

HOPE | **EXPLORED**

WHAT'S THE BEST FUTURE
YOU COULD EVER IMAGINE?

HANDBOOK

Hope Explored Handbook

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WELCOME TO HOPE | **EXPLORED**

There are few emotions more powerful than hope. It's a spark inside you that brings a smile to your lips, a light that shows on your face, a feeling that lifts your head and pulls you forward. Hope is what keeps us alive.

These days hope often feels hard to come by. But real hope is what the Christian faith claims to offer: a joyful expectation for the future, based on true events in the past, which changes everything about my present.

It sounds good... but is it true? Whatever you do or don't believe, this series is your opportunity to explore, to discuss, to question, to discover. This is *Hope Explored*.

Key

-  Watch a film
-  Discuss a question
-  Explore a Bible passage

SESSION 1

HOPE

WATCH: Hope Part 1

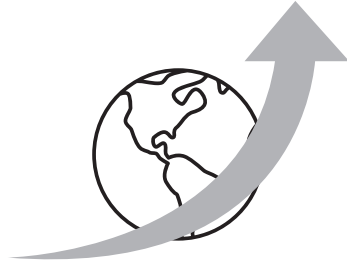
- Hope is a wonderful thing – but few things are more crushing than when our hopes are disappointed.
- A hope worth having needs to...
 - be true.
 - deliver what it promises.
 - be for something that will last.
- The Christian faith is all about hope: a joyful expectation for the future, based on true events in the past, which changes everything about my present.

DISCUSS

How much hope we have will depend on where we've been, where we are, and where we think we're going. Some of us may be searching for hope; others of us may be more sceptical. What about you? Where do you think the world is going?



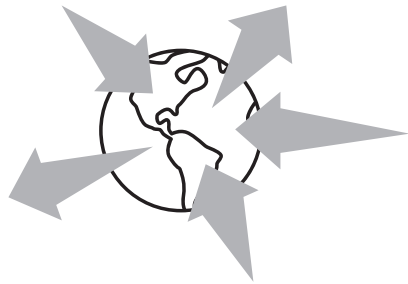
Things are getting worse




Things are getting better



Things go round in a circle of life



Things are in chaos

 **WATCH: Hope Part 2**

- Life is full of many good things. But the Bible is realistic about the darkness we experience too.
- Isaiah 9 speaks to “people walking in darkness”. It was a message from God, promising his people a “Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace”, who would bring light to the darkness (Isaiah 9:6).
- Most of us hope that there’s a God out there. The Bible says that there *is*, and that he’s come to earth in the person of Jesus. Jesus is the person Isaiah spoke of.
- Jesus calmed a storm on Lake Galilee.
- Jesus raised a dead girl.
- There’s only one category big enough for him: Mighty God.
- Jesus proves there is a Mighty God who cares for his world and wants to help people.
- Jesus’ miracles point to the end of the story: one day he will bring in full a new world without uncertainty, sickness or grief.
- This is the Christian hope: a joyful expectation for the future, based on true events in the past, that changes everything about the present.

² *The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned ...*
⁶ *For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Isaiah 9:2, 6

 **EXPLORE**

1. What most surprised or intrigued you about the Christian view of hope that we've just heard described?

Christian hope claims to be "a joyful expectation for the future, based on true events in the past". The question is: how do we know those events are true? In the film, we heard about one day in Jesus' life, as told by a man named Luke in his "Gospel". So, can we trust Luke's account?

Right at the beginning of his book, Luke describes how he went about compiling his Gospel.

Read Luke 1:1-4

("Luke 1:1-4" refers to Luke, chapter 1, verses 1-4.)

Fulfilled | Brought about; completed.

Eye witnesses | Those who saw first-hand what Jesus said and did.

The word | God's message about Jesus.

Theophilus | A Greek name meaning "friend of God". This was the first, though not the only reader of Luke's book.

2. According to Luke, why did he write his Gospel?
(See Luke 1:4.)

3. How did Luke research the events he wrote about?
(See Luke 1:2-3.)

4. How does Luke's method help us to have confidence in what he wrote about Jesus?

So, the claim is that we're reading the words of a historian who had carefully researched the events of Jesus' life by speaking with eye witnesses – including the two events described in the film. Let's take another look at the second of those events.

Read Luke 8:40-42, 49-56

5. Trace the events of this passage. How might Jairus have felt at each of these points?

- Verse 49

- Verse 50

- Verses 51-53

- Verse 54-55

- Verse 56

Synagogue | Where Jewish people gather for worship.

6. What does this episode show us about:

- Jesus' power?

- Jesus' character?

7. Earlier, we heard these events in Luke's Gospel described as "a thumbnail preview of an entirely new world" that Jesus will bring about one day. What hopeless situations do you see around you? What difference would it make to how we think and feel about those situations if Jesus were the Mighty God, who would one day step in to set everything right?

8. We've been thinking in this session about how the Bible claims that Jesus is the Mighty God, who gives us a hope worth having. What has particularly struck you as you've watched the films and looked at this part of Luke's Gospel?

