

Confident Faith – & Hope!

Intro: Stefan Duerksen Lead Pastor

CHURCH WIDE PRAYER: 1. Life on Mission: Love, Serve & Disciple People to Jesus

- Camp – for the kids going: meet Jesus, safety, fun, belonging
- Camp – ministers serving at camp – God to call them, prepare them, anoint them
- For each person in our church to be strengthened in their “YES” to God
- Who is God calling you to reach? Pray for them by name.

Recap: Confident Faith

- **Know what and why you believe!**
 - **1 Peter 3:15** But in your hearts, honor Christ the Lord as holy. Always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. Yet, do it with gentleness and respect.
- **The Foundation of a Confident Faith is built on a Biblical Worldview**
- **Creation & the Resurrection** are key pillars to having a confident faith!
- **Right knowledge of God is supposed to lead us into RIGHT RELATIONSHIP with God!**
 - This requires **MARGIN** – space!
 - And **PRAYER** – prayer is how we YOKE OURSELVES TO GOD!
- **P. Martin** – talked about **Humbly Approaching the Bible**

A. Confident Faith & Hope

What have you placed your hope in? do you have hope?

Hope is an interesting thing! When you have it? You literally LIVE LONGER – studies have shown that having hope can decrease mortality and lead to a better quality of life!

Sadly, the converse is also true... those who live in states of depression, hopelessness and despair... have higher mortality rates....

Hope is a positive expectation of a future outcome

Hope misplaced:

- Marriage is struggling... if you can just turn a corner... then your life will be ok...
- Anxiety & depression... if I can just fix my circumstance... then I will be ok...
- Addictions... if I can just get my next fix – than I'll quit and straighten my life out!
- If my kids will just smarten up! Or stop pestering me!
- If this HEALTH issue will clear up!
- If I change my gender... then I'll be ok
- If I hide my beliefs... and blend in... then I will be accepted
- If our government would change – THEN we'd have some HOPE!
- Healthcare reform! Social reform! Financial reform! THEN – things will be ok!

1 Corinthians 15:19 If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

In this life... everything we hope IN eventually breaks, dies, or leaves.

We live in a broken world... we are a fractured and broken people... and you see it in our society... have you ever noticed that even the good things you enjoy are marred by loss? **Henri Nouwan write**, *“Our life is a short time in expectation, a time in which sadness and joy kiss each other at every moment. There is a quality of sadness that pervades all the moments of our lives. It seems that there is not such thing as a clear-cut pure joy, but that even the most happy moments of our existences we sense a tinge of sadness. In every satisfaction, there is an awareness of limitations. In every success, there is a fear of jealousy. Behind every smile, there is a tear. In every embrace, there is loneliness. In every friendship, distance. And in all forms of light, there is the knowledge of surrounding darkness.”*

Ecclesiastes 1:3-11 What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun? A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever. The sun rises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it rises. The wind blows to the south and goes around to the north; around and around goes the wind, and on its circuits the wind returns. All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again. All things are full of weariness; a man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. Is there a thing of which it is said, “See, this is new”? It has been already in the ages before us. There is no remembrance of former things, nor will there be any remembrance of later things yet to be among those who come after.

When we HOPE in the wrong things... we set ourselves up for **DISAPPOINTMENT** that leads us to **HOPELESSNESS!**

Did you know: BOTH HOPE & ANXIETY are FUTURE FOCUSED!

- **Anxiety** is focused on a fearful expectation of the future!
- **Hope** is focused on a positive expectation of the future!

What we place our hope in MATTERS.

Misplaced HOPE will lead to HOPELESSNESS which will KILL YOU FROM THE INSIDE OUT.

B. Three Types of Hope: (All Things New – John Eldridge)

1. **Casual Hope** – coffee is good this AM, dog doesn’t chew my sandals, etc.
 - i. **Casual hope is of the daily variety!** We hope to have a good day! Nothing wrong with that!
2. **Precious Hope** – I hope this pregnancy turns out well, I hope I get good results from this CT, I hope I can fix my marriage... I hope I break free from this struggle...
 - i. **Precious hopes are much deeper within our hearts...** and they become fuel for our prayers.
3. **Ultimate Hope** – Jesus paid for my sins, Jesus will forgive me, Jesus is COMING BACK...
 - i. **Ultimate hope is our “life & death” hopes.** In the sense of, “If this doesn’t happen, I cannot keep going!”
 - ii. **Ultimate Hope determines what we LIVE FOR.**

John Eldridge argues, “the only thing that belongs in this category are the things that will destroy your heart and soul if not fulfilled.”

