

- I. ONE THING—The One Thing that I'd like to take away from today's class and believe God to accomplish in my life is:

II. MEDITATION

- A. Review your class notes from Tuesday.
- Take some time to think about the main ideas of the lesson. If you want to add details to your notes, you'll find the audio message on our website under the Resources tab. (www.DivineDesignDiscipleship.com).
 - Which of the scriptures referenced were particularly meaningful to you? Write out those verses below and spend some time studying them this week.

- B. Rewrite your One Thing into a prayer, expressing your heart's desire for God to make this truth become your experience.

III. PRINCIPLES

Use the principles found in these Scriptures to help you understand the concept of Living Hope:

A. REJOICING IN HOPE

- Why rejoice in our troubles? They are training opportunities to grow us in Christ. God uses them to purify and mature us to become more and more healthy and holy:

TROUBLES → ENDURANCE → CHARACTER → HOPE (ANTICIPATE GOODNESS) → LOVED!

- God begins today's Scripture with the commandment to rejoice: Zech 9:9-13 NIV-- Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. ¹⁰ I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the warhorses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. ¹¹ As for you, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit. ¹² Return to your fortress, you prisoners of hope; even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you. ¹³ I will bend Judah as I bend my bow and fill it with Ephraim. I will rouse your sons, Zion, against your sons, Greece, and make you like a warrior's sword.
- Rejoice = to delight in (Strong's #H1523, *giyl*)
- Here are just a few things about the character of King Jesus to delight in (v. 8):
 - Not only is the King coming, but also He comes to us individually: Lk 21:28 TV--When the troubles begin, *don't be afraid*. Look up—raise your head high, because the truth is that your liberation is fast approaching.
 - He is a King that rules in righteousness: Ps 111:7 TPT—All God accomplishes is flawless, faithful, and fair.
 - He is a humble King unlike rulers of this world: Mt 11:29 AMP-- I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest (renewal, blessed quiet) for your souls.
- We can also delight in the benefits of rejoicing:
 - God gives us inner strength as we obey His command to rejoice: Neh 8:10—The joy of the Lord is your strength.
 - Joy is a weapon that precedes victory over and over again in Scripture! Revisit the stories of Jericho (Josh 6), Jehoshaphat (2 Chron 20), or Paul and Silas (Acts 16:16ff).
 - Negative emotions dissipate as we make the choice to rejoice: Ps 42:5--Why are you cast down, O my soul? And *why* are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him *for* the help of His countenance.
- We can overcome evil by celebrating the goodness of God daily: Pr 15:15 AMP-- All the days of the desponding *and* afflicted are made evil [by anxious thoughts and forebodings], but he who has a glad heart has a continual feast [regardless of circumstances].
- LISTENING EXERCISE: *What is keeping me from practicing joy? (Be still and let the Holy Spirit show you anything standing in your way.)*

Insights:

B. RELEASING PRISONERS

- Our text says that our King comes to proclaim peace and to set prisoners free. Jesus reiterates that in His “mission statement” at the beginning of His ministry: Lk 4:17-19 NIV—The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”
 - The first thing He does for us when He sets us free is to forgive us: Eph 1:7 NLT-- He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins.
 - We can’t be Prisoners of Hope as long as we hold bitterness, resentment, anger, or offense in our hearts. We imprison ourselves and others: Mt 18:32-35 NLT-- Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, ‘You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Shouldn’t you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?’ Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt. “That’s what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart.”
 - Wrong mindsets can prevent us from forgiving fully. Here are some ways we do this:
 - Denial
 - Minimizing
 - Blaming (others, God)
 - Over-spiritualizing
 - Blaming self
 - Rationalizing
 - Intellectualizing
 - Distracting
 - Becoming hostile
 - Medicating (with unhealthy attachments or addictions)
- (From *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* by Peter Scazzaro)
- The apostle Paul gives us another checklist to help us spot unforgiveness: Eph 4:31 AMP-- Let all bitterness and indignation *and* wrath (passion, rage, bad temper) and resentment (anger, animosity) and quarreling (brawling, clamor, contention) and slander (evil-speaking, abusive or blasphemous language) be banished from you, with all malice (spite, ill will, or baseness of any kind).
 - *Which of the mindsets, feelings, speech, or actions do you need to banish in order to experience the freedom, healing, and hope that Jesus died to give you?*
 - God calls us to release forgiveness and relate as He does. “Christ in you” is your only hope of fulfilling this call!: Col 3:12-13 NIV-- Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.
 - LISTENING EXERCISE: Ask the Lord this question on a regular basis:
Is there anyone I need to forgive?

