

Small Group Study Questions

Sermon: "Hope From Heaven"

Passages: Ephesians 1:15-20

Context:

We can often walk through seasons of illness, loss, reversal, and disappointment with undaunted courage . . . as long as we experience one crucial thing, hope. But take away hope and we lose perspective, power, and motivation within minutes. God calls hope the anchor of the soul—an irreplaceable, irreducible source of strength and momentum. If there's anything the world needs right now, it's hope. There's a hope that God has, and you live a life of strength if you can connect your heart to it.

Questions:

1. What do most people mean when they refer to hope? What is implied about hope when someone uses the phrase, "hoping beyond hope?"
2. When do you struggle with hope the most? At what points in life do you easily face doubt and anxiety?
3. List three examples that demonstrate the sentence, "Human beings are irreducibly hope-shaped beings." How does that play out in our society today? Where do you see it?
4. Ephesians 1:15-21 is a good introduction to the promise of hope for all Christians. The apostle Paul often wrote complex sentences. Ephesians 1 is an example. Let's take it apart in order to understand Paul's prayer. Take the time to "unthread" the various phrases in this passage. What is Paul's main priority in his prayer? Although he clearly states hope as a high priority (a goal for which he prays), you can easily assume that three phrases are fairly synonymous. What are they? How do they work together in creating hope in your life?
5. How compelling are hope and power to those who are hurting spiritually? Describe a situation in your life when you benefited from the knowledge that spiritual power provides hope.
6. Nancy Guthrie wrote to those who grieve: "The heart of what it means to grieve with hope is to grieve with a sense of confidence that God's resurrection promises are really true." How have you experienced that reality?