

**Lesson Aim:** To guard our heart and focus on developing a heart that cultivates hope based on God and His Word.



*connecting*

**Prayer:** Start your time together by asking the Holy Spirit to lead your discussion.

**Icebreaker:** Describe a time in your life you felt homesick.

1. Have you ever had hopes in your life that were dashed? How did you deal with it?
2. What things other than God do people tend to put their hopes in? What things other than God are you tempted to put your hopes in?



*growing*

3. **Read Psalm 42.** What themes emerge from this Psalm?
4. **Read 2 Kings 14:11-14.** How could the situation of these hostages being taken as captives from Judah help give birth to this Psalm?
5. How does the Psalmist recommend we handle things that dash our hopes? Is this realistic? Why or why not?
6. The same question is asked in Psalm 42:3, 42:9 and 42:10; but what is the difference in how the question is asked? What does this teach us about the dark side of faith and the sunny side of doubt?
7. The Psalmist longs to be back in God's house in Jerusalem, but what is he learning about God right where He is at?



*sewing*

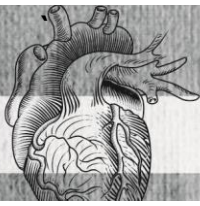
8. In the same way, there are situations in our lives right now that we want to see changed. What is one of those situations in your life? What is your hope about how this could change?
9. What might God be teaching you about Himself in this situation right now? What might God be teaching about hope in this situation right now?



*reaching*

10. Look over the *Heart Exercises* section in your sermon notes that Pastor Scott talked about in his message. What is one Heart Exercise you can grow in this week to cultivate more hope in your life?

**Close in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads you.**



# Heart

Proverbs 4:23 - *Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.* (NLT)

**OPPOSITE OF HOPE – HOPELESSNESS** (Proverbs 13:12; Isaiah 9:1-2, 6-7; Acts 27:20)

## DEFINITION OF HOPE

- ▶ Note: Hope has to do with the future & the unseen
- ▶ Hope = The happy anticipation of good
- ▶ The Blessed Hope – The return of Jesus Christ (Titus 2:11-14; cf. 1 John 3:2-3)

## CONDITIONS OF HOPE

- ▶ There is weak hope full of uncertainty
- ▶ There is false hope that is built upon unstable ground
  - ❶ Yourself (Proverbs 26:12)
  - ❷ Others (Proverbs 11:7)
  - ❸ Money (1 Timothy 6:17)
  - ❹ Dishonest gain (Psalm 62:10)
  - ❺ Any path leading away from God (Proverbs 11:23)
- ▶ There is strong hope that is anchored into a firm foundation

## BASIS OF HOPE (Hebrews 6:17-19)

- ▶ Christian hope is built on the foundation (or basis) of 2 unchangeable things:
  - ❶ The Character of God
  - ❷ The Word of God

## PROGRESSION OF HOPE

- ❶ Hope in circumstances (Psalm 33:20; Jeremiah 29:11; Romans 8:25)
- ❷ Hope in God Himself (Job 13:15-16; Psalm 31:24; Psalm 42)
- ❸ Hope in our future with God (Psalm 73:23-26; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 10:23)

## EXERCISES TO BUILD A HOPEFUL HEART

- ❶ Cultivated hope through time spent with God & His Word
- ❷ Preach truth to yourself
- ❸ Seek the Giver & not just the gifts