



reclaiming hope

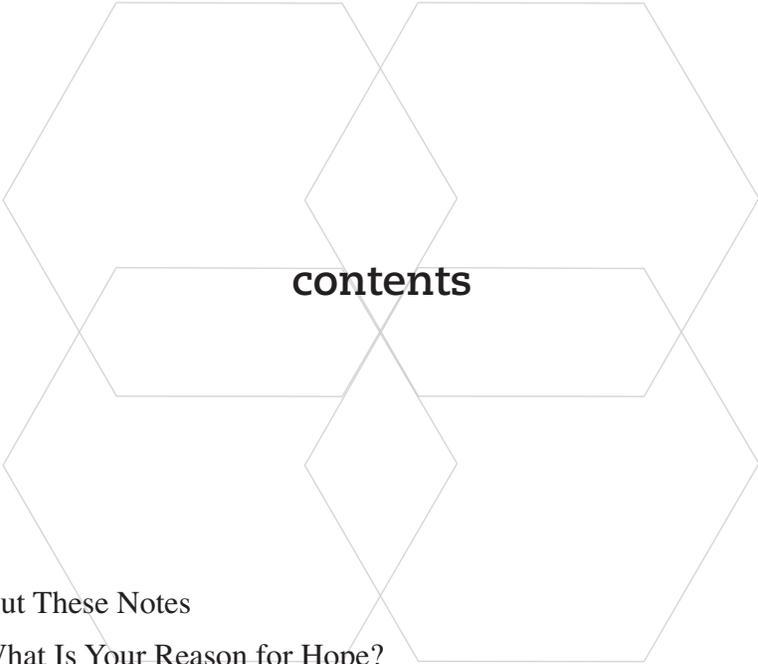
sermon notes

ed love

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Published by Wesleyan Publishing House
Indianapolis, Indiana 46250

These sermon notes are to be used in conjunction with *Reclaiming Hope: Thriving in the Promises of God* by Ed Love (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2016).

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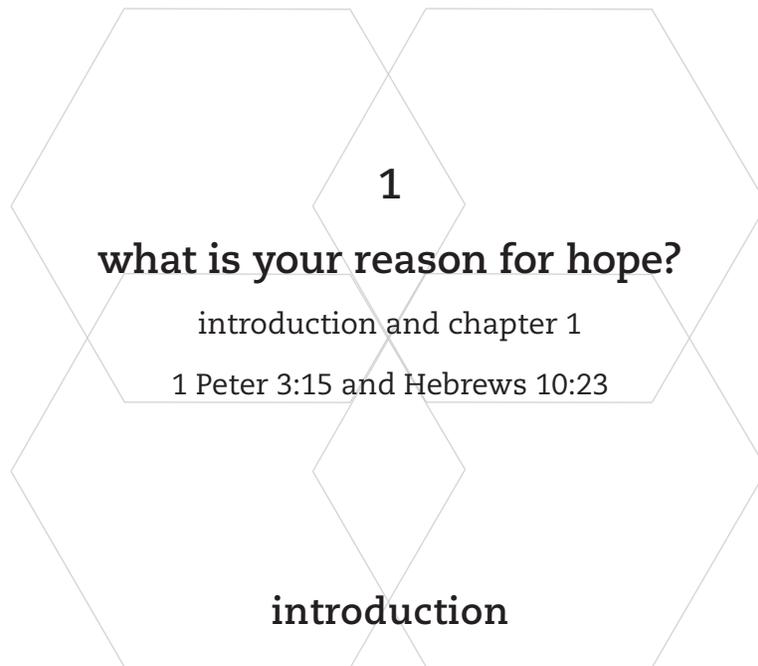


about these notes

Hope is in need of a face-lift. God's people have always looked toward the future and believed that God was up to something good. Even while the early Christians faced intense periods of struggle and persecution, they still did not lose their hope. They believed that in Jesus God was doing something entirely new—something the world had never seen before. These faithful disciples began to redefine their hope in light of the good news. But what did their hope look like? How did these faithful followers remain hopeful, even when their situation was hopeless?

In *Reclaiming Hope*, we will explore what it means to put our hope in Christ and learn how to stand with an unshakeable hope the next time struggle and resistance comes our way. Hope is not optional, in fact, it's central to survival. What is your reason for hope?

