because it'd be so easy to go, this building is great. That was great. That person's great. You know, that would be easy. Don't, it'd be easy now. But look, there'll come another moment just like that, and you'll start thinking about, oh, that, now we're going to put hope on that. It happens subtly.

It happens naturally. And so you got to be, always be on guard against it. Here's the thing. Hope's powerful, and you and I get a chance to choose where we put our hope. I love what Jeremiah 14, 22 says. Are there any among the false gods of the nations that can bring rain? Or can the heavens give showers? Are you not he, oh Lord, our God? We set our hope on you, for you do all these things. We get a chance to, we get to decide where we set hope. You and I don't get to change lots of circumstances in our life, but we can decide where we're going to get our hope from, right?

Where's our, where's our trust going to be? Proverbs 147, verse 10. His delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor in the pleasure of the legs of a man, but the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, and those who hope in his steadfast love. Man, I want to encourage you to be a people who hope in God's steadfast love. That's, that's where your hope lies. What we say all the time on Harbor, all for the sake of the gospel. That's where our hope is, right? A couple more quick ones. One, don't allow others to hope in you. We've already talked about this a little bit. I, I, I told you how easy it is for me to want to show off in front of you. You know what? You're going to feel that same temptation.

[22:56] You're going to want to put your best foot forward. You're going to want to say all the right Bible verses at all the right times. You're going to want to, you know, put on a mask and act like everything's okay. You're going to want to do this too. It's just human nature.

But when we do that, it's hurtful because folks who don't have it all together, who are supposed to hear that, you know, there's a Jesus who can take people like me and you who are train wrecks, and he can work miracles in our life, are going to, are going to, instead they're going to look at you and go, this person has it all together. These people all have it all together. Oh, this is one of those churches for people who have it all together. And so watch out for that. I'm going to revisit that first Corinthians passage. I read a little bit of it earlier. Just, just, I want you to think about now, this is you. This is you now coming to Havelock in New Bern and Craven County.

This is not me coming to you. This is you coming to them. Okay. When I came to you, brothers, I did not come proclaiming to you a testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. Now, I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

I was with you, Paul carries on, with weakness and fear and much trembling. My speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power.

Why?

Because we want their, we want their faith. We want their faith, this community who needs Jesus, not to rest in us, not to rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

[24 : 30] I'd love you to consider that being a challenge for you that if you were to write a letter back to Havelock, like Paul was writing back this letter to the Corinthian church, that you'd be able to say with integrity, now we didn't come to you with that stuff. We came to you with Christ and him crucified because we wanted, with integrity we can say, we never did that. We wanted you to put your hope in the power of God. From the very start, brag on Jesus, not you. And a great way to brag on Jesus is to boast in your weakness. That's a really good way to brag on Jesus. It's easy to say theological truths about Jesus. It's hard to say, I'm a mess. I'm a real mess, man. Jesus is the only hope I have.

But when you and I talk like that, man, we show people how great Jesus is. He's the hope of glory, not us, not buildings, not any other mess. Paul says again, 2 Corinthians 4, 7, we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. That's all we are, man. We're just jars of clay.

It's humble, but what's inside of us is what's powerful, right? And the last thing I want to say to you is be full of hope as you bring hope to the hopeless. The Jesus that we follow does this. He brings hope to hopeless people.

I don't know everybody in the room. You might be someone in that situation right now, totally, utterly hopeless. You may not even know Jesus. Again, I don't know all of you. So if I've made some awkward eye contact with you, it's just because I'm weird, right? It's not like I didn't get a list of people to stare at. This is just something that I do. But if you're here and you don't really know Jesus and you're feeling like hopeless, well, let me tell you about Jesus. This is Jesus' first sermon, Luke 4, 18. He says, the spirit of the Lord is upon me because he's anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

That's just Jesus that we all love so much. So anyone that you and I meet in this community who's poor and bound and blind and oppressed and so on, we can tell them with confidence we know the hope. We know the one. We go out bearing good news. We bring this news that we've set our hope on the one who's the Savior of the world, and he will not disappoint. Just a couple more verses. 1 Corinthians 4, 10.

[26 : 58] For to this end we toil and strive because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe. This is where I want you just to really lean in and listen. Okay? If you've leaned back, lean in. Jesus only has you in Havelock because he wants to save people here. I hope you know that Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit are not excited about advancing the One Harbor Church brand. I think they could care less. There's no One Harbor section of heaven, so it doesn't really matter from an eternal perspective.

So, we're not here to advance some brand. The only possible reason we're here is because people in this community need Jesus. Otherwise, we wouldn't even be breathing. We'd be, what point would there be for us to be left on earth? We're here because this community needs Jesus.

And we have the hope that they need. In Romans 15, 12, this interesting little passage in Romans, Paul says, again, Isaiah says, he's on this little sort of rant, the root of Jesse will come. Even he who arises to rule the Gentiles, in him will the Gentiles hope.

