

# **life group study guide**

March 29, 2015



## **Big Idea: HOPE**

**BIG IDEA: Hope believes God will bring something out of something bad.**

### **What is Hope?**

The dictionary defines HOPE as “a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen.” It’s looking into the future and seeing a promising picture, longing for something beautiful to come.

Q: What was your greatest hope as a child?

Q: Did you see it come to pass?

Q: Share a story of something you are still hoping for today.

**So what do we do when life takes an ugly turn? When our picture of the future becomes less clear, or the things we anticipated are delayed or even lost forever?**

### **Personal Story:**

I celebrated last Easter in a hospital bed. An unknown blood-clotting disorder had created 3 sizeable blockages in the jugular vein running from the top of my head down behind my left ear. The resulting CVST caused a massive seizure, and voila, there I was on the third floor of IU West while my wife, kids, and extended family feasted on ham and hunted Easter eggs without me. I had never felt more weak, desperate, or alone.

Q: Share a time when you felt your most hopeless.

Q: What are some of the emotions you encountered in those moments?

Q: How did you deal with them? Did you express them? Keep them to yourself?

**READ: Mark 15:1-20**

Q: How do you think Jesus felt in those moments?

Q: How about His followers? What was their picture of their future with Jesus compared to the reality they were experiencing in that moment?

Q: What gets exposed in these moments?

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*“When our circumstances don’t match our desires, we suffer.”*

*-Tim Keller*

Q: Do you think you would pray differently if you knew everything God knows? Why?

Q: What have you learned about yourself through times of suffering? About God?

## **Here’s a Short Portion of My Journal from Last Easter Morning:**

Up until six weeks ago, I would’ve told you I trust God. After all, trust is central to faith. It’s been part of the fabric of my belief system since I was old enough to sing Sunday School songs about it and quote verses like [Proverbs 3:5](#). But let’s face it, it’s easier to trust God when you don’t have to. And yet here I sit. Full of fear. Full of questions. Forced to trust.

But maybe, just maybe, that’s not so far away from what Easter is all about after all. If you read the Easter account in Scripture, there was plenty of sorrow and despair to go around. Jerusalem was somber, the disciples were in hiding, women were weeping. Their dreams had been shattered. Their dreams. Their picture of life. Their image of Jesus, who He was, and what He was there to do.

That first Easter morning they were undoubtedly swimming in sorrow, confessing their frustration, and fears, and confusion, and complete inability to control anything that had been so important to them. And from that place of complete loss...

## **Resurrection.**

Q: How has suffering changed *your* picture of life or *your* image of Jesus?

Q: Did suffering expose anything you had placed your faith and trust in outside of God? If so, what were those things?

Q: How did God’s plan for that first Easter differ from what His followers expected and desired?

Q: What does this tell us about our own moments of difficulty and hopelessness?

Q: How have you seen God bring “resurrection” out of “death” in your own life?

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