Ecclesiastes 3:11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

We get in trouble when we place the wrong things in the Ultimate Hope category!

HUMANS REQUIRE HOPE TO LIVE – WE DIE WITHOUT IT.

Where is your hope? What are you living for?

Romans 8:24-25 For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Matthew 13:44-46 “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Hope is the fuel that leads us to let go of the things in this world, to sell everything, to lay down our lives, to persevere!

C. Our Hope: Jesus, the Kingdom & the Restoration of ALL things

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Romans 8:22-25 ...we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved.

1 Peter 1:3-9 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Christian HOPE is to be FIXED on Jesus, His Kingdom! And the Restoration of ALL things!

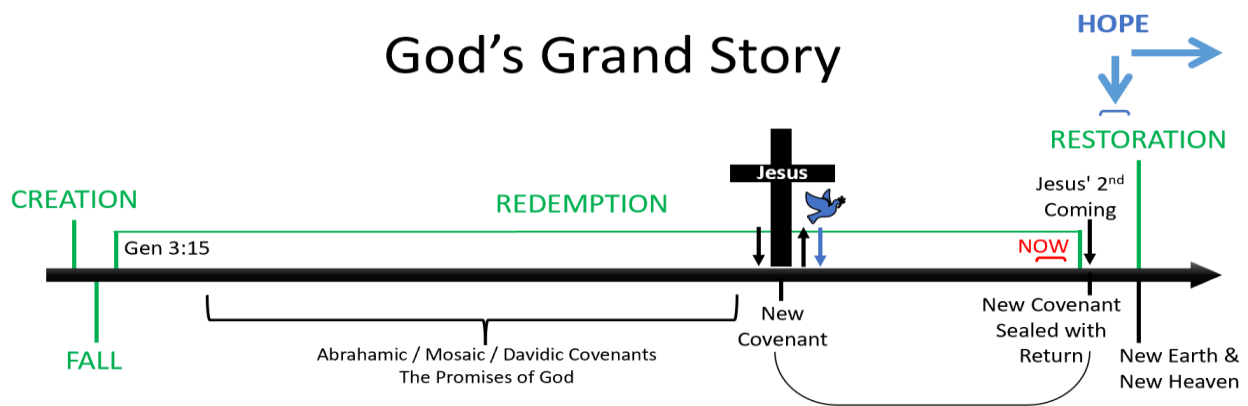
This is what the Gospel is! It's the forgiveness of sin – yes! but that is ONE PART. It is the Gospel of the Kingdom! The Renewed Heavens & Earth! Our King is coming BACK to rule!

This is why JESUS proclaimed, “REPENT, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND!”

REFOCUSING YOUR HOPE:

1. **Biblical Worldview – Past** - understand God's Grand Story and where we fit
2. **Eschatology –Future** – death, judgement, eternity. What happens in the end?
3. **Actions & Attitudes – Present** – hope, what we live for, how we respond to God
 - a. **Not having a biblical worldview leads to misplaced HOPE!**
 - b. **If you have a secular worldview:** Climate anxiety – what will happen if the earth is destroyed!

God's Grand Story



Romans 13:1-2 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore, whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

Samuel Whitefield writes, “The apostles understood world redemption was connected to the establishment of the kingdom. They longed to see Jesus bring an end to wicked empires, and because they were Jewish, they also had a specific longing to see Israel freed from Roman oppression. The apostles’ deep desire for Israel’s liberation makes their complete lack of interest in any kind of political kingdom surprising.”

The apostles didn’t start a revolution to overthrow their oppressors! On the contrary, the early church submitted to Rome as an empire established under God’s leadership. WHY?????????

Because they understood the GRAND STORY. They knew their Bibles. They knew God. They knew where they came from, who they were, what the real problem was, the solution and they knew what was coming...