This sermon series is designed to help your church see God's picture of hope for humanity and to help individuals discover what it looks like to live full of hope in a world that is filled with despair.



The purpose of this sermon is to help individuals desire God's hope, demonstrate the importance of having their hope rooted in Christ, and learn how to remain rooted in Christ the next time struggle and resistance try to define their existence.

sermon outline

I. The Truth about Hope

- A. Hope is confusing.
- B. The world is longing for hope.
- C. True hope is rare.

II. The Opposite of Hope Is Swerving into a Despair-Filled Life

A. Despair equals the complete loss or absence of hope.

Synonyms of *despair* are: give up, lose heart, lose faith, be discouraged, be demoralized, be pessimistic, or resign oneself.

B. How to avoid swerving into despair.

1. Put your hope in Christ not in worldly things. The early Christian movement spread like wildfire because Jesus' disciples knew what it meant to put their hope in Christ.

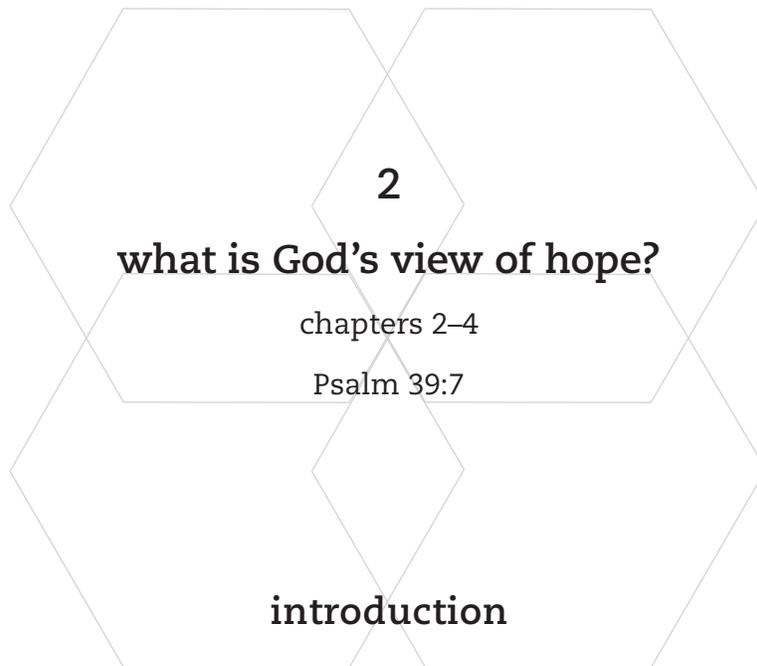
Example: John, the author of Revelation, wrote his hope-filled revelation of Jesus Christ when in exile on the island of Patmos, which was an entirely despair-filled environment.

2. Expect opposition and resistance. When we hear of people splashing in hope, even when their situations seem rather hopeless, we can't help but investigate.

Example: The first-century Roman culture was not tolerant of the early Christian movement. In fact, the Roman authorities made it their mission to abolish Christianity. Being a Christ-follower in the first century was not easy—opposition and resistance was always present.

conclusion

God is faithful and true. He will never abandon us.



The purpose of this sermon is to help individuals see how God's view of hope is different than many of the world's versions of hope and to develop a deep sense of hope now.

sermon outline

- I. God's Version of Hope Has Many Imposters
 - A. Optimism: thinking a positive attitude and a can-do spirit is what the world needs most.
 - B. Progress: thinking the world's systems of good education, generous governmental structures, and better policies is what will solve the world's deepest problems.
 - C. Escapism: thinking we aren't necessary and needed in the world.

- II. How Is God's Hope Different from the World's Versions of Hope?
 - A. The story of Stephen, the first Christian martyr (Acts 11:19-21)
 - B. Describe the first century opposition to Christianity from the roman Caesars and what it would have been like to be a Christian during that era.
 - C. Show and describe the history of the Christian fish symbol.

