

Talking through the message during the week helps you turn what God is saying to you into action steps. These talking points, questions and scriptures are designed to help you take the next step.

Read Romans 15:12 and Matthew 12:21

Jesus' coming is characterized as a reason for hope for all people.

- Do you find the Christmas holidays to be hopeful or a hassle? Why or Why not?
- What are some ways that you have found hope in Jesus?

Read Proverbs 13:12a; Job 17:15; Isaiah 53:6; and 2 Corinthians 1:8b

For many people this season of peace and good will is instead a time of discouragement, loneliness and tension. This leads to a heightened sense of hopelessness.

- Have you every felt overwhelmed during the holidays? Which characteristics of hopelessness identified in the pastors message did you experience? What about other times of the year?
- Have you ever found yourself physically sick because of feelings of hopelessness?
- Do you have a family member or friend who could use some encouragement in the weeks ahead due to a tendency toward hopelessness? What is something that you can do to be an encourager?

Read Hebrews 11:1 and Psalm 71:14

Hope takes us to a place of confidence in God and His work even though they are most often unseen.

- Do you tend to think of hope more as wishful thinking or as something that you can depend upon? What is the difference?
- Where does your assurance rest – in yourself; others; spouse or companion; children; job; or in God? Why?

Read Hebrews 6:19a; Romans 4:18a, 15:13; Psalm 42:11, 62:5; 2 Corinthians 4:17-18; Titus 2:13; Isaiah 40:31

The writer of Hebrews pictures hope as an anchor for your soul.

- How dependable is your anchor of hope today? Is there a difference between now and 1 year ago? 5 years ago?
- Do you find it easy to trust God? What has been an experience in your life that has helped you to deepen your trust and therefore strengthen your hope?
- Do you easily experience hope in God even though much of his work is behind the scenes, unseen? Have do you deal with doubts in this area?
- Describe some ways that your relationship with God gives you hope.
- Do you experience the rest of God that comes from hope?
- Can you tell the difference when you are exercising hope in your life? Can you think of a story where you where able to accomplish something that you don't think would have happened if you hadn't put your hope and trust in God?

My Next Step Today Is To . . .

- Choose to trust God, putting my hope in Him, by asking Him to begin a relationship with me.
- Admit that I've been trusting on the things that I can see and today I want to return to the place where I know that my anchor is in Him.
- Thank God that he has been my anchor in the storms of my life.
- Meditate and/or memorize Matthew 12:21

Talk It Over with God:

These prayer tips can guide your time alone with God each day. Praying with a friend or a small group might help you stick to it.

- Look up verse in the Psalms that talk about hope and include them in your prayer life this week.
- Take time to thank God the Father, for the hope we have in Jesus.
- Pray for those who you know that struggle this time of the year with hopelessness. Put feel to your prayers and do something to encourage them.