

## Hope Bumper

Today is December 18<sup>th</sup> 2016. It is hard to believe this year is almost over. I know this time of the year is very busy. I thank you for taking time to worship with us today. We have worshipped together. We are about to receive the word together. And before we leave today we will talk to God together.

My name is Chris Fluitt and I am the lead pastor here at Redemption Church. I am excited to be preaching the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of our Hope 4 the Holidays series.

Next Sunday is Christmas day (December 25<sup>th</sup>) and we will be meeting right here to worship at our normal time of 3pm. We will have a special time of communion and worship. Please come and bring your family and friends.

Week 1 – Hope shows up

Week 2 – Hope speaks up

Today I want to tell you that **H3 1 Hope holds us up**

**When you see no hope in front of you, in your current situation, after all the loss you may be dealing, THERE IS A HOPE THAT WILL HOLD YOU UP.**

Let's look at our scripture memory verse for this month.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.(NIV)

John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.(NIV)

The gospel of John is different from the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

## H3 2 Matthew, Mark, & Luke are Synoptic

If you have been around Church you have probably heard that term dropped into a sermon. Redemption Church is a church built for to welcome people who have not been around church and perhaps have never heard the term synoptic.

Matthew, Mark, & Luke are **Synoptic Gospels** because they include many of the same stories, often in a similar sequence and in similar wording.

When you read the gospels of Matthew, Mark, & Luke you notice the same stories and layout. Matthew & Luke both include a genealogy of Jesus. The three accounts have similar chronology in the order of sermons, parables, and miracles...

And then there is John. **H3 3 John is just different.** He is no more or less inspired by the Spirit, but John is just different.

- The stories he focuses on are different.
- John focuses on Jesus' early ministry in Galilee. The others don't mention this time.
- John tells us about Jesus visiting Jerusalem before the Passion week. The other Gospels only mention Jesus traveling to Jerusalem in connection to the cross.
- Only John tells us about the raising of Lazarus from the dead.
- John spends an extended time telling of Jesus' farewell to His disciples.
- John doesn't spend time on the sermon on the mount or the Lord's prayer.
- There are no parables in the book of John. (There are a growing number of scholars, who also find parables in the Gospel of John, such as the little stories of the Good Shepherd (John 10:1-5) or the childbearing woman (John 16:21). Otherwise, it includes allegories but no parables.)

- The temptation of Jesus, Jesus' transfiguration, and the institution of the Lord's supper are not mentioned by John.

John is just different. The way he talks is different. He opens up His Gospel calling Jesus THE WORD.

He makes this grand declaration using a Greek word LOGOS.

A Greek philosopher named Heraclitus first used the term Logos around 600 B.C. to designate the divine reason or plan which coordinates a changing universe.

He reaches into the Greek philosophical library to declare Jesus to be the divine plan that changes the universe. This is how he starts His gospel of Jesus. In the beginning was the LOGOS..

The way John describes Jesus is different. His description is often more personal and relational.

John is just different, and that is ok. It is ok to be different. We don't all have to be synoptic Christians. We don't all have to talk alike, look alike, sing alike, walk alike. John was different, so you go ahead and be different as well.

Your story is different. Your testimony is different. Your description of Jesus is different.

Be different.

What makes us different? Maybe we look at our experiences. Our different experiences make us different people. So let's look at John's experience...

The book of John is believed to be the youngest of the 4 gospels. In fact the last 2 books of the New Testament are believed to be the Gospel of John and Revelation.

The book of John is believed to have been written around 90 AD. **H3 4Gospel of John 90A.D.**

At this time John is an old man. He only has a small amount of timeline left. We can estimate he was around 84 years old. The

large bulk of his timeline has already been spent. Within that timeline that has been spent is so much heartache.

- He had a brother named James.
  - You can't hardly find a place where James is mentioned without his brother John. The sons of Zebedee were inseparable. In fact Jesus gave James & John a nickname. (How cool is that!?) Jesus called them the SONS OF THUNDER. They were always together.

But around 44AD, Acts 12 tells us about the first martyred Apostle.

Acts 12:1 It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them.(NIV)

Acts 12:2 He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword.(NIV)

Think about how the loss of a brother effected John.

- Persecution escalates
  - Jesus said they would be hated. (Mark 13:13)  
Believers were arrested. Believers were killed. The death toll grew and grew.
- Peter & Paul are gone (67A.D.)
  - Fellow Apostles Peter and Paul are killed around 67A.D.  
  