Now, who is the root of Jesse? Sorry, it's not Asher. Okay? It's not Jesse, Kinsher's first son. That's not who we're talking about here. The root of Jesse, Paul's listing off prophecies that Jesus is going to fulfill. Basically, he's building a case. This is a powerful case he's building. He's saying, look, what I want you to understand is that the whole Bible was always telling us that the hope of Jesus was not just going to be for the people that everyone expected, that God intended to bring hope to people that no one would have ever guessed, the Gentiles.

Paul's making this case. In case you look back and think, oh yeah, God only loves certain kinds of people, what I want you to see is that God is after people that no one would have ever guessed, people who everyone else disregarded. The Gentiles, to put it in language we might understand in this room, were the have-nots. They were the have-not people. They were quick to be forgotten and isolated.

[29 : 12] And people would have, frankly, rejoiced in a road that meant they could travel around their town without having to go through it. Sound a little too familiar? I hate when I hear people say things like, man, that's great because we don't have to drive through Havelock anymore.

Because there's people in this town made in God's image and they matter. And God made this whole place and he said it was good and that's so it matters. So I think there's some similarities. And Paul says, look, God saw these Gentiles and God wanted to give them hope. Well, God sees the people of Havelock and Newbern and Craven County and God knows the hope they need. And that's why you're here. Plain and simple, that's it. This is not to plant a one harbor flag in the ground. That's stupid. That doesn't matter. That's not worth giving your life to. It's really, that's dumb. The only reason we're here is to bring hope to hopeless people. Look what Paul says next, verse 13. So may the God of hope, that's who he is, the God of hope, fill you with all joy and peace and believing so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. The point is you shouldn't have hope but you do. Now by the power of the Spirit go and abound in hope amongst the hopeless.

Go fill Havelock, Newbern, and so on and so on with hope. Y'all, that is worth doing. That is worth doing. Advancing a brand is not worth doing and I'm beating that thing because I want to hit it from the start because otherwise we fall into essentially imperialism. That's not what we're here for. This is about Jesus and the gospel, not one harbor. So as we get ready to take communion, Phil or the guys want to come up. If you hear and you're going, gosh, actually, hey, I'm hopeless or, I mean, I've misplaced my hope. You might be one of those volunteers. You might be one of the guys walking on stage. You were really involved in all this and somewhere along the way, just this getting everything ready began to like entice this area of your heart and you started thinking, yeah, yeah, man, we're going to have that building and then if we build it, they will come. No, no, man, like our hope is in Jesus.

[31 : 35] I'm going to read us this passage in Romans 5 and then we're going to take communion together. Verse 1, therefore, since we've been justified by faith, we have peace with God. 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. This is powerful stuff.

If this gets cliché in your heart, there's a problem. More than that, more than that, we rejoice in our sufferings. That's how far this has gone, knowing that suffering produces endurance and endurance produces character and character produces hope. I mean, this is incredible that he's able to think like this 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. We've been given the Holy Spirit for while we were still weak at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. We were weak and we were ungodly. One will scarcely die for a righteous man, though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die, but that's not who we're talking about. We're not good people here. We're not righteous people here. No, we were the weak and the ungodly. And God showed his love for us.

He did what no one else would have ever done. No one dies for weak, ungodly people. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. That's where we find hope. And if you hang on to hope there, it will continue to keep you and it will be a blessing to this community. So as we're going to come and take communion, it's set up around the room. Let's put our hope in the right place. This is a chance for you to do business with God. It's a chance for you to, and what I mean by that, it's a chance for you to pray. That's all that means. A chance for you to pray. You can bow your head, you can talk to the person you came with, whatever, but it's a chance for you and I to just step back and go, how has this affected me? How is this true for me? That may include some repenting. That's good too. Man, Jesus, I'm sorry. I did it again. I put hope on the wrong thing. Look, this matters. So let's, let's, when we take communion this morning, let's do a bit of a, draw on a line in the sand.

Hey, our hope is in you, Jesus. Your broken body, your shed blood, it's not an afterthought for us. It's, it's the core of what we hope in. But for grace, but for mercy, we'd be like the most hopeless person in this community. Man, Jesus, you have given us hope. Now we want to take this bread and take this use. Remember this hope that we have in you, and remember that now we're going to go out and share this hope with this community you've put us in. Amen? Let me pray for us. Jesus, thank you for your love and mercy, your goodness, your grace, and those are the important things.

[34 : 35] And so I pray for my friends in the room. I've been there. I've been here. I've been in this, this moment before, and I know how easy it is. Looking over my shoulder, I can see, I didn't even see it happening, but I can see now looking back. I began to put my hope in the wrong wrong things. And so God, there's lots of things we could talk about this morning, but at the end of the day, what matters is that we've set our hope on you, the hope of glory. So be with us now.

I pray this would be a moment for us where, as we go into next week and we invite everybody we know, and every, every, every person we come across to be here with us, I pray we would go into that moment with some different lenses on because of this moment, that as tough times come, we would, we'd think back on moments like this where we remembered where our hope is actually set. Bless you, Jesus. Success in ministry will never compare to a relationship with you. Nothing compares. You are enough. You are worth it. We love you. Amen.