

Youth group @ Home

Sunday 28th June 2020

Christian Character – Session 11: Hope in lockdown

Good morning and welcome to session 11 of Youth Group @ Home. Why not go through today's session with family or friends? You could always Zoom call some friends and go through the activities together.

Activity

To start us off with this week's session, come up with three things in your head and then share them with a friend or family member.

Thing one: A good thing from the previous week

Thing two: A bad thing from the week

Thing three: A prayer for the coming week

Activity

With a family member or a friend over the phone or Zoom, give yourself one minute to come up with a positive word for each letter of your friend or family member's name. For example, your friend is called John, your words could be; Joyful, Original, Hilarious, Nice - JOHN.

Bible Study

Take a look at Matthew 28:1-10.

This passage describes the events following Jesus' crucifixion on the cross. Throughout Jesus' life, he brought so much hope to the people, the people thought Jesus was going to rescue them, they believed he was the promised and long-awaited Messiah. Yet, they never expected Jesus to be killed on a cross, like a common criminal in those times. For a while Jesus' followers probably held out some hope that as he hung there on the cross he would suddenly perform some miracle and come down from the cross and defeat the Romans, but I image their hope in Jesus faded as they realised Jesus wasn't going to come down from the cross alive, instead, Jesus cried out to God – his Father in Heaven – and 'he gave up his spirit' (Matt. 27:50). In other words, Jesus gave up his life, he chose to die on the cross. We, as Christians today, know why Jesus' death on the cross was so important, without his death

and resurrection we would have no hope of forgiveness and freedom from our sins, but that's just it, we know the end of the story, we know that there is a resurrection, but the followers of Jesus at the time of his death, didn't know what to expect. Jesus tried to tell them what was going to happen while he was alive, but this was a huge thing for his disciples to understand, the idea of their Messiah being killed on a cross was completely different to what they had expected from their promised Messiah. Jesus' death would have shaken their whole world's, suddenly they felt hopeless and lost and confused, and their lives became full of unknowns. Their Jesus, the one who was meant to save them, was dead!

In today's passage we read that some of Jesus' friends went to see the dead body of Jesus in his tomb, they were probably still grieving his death and feeling lost and confused, but then there is an earth quake and an angel of the Lord came down from Heaven and rolled back the stone that had sealed the entrance to the tomb where Jesus lay. The angel told the women, who had gone to see Jesus, "He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him" (Matt. 28:7). The resurrection of Jesus took a situation of hopelessness to one of great hope and joy. Matthew 28:8 says, 'the woman hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy...'

Maybe lockdown has made you feel disconnected from the world and isolated, maybe it has made you feel lost and confused in all the unknowns, maybe you feel hopeless and can't wait to resume normal life, but lockdown isn't going to last forever. We, like the disciple's when Jesus was killed, don't yet know how this story will end, but we do know that God is still in control, He still loves us, and is still looking after us. We can always put our hope in God and trust that there is more to our story than our current circumstances. Just like the women in the passage, it is OK to be scared, but because God is a faithful and loving God, we can also be filled with joy!

Consider these points:

- What does this passage tell you about God and who He is?
- What does this story tell you about other people or yourself?
- How will you react having thought about this passage? Has this passage said something that has shown you something you need to change about yourself or your behaviour?
- Is there something you want to share this message with? Who do you think this message could help?

Think

1. Can you think of a movie where a character's situation looked hopeless? How did they respond to the challenges? What was the outcome?
2. Most famous stories show good overcoming evil. Do you think that's what will happen during this Covid-19 crisis?

3. How did today's passage, about Jesus raising from the dead and bringing hope to a seemingly hopeless situation, bring hope to our current situations in lockdown?

Activity

Grab a blank sheet of paper and a pen. Write 'hope' on one side and 'no hope' on the other. Now consider each of the scenario's below and write them each down on whichever side of the paper you think they belong based on whether you feel hopeful or hopeless about that situation.

- 1) Donald Trump being re-elected as president of the USA
- 2) Australia winning the most medals in the next Olympics
- 3) Scotland gaining independence in the next 5 years
- 4) You having your favourite meal cooked for you in the next two days
- 5) 'The Voice' on TV being won by someone from Birmingham
- 6) Leeds being named the most beautiful city in the UK
- 7) You being invited to Buckingham Palace at some point in your life
- 8) The government announcing that there will be three new bank holidays per year
- 9) Someone swimming across the Atlantic
- 10) The Liberal Democrats winning the next UK election

Pray

As we come to the end of our session on feeling hopeful, make sure you take some time to pray (talk to God) and ask God to help you have more peace and hope in this time of lockdown. Spend a little time each day telling God what's on your mind and why you are annoyed or worried, ask Him to help you trust Him more.

Dear God,

Right now, our lives are full of unknowns for us, but we thank you that there are no unknowns for you. We thank you that you know how every story ends and you will always love us, and you will always use our situations for good.

Help us to trust you and remember that you are still in control. Please help us to have hope for our future's and peace in the midst of all our fears and concerns.

Please give us joy, a joy that drowns out all other negative feelings.

Amen.

Remember, you can pray anytime – day or night – God is always listening to you and He loves to hear your voice.

We really hope you enjoyed this session. If you have questions you want to ask, or want to request a certain topic for a future session, you can email me: Freya@Bedhampton.Church.