Paul is imprisoned and beheaded.  
  
Peter is crucified and requests to be hung upside down, because he saw himself unworthy to be crucified in the same way as Jesus.
- Jerusalem destroyed (70A.D.)
  - A Roman General (and future emperor) named Titus sieged the city.

1 Million Hebrews killed. 95 thousand taken captive.

The temple was burnt to the ground.

John's Homeland was destroyed. His earthly heritage was left to ruin.

- Church in Jerusalem scattered
  - The once mighty Church in Jerusalem was scattered. Things would never be the same. Christians would never meet at Solomon's porch again. From this point on they would need to meet in private underground locations to avoid Roman soldiers.
- John is the last apostle
  - Peter, Andrew, James, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James, Thaddeus, Simon, Paul... they are all gone. They all met violent ends as they spread the news of Jesus in peace.
- John arrested and executed but... Lives
  - As if things aren't bad enough for John, He too is arrested. They attempt to execute John by boiling Him in oil, but John lives. What is worse than being boiled in oil? Answer: Being boiled in oil and living.

### H3 5Picture John – No hope in front of him

He sits chained in a jail cell. He has high degree burns on 100% percent of His body. It hurts to be alive.

Physically hurt.

Emotionally hurt.

Relationally alone.

It would be so much easier to die at this point. "God why am I still alive? I am the last Apostle and I have no chance of getting out of here. I have heard that I will be banished to a desert island called Patmos."

John has no hope in front of his timeline on earth. He has nothing that will happen today or tomorrow that he could hope in.

This is the moment. This the context. This is the frame of mind of John when he takes a piece of paper and grabs a quill and begins to write...

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.(NIV)

John 1:3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.(NIV)

John 1:4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men.(NIV)

John 1:5 The light shines in the darkness...(NIV)

I want you to understand this. John in this dark situation had no hope left in the physical. He can't really say "well maybe tomorrow will be better." There was no reason to hope in a tomorrow for John. That is a dark place.

So where does John look for hope. Not in front of him. He looks behind him.

He points to the hopeful moment where the word became flesh.

John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.(NIV)

John sitting in this darkness looks back. He looks back before his arrest, before the burning of Jerusalem, before Peter, Paul, & John were taken in martyrdom, before the ascension of Jesus, before the miracles of Jesus, before the moment where Jesus called John to be his disciple...

John points us to a baby in a manger.

## H3 6Where is your hope?

**Let me tell you why this is important to you.**

I am talking to people today that are experiencing all kinds of situations and problems. You may not see much hope in front of you. You may have some terrible memories that are tied to this holiday. I hate to see people pass away in the holiday season. Every year at this time they may remember the terrible loss. A season that ought to point to happy things only seem to underline what has been lost and who is no longer with us.

I may be talking to people that feel like everything is going well. You may tell me that you have plenty of hope in your life right now. You have money, a house, cars, nice things, everyone is healthy. But we all know that that can change in a moment. If that is the hope you are pointing to, then I have to warn you that this hope is not guaranteed to be here.

Wouldn't it be good to have a hope that is guaranteed?  
Wouldn't it be great if there was a hope you could grab onto, no matter what life's circumstances bring.

John would tell you to point back to the manger. That is where your guaranteed hope is.

God's glory is in the manger. Grace & Truth are in the manger. God chose to dwell with us from a manger. Hope is in the manger.

John 1:1 told us that the manger, coming in the flesh, was God's LOGOS PLAN from the beginning.

My hope is here at the feet of a manger. Hope is here at with the savior.

This is not just a holiday. This is not just a time to remember an old story. This is a time to worship God because He came to earth to save us. THIS IS HOPE! When nothing else will hold you up – this hope will.

John's gospel was a declaration of hope & life.

John mentions LIFE more than all the other Gospels put together. 36 times he talks about the LIFE that is found in Christ.

John lost his brother, but he still had life in Jesus.

The city of Jerusalem was burnt to the ground, but John still had life in Jesus.

He may one day soon die, but John had LIFE, BECAUSE IN JESUS WAS LIFE AND THAT LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF ALL MANKIND.

### **H3 7Where is your life?**

If you are trying to get life & hope from any other source than from God, then you are at risk.

Let's take some time and tell Jesus that He is our hope and our life.

Hope held John up. There is a hope that will hold you up.