

SERMON NOTES The Blessing of Hope - Jan 12 - Pastor Peter

This is the year of blessing.

Ephesian 1:3 "All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ."

1. God Doesn't Change

Hope is grounded in the deep truth that God doesn't change.

Psalm 33:20 "We put our hope in the Lord .He is our help and our shield."

QUESTIONS:

1. What is Hope grounded on?
grounded on?
2. Why is it
important to know
that God doesn't
change?
3. Why is God
pursuing us?

And, as in so many things, it's our unchangeable God who starts it all.

We all have defining moments in our lives, moments that we'll never forget.

And for a follower of Jesus, the defining moment is that moment when you felt the tug of the Holy Spirit and you gave your life to Jesus.

Here's Paul's defining moment that he'll never forget.

Acts 26:9-15 "I used to believe that I ought to do everything I could to oppose the very name of Jesus the Nazarene. Indeed, I did just that in Jerusalem. Authorized by the leading priests, I caused many believers there to be sent to prison. And I cast my vote against them when they were condemned to death. Many times I had them punished in the synagogues to get them to curse Jesus. I was so violently opposed to them that I even chased them down in foreign cities. One day I was on such a mission to Damascus. armed with the authority and commission of the leading priests. About noon, Your Majesty, as I was on the road, a light from heaven brighter than the sun shone down on me and my companions. We all fell down, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is useless for you to fight against My will.' 'Who are you, lord?' I

QUESTIONS:

4. What should our attitude be towards this truth?

5. Why is attaching yourself to the past harmful?

asked. And the Lord replied, 'I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting."

And this defining moment radically transforms and redirects Paul's entire life. Saul turns into Paul.

And he says he hopes for more.

Philippians 3:12 "I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me."

Jesus grabs a hold of us and then we grab a hold of Him.

We just need to make room for Jesus

John 8:37 "Yes, I realize that you are descendants of Abraham. And yet some of you are trying to kill Me because there's no room in your hearts for My message."

Their hearts are like my cluttered closet. There's no room.

So, how's your heart? Because God is pursing you.

QUESTIONS:

7. How does
Hope makes us
focus properly on
what really
matters?

8. How did John the Baptist react when he saw God was not doing what he expected him to?

Psalm 23:6 "Surely Your goodness and unfailing love will pursue meall the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the Lord forever."

2. Hope Leaves What's Behind

Philippians 3:13 "No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead."

He's very careful that he doesn't look back in such a way that the past impedes the future. His focus and hope are in the future.

And our expectation that God will do what He's always done can limit us.

John the Baptist has the unique calling to prepare the way for the arrival of Jesus the Messiah.

Matthew 3:12 "He is ready to separate the chaff from the wheat with His winnowing fork. Then He will clean up the threshing area, gathering the wheat into His barn but burning the chaff with never-ending fire."

But things get hard for John, he ends up in prison and he even begins to question the truth about Jesus.

QUESTIONS:

9. Do you relate
with John the
Baptist's reaction
and why?

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Matthew 11:4,5 'Go back to John and tell him what you have heard and seen - the blind see, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor."

What John prophesied and expected isn't mentioned.

But maybe God wanted to do something else.

Maybe, God wants you to experience the blessing of hope and He'll do something so amazing in your life you'll hardly be able to believe it.

3. Hope Helps us Finish Well

Hope always pushes us forward.

Philippians 3:14 "I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.

What is the object of our hope?

Romans 8:29 "For He knew all about us before we were born and He destined us from the beginning to share the likeness of His Son. This means the Son is the oldest among a vast family of brothers and sisters who will become just like Him."

QUESTIONS:

11. Why is finishing well so important?
12. Why does God wants us to be more like Jesus?
13. Why does God wants us to be more like
Jesus?

God wants us to	be like	His Son	as v	we v	valk
through this life.					

But there's also a future goal and a future purpose and a future hope.

Titus 2:11-13 "For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope - the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ."

One day, in heaven, when we're with Him forever, we'll be the proof of His kindness and His grace and His mercy and all hope will be fulfilled.

Putting it all together (Application)

- 1.- God Doesn't Change. What a beautiful truth that is. It gives us certainty and sense of confidence. We don't have to guess if God changed his mind, we don't have to wonder if he woke up in a good or bad mood. Once we get to know him, there is no change. He is who he is. That is something that gives us hope.
- 2.- We put our sight in what lies ahead. It is OK to remember what God has done and what has

QUESTIONS:

14. What is your end goal in life?

happened to us. But we cannot stay in that space mentally, emotionally and spiritually. What has happened in our lives has happened. We cannot change it or relive it. We can just contemplate it, but we need to keep our eyes in what is to come. It's like driving a car. You keep your eyes of what is in front of you. You sometimes look in the back mirrors to glance of what is behind you, but just a glance. Most of the time you are looking ahead, otherwise you will collide. Don't let your past define your future. God is always doing something and he is not restricted to doing things the same way always. Because he did it one way in the past with you doesn't mean he has to do it the same way always. That is why we need to keep our eyes in what lies ahead.

3.- We want to be more like him. Hope helps us do that. By trusting him and keeping our eyes in what he will do next in our lives we are allowing the Holy Spirit to change us. Having hope in what is to come opens our minds and hearts to change. We allow the Holy Spirit to transform us, he does it! He changes us to be more like Jesus and less like the old us. One day we are going to be presented in heaven as God's trophies. Are we are going to be his trophies not because we are good or perfect? No! We are going to be shown as his trophies because of how he made us become like Jesus. The power he used to transform us from sinful humans into the image of his son.

ACTION STEPS:	