

CHAMPIONS! - HOW TO BE A CHAMPION OF HOPE!

Scripture used: John 1:4-5 (NLT)

OVERVIEW

The BIG IDEA: Champions are known for the choices that they make!

We tend to associate champions with sports teams or individuals based on two things: 1) they stand out from the rest of the crowd and 2) they overcome great odds to win. This inspires us with a sense of hope, which we translate into the challenges of our homes and our lives. Jesus was the ultimate champion of hope! He has overcome death and the grave. Romans 8 says that through Christ, we are MORE than conquerors in all things.

The book of John wants to convince us to trust in Jesus. But trusting in someone can only be developed by knowing them. In John 1:4-5, this Jesus is promised to us. The word gave life and His life brought light to everyone. This shows us what he did in the past. Verse 5 says that the Light shines in the darkness, showing us what He does to this day. And because His light shines through our darkness, we have a hope that nothing else can possibly give, and the darkness will NEVER extinguish it, no matter what the circumstance! Not terrorism, not racial tension, not senseless killing. NOTHING will extinguish it. What a hope! If Jesus lives in our lives, we will always have HOPE!

KEY POINTS - 4 steps for a dialogue of HOPE

- 1) **Listen to each other's stories without judgment or a need to persuade.** We need to take risks in sharing our stories with each other. But just as Jesus did not come into the world to condemn the world but to save it (John 3:17), we need to LISTEN to each other's stories and perspectives without judging or condemning. In the transactions of our stories to each other, HOPE is born.
- 2) **With humility, acknowledge each others pain, and lean towards empathy and away from criticizing.** Philippians 2:5-8 describes how Jesus willingly gave up His rights as the Son of God and became a servant to all, which He epitomized on the cross. He modeled for us how we should behave towards one another. We should humble ourselves, especially when listening to other's accounts, and learn to suffer along with the other, as Christ would (1 John 3:16).
- 3) **Pray for one another.** Prayer is the ultimate wall-breaker in relationship building and restoring. It is through prayer that the seeds of hope are ultimately planted.
- 4) **Stretch towards each other in a new way.** God let His light shine through Jesus that all the world would know that He is Lord (Phil 2: 9-11). When we stretch towards others, we are letting Christ's light shine through us to other people. It is then that the Word of God becomes flesh in us (John 1:14) and becomes human. And THIS in turn makes each of US more human to one another.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** What are areas of hopelessness in your life that the light of the hope in Christ needs to shine upon? If you are willing, share those with the group to pray over individually.
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** Eph 2:14 (NLT) says that Christ broke down the walls of hostility and brought peace. In what areas do you still encounter hostility? Being honest with yourself, what prevents you from experiencing peace?
- 3) **DO** In light of the recent events that Pastor Hurmon has been preaching in response to, pray over the decision to have engaging conversations with others about racial issues or sufferings you have encountered or experienced. Commit to follow the guidelines defined in today's message, and pray for God's healing and hope to permeate through the relationships you invest in.

You can connect one of four ways:

- One on one - Initiate individual conversations
- Family chats - Engage in safe conversations with your immediate family
- Life Groups - Share stories safely with trusted friends in your Life Group
- Community Conversations - Join a diverse group of 8 other people in a facilitated dialogue over the next 3 months. Sign-ups will be open on July 24.