Insights:

C. RESIDING IN HOPE

- Hope is a habit and habitat we must return to over and over until it's our new normal: Zech 9:12a NLT-- Come back to the place of safety, all you prisoners who still have hope!
- In Hebrew, the word for this place is *bt/stsarown*, meaning stronghold or fortress. It's root means "to make inaccessible." (Strong's H1225 and H1219)
- Jesus is our Living Hope and we must learn to abide in Him in order to be inaccessible to the enemy's attempts to steal, kill, and destroy our hope:
 - Ps 27:1 NAS-- The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defense of my life; whom shall I dread?
 - Ps 32:7 NLT-- For you are my hiding place; you protect me from trouble. You surround me with songs of victory.
 - Ps 57:1 NAS-- Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me, For my soul takes refuge in You; and in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge Until destruction passes by.
 - Is 25:4 TV-- Because You stand up for the poor and weak, You *comfort and* empower them in their distress, giving them safe harbor and cool shade when it's hot; You shelter them from their oppressors' blows as a strong wall holds back the driving rain.
- The Lord is telling us in these verses that HE wants to be our defense, strength, refuge, defense, hiding place, protection, comfort, and shelter. This is who He wants to be for us in when we are afraid, weak, or insecure.
- Make these truths feel like "home" by rehearsing them again and again in times when your moods or your circumstances tempt you into negativity.
- Remember that one way the word hope is translated in Hebrew is "rope" or "cord."
- Rahab is someone who literally displayed hope in God's protection. She risked trusting God to her stronghold and her cord of hope when the walls fell down around her: Josh 2:21—(Rahab) said, "According to your words, so be it."...And she bound the scarlet cord in the window.

Insights:

D. RESTING IN THE PROMISE

- God's promise to Prisoners of Hope is a two-fold restoration: Zech 9:12b NIV-- Now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you.
- The double portion is reserved for the firstborn. The true Firstborn of God, Jesus, was different than the firstborn that were freed from bondage in Egypt. He tasted death for us so that we are now included in Christ's death and resurrection: Col 1:18-- He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead

- God promises we are fellow heirs with Christ. Our inheritance is not only life everlasting but Living Hope in this earthly life:
 - Rom 8:16-17-- The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ
 - Is 61:7 NIV-- Instead of your shame you will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace you will rejoice in your inheritance. And so you will inherit a double portion in your land, and everlasting joy will be yours.
- We must take care not become distracted with our speculations about specific outcomes. That can lead to doubt and distrust:
 - Jm 1:6-8-- He who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ *he is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.
 - Rom 8:24 Phillips-- In our moments of impatience let us remember that hope always means waiting for something that we haven't yet got. But if we hope for something we cannot see, then we must settle down to wait for it in patience.
- Instead, the promises of God are relational meant to help us know Him more deeply. We will abide in hope when we view promises through the lens of His character:
 - Ps 119:89-- Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven.
 - Ps 119:91-- All things are Your servants.
 - Ps 119:98-- Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies, For they are ever ^[e]mine.
 - Rev 19:11-- Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True
- Christ “in me” and being “in Christ” is the promised Double Portion Inheritance that is ours. Charles Spurgeon wrote a wonderful commentary on this promise: God gives His servants the double of all that they expect. When we come to our Lord, it is as it was when the queen of Sheba came to Solomon. She said that the half had not been told her, and if you raise your expectations to the highest point that you can reach, you who come to Christ will find them far exceeded in the blessed realization! He is, indeed, a precious Christ to all who believe in Him—but He is a hundred times more precious than you can ever imagine! You think that it must be a delightful thing to be saved, and so it is, but it is ten thousand times more delightful than you suppose! You have read the Scriptures, and have prized the blessings of grace of which you have read there—but you have not prized them at anything like their proper value! There shall be double rendered unto you, who are the people of God who have known the most of divine love, and have for years sat at your Master's feet. As yet you know not the half of what He will reveal to you in His own time and way! Only have patience, and keep your souls upon Him while pressing forward in the heavenly race. The land has been full of silver mercy, but it shall yet be full of golden mercy! You have gone through green pastures, and by still waters, but there are fatter pastures, and deeper streams on ahead! The fullness of joy is not yet revealed to you—press on, and you shall discover it, and delight in it!