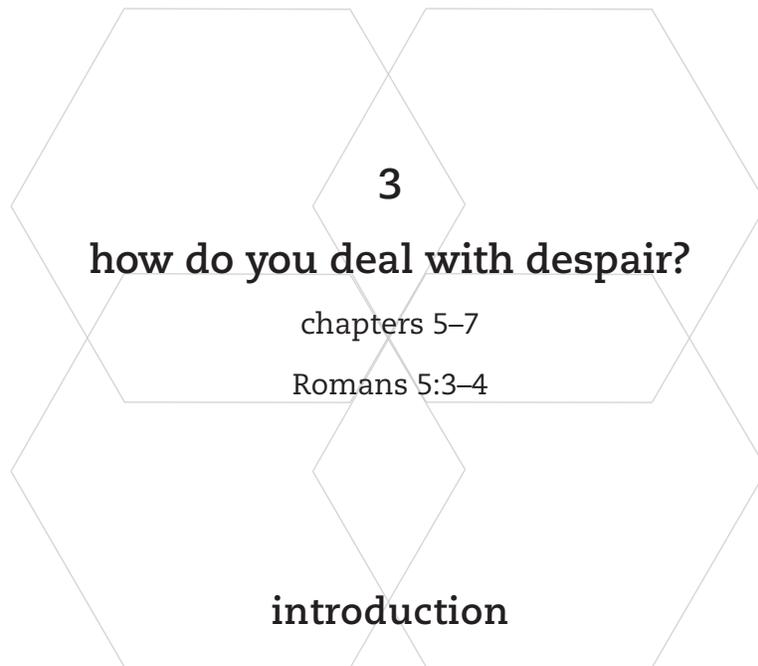
- III. Two Big Observations
 - A. God's hope is about remembering (Ps. 119:49).

God's hope is rooted in the past, is alive in the present, and draws us into his future.
Example: Revelation 3:14-22. Focus on the ramifications of being optimistic-centered.
 - B. God's hope is about remanufacturing (Phil. 1:20-24).

God's hope begins on earth, even in the midst of persecution and struggle.
Focus on Paul's desire to accomplish God's purposes. Escapism says, "The mess of this world is not my responsibility." Hope says, "It is necessary that I stay here for you."

conclusion

The lost world needs us to embody hope, to embody Christ.



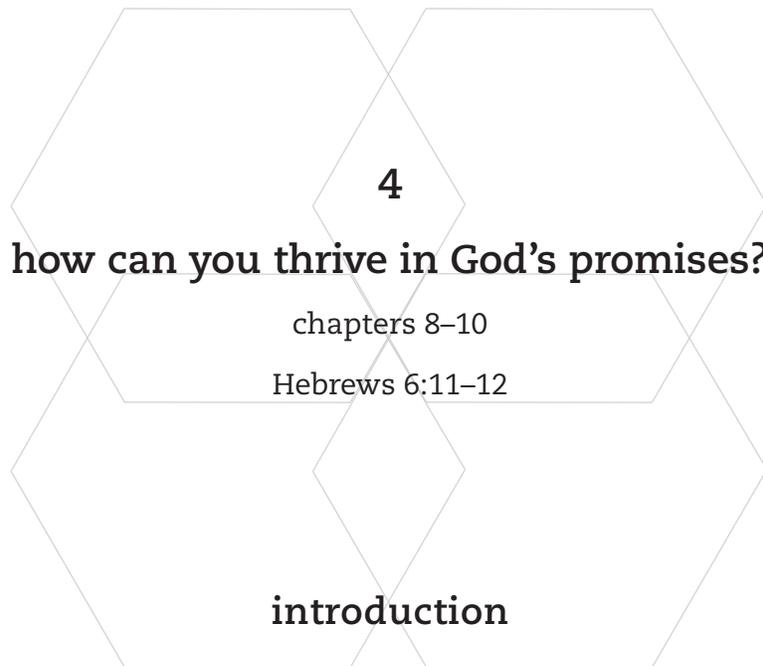
The purpose of this sermon is to help individuals deal appropriately with despair and see how God desperately wants them to live with a greater hope in God's future.

sermon outline

- I. Be Willing to Pick Up Our Cross (Luke 14:26–27)
- II. Be Willing to Embrace Hardship and Struggle (Phil. 1:29; Rom. 8:28)
 - A. God's vision of hope fully recognizes struggles and pain will come. But disciples of Jesus have a different vantage point on life—one which is already caught up in-the-end.
 - B. Struggle is inevitable in life.
- III. Be Willing to Look toward God's Future (Heb. 11:35–40)
 - A. God's faithful ones were filled with hope, even when their situations looked hopeless.
 - B. God's hope comes in the form of a gift.
- IV. Be Willing to Surrender in Praise
 - A. Similar to salvation, when a child of God experiences a hope conversion, God gives his child a new capacity for understanding the challenges of life, new values to express to the world, and a new self to discover.
 - B. No matter what has happened or will happen to us, we must be convinced God's hope is always possible to attain in any situation.
 - C. Struggle, despair, and resistance are simply a springboard for faith.
Example: Revelation 2:12–17. The church in Pergamum was filled with despair, even in the days of Antipas, but the church remained faithful in praise to God.

conclusion

God enjoys birthing new beginnings.



