

Intro:

Start new Series this morning calling: The Journey to Hope

1. We Lose Hope When We Walk Through Life Without Recognizing God's Presence With Us.

- *Jesus walked with them, but they didn't recognize Him* Vs 16
~Kept from that: Spiritual blindness (H.S. ;Held back)
- *We do the same thing, He walks with us...we don't see him either!*
~Disappointment, Busyness, Sin, We don't want to see (call us to change!)
~Sometimes we overwhelmed by problems, that's all we can see
~Sometimes it's pain, bitterness, struggle...
~Sometimes it is one large disappointment; sometimes many, many small ones that add up
- *Just knowing the FACTS of the story of Easter isn't enough to give us hope!* Vs 19ff
~They knew the facts: Talked about them while they were walking!
~Disciples: Seen and heard Jesus; Knew how He died; Heard 1st hand account of Empty tomb!
Heard about angels; Heard from other Apostles; Knew every detail!
- *But, none of it was enough to give them hope!* Vs 21 (We had hoped) no more
~Knowing "God" in a general way is not enough to give true spiritual hope
~92% of Americans "believe" in God, may even believe facts of story...doesn't give hope
~Listen...Many of them even pray! 70% (Throw up a "wish"!) They have No confidence He hears

2. We Need Hope To Give Us The Courage and Confidence To Keep Going When Life Comes Apart.

It happens to us all: We have a mental Picture of the future that captures our heart...It is Lost!

- *Hope Defined:*
~For Most of Us: Like a wish...Maybe so, maybe not...but I'm hoping...wishing..fingers crossed
~Biblical Hope : Confident assurance based on Character of God...He said it, promised it...It's So
Quote: "*Despite everything which at present runs counter to the promise of God, the one who hopes trusts God for His faithfulness.*" Colin Brown
- + Their Hope: Jesus was the Messiah
~Freedom from Roman domination; Reestablish Jewish Kingdom; Spiritual Connection with God
- + Our Hope: God is there, Not alone; Everything (even bad things) happens for a reason
God can make something good come out of bad; Restore and give hope to broken
God can take the worst...of Us, Circumstances, Life, Others...Make it Good, Restore
Bumper sticker is not right ..."*Life is tough and then you die!*"
- *That hope comes from Listening To God...and Knowing His Word (The bible)*
~Listen to Jesus open the Scripture to them...All there...He was all through the OT
Moses: Law: 10 Commandments
God is Holy, Man is not, God wants to be with us, Our sin must be dealt with
Prophets: We cant follow Him, Walk with Him, Always Rebel, So he came to us in Jesus
Is 53 Pay for our sin; Ez 37 Give us new heart; Jer 31, I know the plans

3. Hope Becomes Real At The Point Of Brokenness.

- *For Them*
~Walked with him (hours! 7 miles?)
~Talked with Him (Explained the scriptures!)
~They NEVER GOT IT....Until He took the Bread and broke it (Familiar...So Personal)
- *For Us the same is true...Something happens in our heart in brokenness drives us to know God personally*
~We talk with him...When broken lose Job... We NEED to know He's talking back
~We kind of know He is there...but in Brokenness, divorce ...Need to feel him, not be alone
~We know the bible has promises...In Brokenness, Sick...We want to KNOW them, Read hope
~We know he cares for us...But in Brokenness...When kids in trouble, Know he is with them

All of sudden, when we, our life, our family hits that point of brokenness...Not enough to just know the facts... We have to know HIM...Sense of His personal presence in our life, that whatever comes...He walks with us! We need to KNOW He is faithful, and that we can live with Confidence and Courage

Introduce to you a couple who know something about finding hope when life comes apart all around you

Tim and Sarah

Tim and Sarah have been friends for more than 12-13 years
Met them before they married, started attending Riva as newly weds
Tim has served as Deacon, Tech Team, Teacher,
Sarah sings worship team, teaches bible studies, Served in office as one of Pastoral Assistants for years
After being married, decided to start a family, They struggled with infertility for years (diff story)
Gave up, started adoption process...Pregnant, went 8 8 1-2 months...Left office one day, last checkup

- **Tell us what happened**
- **Tell us how God met you in your brokenness**
- **What would you Say to those that are broken today?**
(Could be much simpler...Job, School, Disappointment, Profound, loss loved one)

Introduce us to your two boys! Matthew and Andrew

4. How Do You Find That Kind Of Hope?

Where do you get the confidence and courage to go forward when your life is coming apart?
Hope believes God when everything around you tells you otherwise
Use an acrostic

H=Hear God Speaking (Here is there all the time)

~Heart ~People ~Circumstance ~Bible

O=Open Your Eyes and Heart, and Believe Him

Brokenness does one of two things: Better, or Bitter
Move you toward Him, or push you away
Same situation will do entirely different things with different people
It is all about your choice. Am I going to believe Him...or not?

P=Pray and Put your Trust in Him.

Jesus, I need you in my heart, and in my life
I need your help to believe
I need the hope that only you can give
I know about you, now I need to KNOW you
I need to know you hear me, answer my prayers, walk with me

E=Enter a relationship with Him

Bible says: God is Holy, We are sinful
Jesus died on the cross, Just for the unjust, to bring us to God
We have to turn to him, say, I believe...
I don't just KNOW the facts...I want to KNOW you
I believe you are alive

That is the message of Easter... That God does his greatest work through brokenness
That the things which are broken...can be repaired, restored

If you want to know Him today, I want to pray with you to do that.

*Jesus, I know the facts about Easter...that's not enough, doesn't give me hope Now I want to Know You
I want you in my life...in my heart...walking with me in a way that I can know and feel
I confess that I have lived my life without you, living apart from you, doing what I know is wrong
I believe that you died on the cross to pay for those decisions, for my sin
Today, I ask you to forgive me, and come life in my life
Speak to me, walk with me, guide me, help me live for you...walk with you, see you, know you AMEN*

If you prayed today, I want to help you get off to the right start spiritually...Do This

- Fill out connection card, Turn it over, Check, Im committing my life to Christ for first time
- Take it to the Journey Kiosk, Pastor Hammer will give you New Believers bible
- Consider signing up for Starting Point with God Class