Insights:

E. GROW IN LIVING HOPE by applying the principles we have previously learned:

- Mediate on these verses that illustrate how we can choose to be Prisoners of Hope:
 - Rev 3:20 TPT-- Behold, I'm standing at the door, knocking. If your heart is open to hear my voice and you open the door *within*, I will come in to you and feast with you, and you will feast with me.
 - Ps 37:3-7 TV-- Live in the land *He provides; roam*, and rest in God's faithfulness.⁴ Take great joy in the (Lord)! His gifts are coming, and they are all your heart desires!⁵ Commit your path to the (Lord); *let Him direct you*. Put your confidence in Him, and He will follow through *with you*.⁶ He will spread out righteousness for you as a sunrise *spreads radiance over the land*; He will deliver justice for you into the light of the high sun.⁷ Be still. Be patient. Expect the (Lord) to arrive *and set things right*.
- Let your group leader know if you want to schedule an individual time of prayer. We will have times available next Tuesday, November 14th as well as outside of class.
- Use your emotions as an indicator of where God can offer Living Hope. Bring your feelings to God in prayer in your over-reactions, numbness, or hardness of heart.
- Embrace the Limp when you are dealing with an area of weakness or wounding. Call on your Abba Father as a beloved little child. Allow your trustworthy, like-minded friends to support and speak into these areas. Offer your strength to them where you are mature.
- If you have not done so, take the assessment on Emotionally Healthy Spirituality. Use the results to pinpoint areas of growth in your relationship with God and others.
- Be alert for any Negativity Bias (focus problem) or Confirmation Bias (belief problem). Ask for hope (an expectation of good) where you're struggling.
- Keep asking: *What am I pursuing and prizing that indicate that my worship is off?*
- "Remember the Deeds of the Lord" and be encouraged by His faithfulness.
- Bring glory to God and grow in hope and faith by giving more weight to what He says than to your emotions, evidence, and errors. The resistance will make you stronger!
- Review regularly the benefits of being "In Christ" and having Christ is in you:
 - Surety—We can have confidence in God's unchanging character.
 - Purity—Our salvation is sure and our record is spotless because of Jesus.
 - Security—The Lord's acceptance, love, and worth for us is unconditional.
 - Maturity—We grow in Christ as we abide, repent, wait and watch for His word to be fulfilled.
 - Authority—In Christ we have authority to overcome the flesh, the world, and the enemy.
- The Scripture verses on the handout "Tools & Techniques: God Makes Things Right" offer comfort and hope when you have been wronged.
- Invite the Spirit to speak through His word and breathe His life-giving power where you have been lifeless and dry. Believe that those Dry Bones can dance again!
- For helpful hints about hearing God's word and allowing the Spirit to apply it to your life, refer to the handout "Tools & Techniques: Listening to God."
- Stop speaking death over your situation and start declaring Living Hope from God's Word over it. Ask Him to draw your attention to a promise from His word He wants to apply specifically to your issue. Add it to your Promise Page!
- Yield to the Spirit's transforming power each day. Thank God that it's not all on you.
- Stay in touch with your leader and your small group over the holiday break. Use the time away from class to review and practice the principles we've studied so far.
- Be sure to journal your prayers and God's answers. Come back ready to share!