Daniel 7:7, 25-27 He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. But the court shall sit in judgment, and his dominion shall be taken away, to be consumed and destroyed to the end. And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.’

The apostles understood the earth was being given over to kingdoms of beasts for testing and refining! They couldn’t bring the Kingdom of Heaven BY FORCE!

The promise was the Ancient of Days COMING BACK – Daniel saw JESUS’ SECOND COMING!!

The apostles knew this! And knew that the followers of Jesus were to create a different type of REVOLUTION!!!

They would not FIGHT the kingdom of beast and men with swords, rather they would LAY DOWN THEIR LIVES and PROCLAIM THE KINGDOM OF GOD WAS AT HAND!!!

D. The Gospel of the Kingdom: Book: Son of Man – The Apostles Gospel

Placing our hope in the right place will lead to us living for HIS KINGDOM over our own!

Matthew 6:31-34 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

1. **Proclaim!** The coming Kingdom!
2. **Invite!** Share with as many people as possible! Invite them to submit to the King and become part of the new Kingdom!
3. **Warn!** People to REPENT!! "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand!"
4. **Train!** Equip and train people to live according to the values of the King and his Kingdom!

READ: When we get our HOPE placed in the right spot! PLACED ON JESUS' 2nd coming! Where he will destroy evil! Restore our bodies back to life! Heal our hearts forever! JUDGE the living and the dead! RENEW the Earth and RENEW the Heavens! THEN WE WILL LIVE AS THE DISCIPLES DID!! We will not love our LIVE, even unto DEATH!! For our HOPE WILL BE SECURED IN THE UNSHAKABLE REALITY OF WHAT IS COMING!!

READ FROM BIBLE - Revelation 21:1-8 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

Our God is a promise maker (Covenants) and a promise KEEPER!!

E. "Rend your hearts, not your garments" Preparing our hearts for the Kingdom

1. **3-day Corporate Prayer & Fasting – Tuesday – Thursday:**
 - a. Wednesday 12-100... live worship & prayer
 - b. Prayer request:
 - i. Personal Repentance form sin or lack of obedience
 - ii. For Israel to know & love God
 - iii. For an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Southland & the Western Church
 - iv. For the Western Church to wake up & get ready (mt 25:13)
2. **Corporate Devotional & Memorization:**
 - a. 7 Day Holy Spirit focused devotional
 - b. Acts 1:8
3. **Global Gathering March 25**

- a. In person or online (see Church Renewal website)
 - b. “When Russian armies were invading Ukraine in 2022, Vasyl Ostryi, a pastor near Kyiv, was asked if he might flee, but he assured his people he would stay with them, and then added, "If the church is not relevant at a time of crisis, then it is not relevant in a time of peace." But for us to be relevant we must understand that our culture is presently making 'truth' claims about the meaning and purpose of humanity that contradicts and clash with the truth claims offered by Christianity. What are the truth claims undergirding society's present sexual revolution and collapse of authority? If we are to be relevant to those inside and outside the church, we must understand the underlying assumptions that are now "truth" to our culture.” – P. Ray
4. **NEXT WEEK IS PENTACOST** – pray for the latter rains outpouring! Commit to being a part of the great commission and harvest! Pray for the Lord to come back! HIS KINGDOM COME!!!

REFLECTION: Lord... would you speak to each one of us here.

LAST SONG Worship & Pray! **SPECIAL SONG:** Spirt, lead me....

AFTER SERVICE PRAYER – PRAYER ROOM – 9AM ONLY

MARANATHA!! Come soon Lord!

Care@mysouthland.com

SC CHURCH WIDE PRAYER REQUESTS 2023

Cruise ship → → → → → Battleship

1. **Life on Mission** (Mt 28:18-20, Mt 22:37-40): Love, serve & disciple people to Jesus
2. **Next Gen** (Ps 78:7-8): Encounters with Jesus, strong mental health, boldness & belonging
3. **Persecuted Church** (Lk 21:13): Faith, fortitude & wisdom “to not waste the opportunity to share the Gospel”
4. **Heart of Prayer** (Ps 27:4): Every generation to find Jesus & learn to bring their needs to Him in prayer
5. **Church Renewal:** Directors for India and other new countries & many global disciple makers