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“Greatest Hope”

Series Recap:

1. Jesus is the Greatest Messenger - Don't Drift
2. Jesus is the Greatest Leader - Don't Have a Hardened Heart
3. Jesus is the Greatest Priest - Don't Reject Your Only Mediator
4. Jesus is the Greatest Sacrifice - Don't Turn Back

Main Idea: Jesus is our Living Hope, which *must* impact our Past, Present, and Future

If Jesus is our Living Hope, it empowers us to:

1. Imitate past examples of faithfulness (Heb 11)
2. Endure this present suffering (Heb 12)
3. Have hope in the future (Heb 13)

Part I: Imitate Past Examples of Faithfulness

Hebrews 11:1-2 (NLT) “Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see. 2 Through their faith, the people in days of old earned a good reputation.”

- The author of Hebrews then provides 19 individual examples of God's people being faithful, starting with the phrase “**by faith (πίστει / pistei)**.” Here are some examples:

“By Faith...”

1. We understand the universe formed by God's command.
2. Abel brought a more acceptable offering to God.
3. Enoch was taken up to heaven without dying.
4. Noah built a large boat and was declared righteous.
5. Abraham followed God into the unknown and fathered a great nation.
6. Sarah miraculously conceived a child in old age.
7. Isaac promised blessings over his sons.
8. Jacob blessed Joseph's sons and worshipped God.
9. Joseph promised that the Israelites would leave Egypt.
10. Moses' parents protected Moses from execution.
11. Moses led the people out of Egypt.
12. The people crossed the Red Sea and marched around the walls of Jericho until it came crumbling down.
13. Rahab risked her life to hide the Israelite spies.

Hebrews 11:13 (NLT) “All these people died still believing what God had promised them. They did not receive what was promised, but they saw it all from a distance and welcomed it. They agreed that they were foreigners and nomads here on earth.”

- By varying degrees throughout history, God's people understood that there was a promise made in the garden (Genesis 3:15) when Jesus was promised to come and redeem His people and defeat Satan. And it led them to, while not being able to see the full picture, live boldly in faith.

Hebrews 11:33-35 (NLT) “By faith these people overthrew kingdoms, ruled with justice, and received what God had promised them. They shut the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the flames of fire, and escaped death by the edge of the sword. Their weakness was turned to strength. They became strong in battle and put whole armies to flight. 35 Women received their loved ones back again from death. But others were tortured, refusing to turn from God in order to be set free. They placed their hope in a better life after the resurrection.”

- Living in faith wasn't always pretty. God led his people through many victories, but also through hardship and trial.
- If the people of Israel, prior to Christ's life, crucifixion, and resurrection, could live by faith with a "**blurry**" view of the Savior, how much more can we live faithfully knowing that our sins have been forgiven, and we serve a Risen King? We have a much "**clearer**" view of the Savior.
- Who is in your personal "hall of faith?"

Part II: Endure This Present Suffering

Hebrews 12:1-4 (NLT) "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. 2 We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne. 3 Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up. 4 After all, you have not yet given your lives in your struggle against sin."

- Just because you're tired of running, it doesn't change the prize before you, or the One leading you and running at your side every step of the way.
- Don't let your exhaustion take away from the value of the prize.
- Our hope is as firm as solid rock. It's concrete, based on the resurrection of Christ

Part III: Have Hope in the Future

Hebrews 13:10-14 (NLT) "We have an altar from which the priests in the Tabernacle have no right to eat. 11 Under the old system, the high priest brought the blood of animals into the Holy Place as a sacrifice for sin, and the bodies of the animals were burned outside the camp. 12 So also Jesus suffered and died outside the city gates to make his people holy by means of his own blood. 13 So let us go out to him, outside the camp, and bear the disgrace he bore. 14 For this world is not our permanent home; we are looking forward to a home yet to come."

- Jesus suffered and died outside the city gate for us. We must do the same, and bear the disgrace He bore.
- This world is not our home; it's not our city. We fix our eyes on a city yet to come.
- We have a much "**clearer**" view of the Savior than the faithful men and women in the Old Testament. But we'll have the "**clearest**" view of the Savior when we see Him face to face in eternity.

Hebrews 13:15-16 (NLT) "Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to his name. 16 And don't forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God."

Small Group Discussion Questions:

Icebreaker: What was your first day of school or church like? What do you remember from that day?

1. Read Hebrews 11:1-2. How does the Bible define faith, and how did that impact the faithful men and women of the Old Testament?
2. In Hebrews 11, what story of faith stands out to you, and why?
3. Who is in your personal "hall of faith?" Who is someone that inspires you to live out your faith?
4. Hebrews 12:1-2 encourages us to run the race with endurance and strip off every weight that slows us down. What are some weights/sins slowing you down that you want to remove?
5. Hebrews 13 reminds us to have an eternal perspective on the future. What do you hope for in the future?
6. What is your next step, and how can your small group encourage or help you in this?

