

# HOPE AGAIN

## Hope Again

### Session 1 | The Gospel Defined

Hi everyone, and welcome to the first week in our brand-new series entitled **Hope Again**. My name is \*\*\* and I serve as senior pastor of \*\*\*. You know – we’ve all been feeling pressure amidst very difficult, divided, and contentious times. Our world is very broken. We are often surrounded by negativity. When you want to make changes, it’s hard to know where to start, when there’s so much going on. Because of that, we can be left feeling anxious... and hopeless.

**[Me]** I understand what living without hope can do to you emotionally, spiritually, relationally, and even physically. There have been times in my life, my first year in college, when I felt as though hope...all hope...was lost. Just prior to coming to Christ, I felt like the road I was traveling was going one way... and that was *down*. I was beat up, bruised, disappointed in life, and to be honest — pretty angry. I was wasting my life — sure I was going to college — but was going nowhere partying and living a crazy life. I was reaching out to anything to fill my heart. Man, it felt like the pressure of life was a lot to bear! *I’ll tell you more of my story in just a minute.*

**[We]** Perhaps you’ve been there. Maybe you’re there right now, asking the question, *“Can I Hope Again? How do we find peace in an ever-changing world, when the ground beneath our feet seems to be breaking apart?”* Well, I can tell you this... You’ve made the right decision to be in this group. Stick with me and your group in this study. I pray you’ll walk away in just six weeks with a hope and confidence for your future. Despite life’s turmoil and even our greatest mistakes, we can find confidence. That’s why I’ve developed this new series, **Hope Again**. ...It’s for you... We’re going to learn how we can rise above hopelessness and anxiety to overcome in life.

In each of our small groups, the goal is **connection**. The goal is for you to connect with one another and grow in both your relationships and your understanding of the Gospel. I'm going to share and recap the key points of the weekend message, and I'll also share some brand-new inspiration with you as well. By the way, if you missed this past weekend's message, you can watch it **on-demand at our website!** Together, we're studying God's Word in Paul's letter to the Romans, chapters 1-8, so we can understand and live out the very best news available to mankind.

Speaking of the news, **all of of us would agree, no matter the channel we watch, or the page we read, it's filled with negativity**. For years, I had a subscription to the newspaper – yes, like the “paper” newspaper. Yes, I'm that old. I may look 30, *but I'm not*. I've noticed in the last few years, I've felt as though we're all on a slowly sinking ship. Day after day, week after week, we come across more and more bad news. Thankfully, in our time today, I want us to dig into what the Good News is, and why this news makes all the difference in our lives.

This past weekend we looked at **the man, the mission, and the message of the Gospel**. The Apostle Paul is the writer of the book of Romans. Prior to coming to Christ in Acts 9 he was a zealous Jew that actually persecuted the church. After his radical transformation, he made it his mission to share the Gospel — the Good News — with anyone and everyone — particularly with church plants throughout Greece and Europe. Paul's message of Romans comes down to the nuts and bolts of the Gospel. That's where we are focusing today and throughout this series.

You know, these days there is a lot of confusion surrounding the message of the Gospel, and **what it is... and isn't**. The Gospel isn't us trying to do the right thing. It's not feeding the poor or helping people. It's not telling people about God. Some people even think gospel is a type of southern religious music. Don't worry. I won't sing. Haha. Many times I've found that people believe the Gospel is us using our own efforts to come into relationship with God. Perhaps you've held to some of these beliefs knowingly or unknowingly. *That's not the Gospel!*

So, let's answer the question... **What is the Gospel?** Friends, simply, it's the Good News. The word gospel in the Greek is the word *euangelion*, (Pr.

yoo-ang-ghel'-ee-on ) and it literally means... "Good...News." So **let's get practical...** To be clear — by **Gospel**, Paul meant **The good news or the story of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.** In the New Testament book of Romans, the Apostle Paul provides us a **detailed explanation** of the gospel. Romans brings us one of the most complete theological explanations of the richness of the Gospel in all of Scripture. Here, Paul gives us a clear explanation of what God has done for us in Christ and God's desired response from us.

In verses 16 and 17 of chapter 1 we see the essence of Paul's message in the book of Romans. **Romans 1:16-17** says: **For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."** These are literally the key verses to the entire book. Paul's saying it's the power *of God* to make you right *with God*.

**What did Paul mean when he referred to the gospel?** In **1 Corinthians 15:3-4** Paul says: **For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,** This passage is Paul's summary of the gospel, which includes the life, death, burial, and resurrection of the living Christ. **The Gospel is more than just information, it is the power of God to transform a person's life.**

The point is, the Christian Gospel is not simply the facts of Jesus' life, death, burial, and resurrection. But those facts are understood in accordance with what the Scriptures say. In other words, the death of Jesus has to be understood in its full context—who this Jesus was who died, why his death was so important, what kind of death it was, and what his death accomplished for you and me.

Let's first be clear on **who Jesus is**. If He is not God manifest in the flesh, if He is not the divine Son of God, then his death would be at best a martyrdom, a great act of love and devotion... BUT it would not have saved anyone. He was the Son of God and lived a **perfect life**. Why does this matter to us? He lived the perfect life to pay the price for our salvation. So,

let's also be clear on why **He suffered and died**. Scripture teaches that it was for *our* sins that He died. He didn't deserve to die. It was the just for the unjust—the righteous for the unrighteous. His death was a substitute for the sins of the world... for you and me.

And if it was a real death, this would also mean that it was a real **resurrection**, one who was dead actually coming back to life. The resurrection proved that his death was a redeeming sacrifice. Jesus did what no one else has ever done. He conquered death by the resurrection... so that we can *hope again*. He rose, so we can rise as well. Jesus lived the perfect life, died a criminal's death, was buried, and was resurrected... never to die again. He did all of this for you and me. That's the "what" of the Gospel. He solved our deepest problem – our separation from God the Father. **Here's the "why" ... So we can hope again.**

**Personal:** My testimony | At 19, I surrendered my life to Christ. My mom, religion, going to church couldn't save me. I needed to trust in the grace of Jesus.

Perhaps today, in your heart, you feel all hope is lost. You feel like you're at the end. Life's become too much. You've lost your passion. You feel too far gone. Here's what I want you to walk away with today: **You can hope again**. Jesus did what you and I could never do—so we can have peace. Stick with me on this **journey**. We are just getting started. Your life will be forever changed as you get a fresh revelation of what Jesus has done for you. To get the most out of this series, I recommend you follow along in the daily guide as you dive into the devotionals and join me for weekend services at one of our campuses.

Enjoy your group as you dive deeper into the discussion and really connect with the material and one another. Remember that's the point — connection and growth. And, please reach out to your small group leader after your study if you need prayer. I'll see you next week. God bless.

**Memory Verse:**

Romans 1:16-17 | For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. <sup>17</sup>For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

**Sticky Statement:**

You can hope again.

**Outline:****Hope Again**

Session One | The Gospel Defined

[YouCanHopeAgain.com](http://YouCanHopeAgain.com)!

What is the Gospel?

Gospel: The good news or the story of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:16-17, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

All Scripture is from the New King James Version (NKJV) of the Bible.