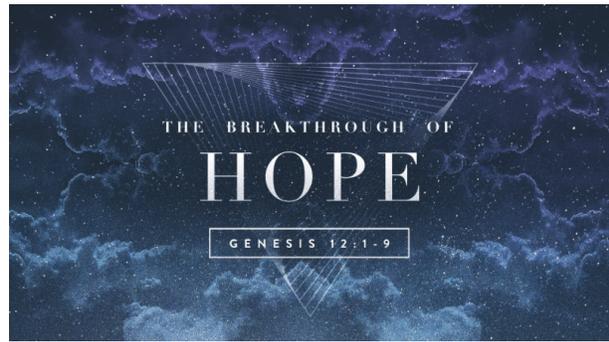


"The Breakthrough of Hope"

August 19, 2018



THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

Psalm 42; Romans 12:9-16,
Romans 4:18-22, Hebrews 6:13-17;
2 Corinthians 4:16-18

DAY 1

Read Psalm 42

- How would you define the word **hope**?

The Psalmist writes we are to seek God as a deer pants for water, and that the soul thirsts for God. Imagine what the Psalmist is describing.

- **Why is he creating this image?**
- **How does it affect our souls when trust is placed in God instead of focusing solely on the problem we are going through?**
- **How has God been your source of hope?**

DAY 2

Read Romans 12:9-16

Paul writes we are to be "devoted to one another in brotherly love."

- **What does this mean?**

In verse 12 he points out that believers are to be "joyful in 'hope', patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."

- **How does hope get us through our afflictions?**

Think of a time when you were struggling and felt overwhelmed by your circumstances.

- **How were you able to cling to hope or be "joyful" in hope during those times?**
- **How was God your strength and the ultimate source of your hope?**

DAY 3

Read Romans 4:18-22

God reached out to Abraham when he was 75 years old and made the promise that he would become the "father of many and his descendants would number the stars in heaven."

- **Think about this story. What would your reaction be if it was you?**

Abraham was totally in tune with his physical limitations at his age, yet he had the great courage to look beyond that and instead to trust fully in God.

- **How was he able to retain that depth of faith?**

It's been said, "God's Word is God's bond." This means you can trust without error the Word of God and according to what we learn through Paul's recording of Abraham, this was definitely the case.

- **When was a time you weren't sure you could trust in God? What was going on?**
- **Looking back, what was the barrier that stood in your way?**

- **How have you learned to be more trusting and to have a greater depth of hope in God's promises?**

DAY 4

Read Hebrews 6:13-17

God made Abraham the promise that against all human odds he and his wife Sarah would have a child. Scripture teaches us God cannot sin, lie or deceive. This is why we know we can fully trust in what God says to us. While this is true, some of us become confused when we pray for something and it doesn't come. We feel God has let us down. But the truth is it was never God's promise to fulfill all our wishes and desires.

- **How can believers guard their hearts against disappointment when a prayer isn't answered the way they seek?**

God never promised to give us what we want, but God does ensure we have what we need.

- **What's the difference between our wants and our needs?**

Before becoming disappointed when a prayer wasn't answered exactly the way you sought, remember God sees the "big picture" of life and we only see a snapshot.

- **When was a time you prayed for something only to discover later on that it not happening was really a blessing? Is it possible to thank God for our unanswered prayers?**

DAY 5

Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Some live by the motto, "Seeing is believing" and yet Jesus told Thomas who was doubting, "Blessed is he/she who believes and have not seen."

- **Why is it we like to be able to wrap our hands around something in order to believe it?**
- **Why do we struggle with blind trust?**

Paul's writing says something profound: "We are to fix our eyes not onto what is seen, but what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."

- **What does he mean by this?**
- **How does this passage help you navigate through your life's difficulties?**
- **How does it help you retain hope?**

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St. Paul United Methodist Church
1199 Highland Ave. | Largo, FL 33770
727-584-8165 | church@stpaulumc.org

www.stpaulumc.org



St. Paul United Methodist Church, 1199 Highland Avenue, Largo, FL 33770

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