The purpose of this sermon is to help individuals discover how to move from despair to hope and find their purpose in building up God's purposes on earth.

sermon outline

I. Be Active (Matt. 5:13)

God longs for His disciples to remain active and useful in this present life. Hope-filled disciples are using their spiritual gifts and constantly looking for ways to serve those in need.

II. Be Proactive (Jer. 31:17)

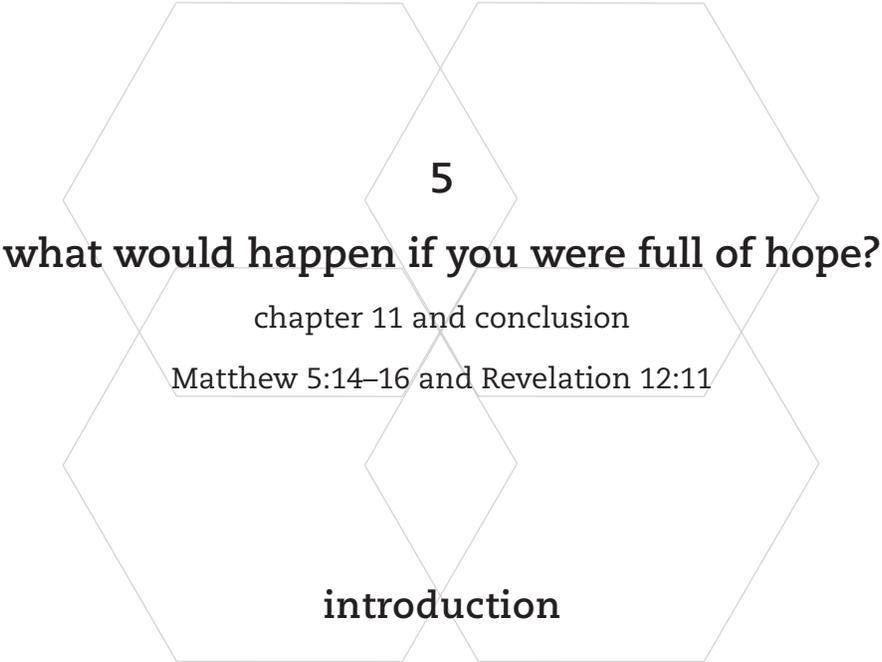
- A. God's promises are not just for us, they are for those who are around us (Rom. 5:3–4).
- B. Hope is like a construction project. God does not need hope watchers; God needs hope workers.
- C. The church was God's strategic vision of hope for the world.
- D. The reason the early disciples were able to endure hardship, persecution, and even death was because they believed God's kingdom project was not finished but in the works.
- E. Within the first few lines of the Lord's Prayer, we can sense Jesus' real desire, which was not to get us into heaven but to get heaven into us (Matt. 6:9–13).

III. Be Attentive (Luke 24:12–33)

The disciples on the road to Emmaus moved from despair to hope.

conclusion

God's people must remain useful in this world.



5

what would happen if you were full of hope?

chapter 11 and conclusion

Matthew 5:14-16 and Revelation 12:11

introduction

The purpose of this sermon is to help individuals lock in their reason for hope and see how the church body is necessary for God's hope project to advance.

sermon outline

I. Don't Be Overly Obsessive about Our Lives but Be Obsessed with God's Kingdom on Earth

A. Example: Modern-day martyrdom stories.

B. If God called you to be a martyr, would you follow through (Heb. 10:25)?

II. Become a Transporter of Hope

Similar to how the mail delivery system works in the world, the body of Christ must be constantly dreaming and strategizing for fresh ways to deliver hope to those around us and across the world.

III. Practice Hope Together

A. It takes a connected community of believers thriving in hope and building up God's hope project in the world. We can't hope alone.

B. God's church was designed to bring hope to this world.

C. Knowing our reason for hope could mean life or death for somebody else.

conclusion

Our hope was meant to be given away.