



W I T N E S S
SERMON SERIES STUDY GUIDE



QUARTER 1, 2025

WITNESS

Sermon Series Study Guide

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Introduction

WITNESS Sermon Series: February-April 2025

Sharing your faith, with family and friends, is not as hard as you might think. And it could be the most important chat you ever have. If you've tried this in the past and failed or if you've just been too scared to have a go, this teaching series will help and encourage you. It is a wonderful thing to bear witness to the hope we have in Jesus. And it's our responsibility as well.

In this series we will explore what the Bible says about 'when', 'why' and 'how' to be first rate witnesses. We will conquer some of our fears and encourage one another to grow God's family. We will also be making use of Doug Pollock's book, *God Space*, to inspire and resource the church's witness. Add this wonderful book to your reading list.

Then through April we will have 5 'Invitation Sundays', and every one of them will be a great occasion to invite a friend or family member who never goes to church to attend with you. Through term one, we will also be promoting the Alpha Course with a goal to see record numbers participating in term two.

And here's the reason why: Did you know that 9 out of 10 people who attend any church meeting do so because a friend or family member invited them? And, did you know that according to NCLS research, nearly 1/2 of Australians claim they would go to church if a good friend or a family member invited them personally?

We are invited to participate in what God is already doing, trusting the Spirit to lead and guide us, as we share the hope we have in Jesus.

Witness Sermons

Watch or listen to the sermons for this study guide at:

<https://nhbc.churchcenter.com/channels/16420/series/57703>

Other Resources

Bible Project Video: Witness (Matus) - bibleproject.com/videos/matus-witness

Doug Pollock book: God Space - available at amazon.com.au



Week 1: The Power of an Invitation

Ryan Vallee

9 February 2025

Visit the [NewHope Teaching](#) page to find this week's sermon

This week we had the privilege of hearing from guest speaker, Ryan Vallee, from *Alpha Australia*, as we launched a new teaching series on the theme of witness.

1. What do you think of when you hear the word Witness or Evangelism?
2. Can you think of a time when you witnessed to someone? How did it go?

Read John 4:1-42

God often chooses ordinary, even unlikely, individuals to be His witnesses. The story of the woman at the well in John 4 illustrates this truth. Despite her societal status and personal struggles, her encounter with Jesus led her to invite her entire town to meet Him. We don't need to have all the answers or live perfect lives to share the Gospel; we simply need to be willing to invite others to "come and see."

1. In what areas of your life do you feel inadequate or unqualified to share your faith?
2. How can you allow God's strength to shine through your weaknesses today?

Evangelism is not about our abilities but about joining the conversation the Holy Spirit is already having with others. We are invited to participate in what God is doing, trusting that the Spirit will lead and guide us, after all, the Holy Spirit is the true evangelist!

1. How can you be more attentive to the Holy Spirit's leading in your interactions with others?
2. What steps can you take to join in the conversation He is already having with those around you?

Ryan reminded us about the profound power of an invitation. A simple invitation has the potential to open doors to new and transformative experiences. Just as Jesus invited His disciples to "come and see," we are called to extend this invitation to others, trusting that God will work through our willingness to share.



Did you know that 9 out of 10 people who attend any church meeting do so because a friend or family member invited them? And did you know that according to NCLS research, nearly 1/2 of Australians claim they would go to church if a good friend or a family member invited them personally?

1. How do you feel when you hear those statistics?
2. What is the importance of community and relationships in spreading the Gospel?

Read Matthew 28:19-20

1. Reflect on a time when you received an invitation that changed your life.
2. Who in your life could you invite to experience something new, whether it's coming along to church, small group, the Alpha course, or simply having a conversation about faith?
3. Is there anything else from Ryan's message that stood out to you?



Week 2: We Are Witnesses

Allan Demond

16 February 2025

Visit the [NewHope Teaching](#) page to find this week's sermon

In our journey as followers of Jesus, we are called to be witnesses to the profound reality of God's love and purpose for the world. This calling is not unlike being a witness in a legal or personal matter, but it is infinitely more significant. We are bearing witness to a new reality: the life, death, and resurrection power of Jesus.

Read Luke 24:36-49

Here we find the disciples grappling with the reality of the risen Christ. They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost! They were full of joy and amazement, thinking this is too good to be true! They could not understand what was happening before their eyes. They needed Jesus' help.

1. What stands out to you about the disciples' reaction to Jesus' appearance?
2. What does Jesus do to help them understand the reality of His resurrection?
3. Reflect on a time when God was doing something in your life that you struggled to understand. What helped you?

Verse 45 says that Jesus opened their minds so they could understand the scriptures. Perhaps this has happened to you when suddenly a passage of scripture you have read a hundred times before speaks in new and wonderful ways. When Jesus opens your mind it is not merely an intellectual transformation, but a profound understanding of God's purpose and love at work in the world.

1. Have you ever had an experience of Jesus opening your mind to understand scripture in a new or different way, or perhaps had him show you something through prayer that went beyond simple human understanding?
2. Why is the experience of having Jesus open our minds so important for bearing witness?



Read Acts 1:1-8

The disciples had their minds opened by Jesus and now they have incredible resurrection news to share. And yet, in Luke 24:49, Jesus instructs them to stay in the city and wait. Again in Acts 1:4, Jesus tells his disciples to hang on. A gift is coming, a gift they cannot be witnesses without.

1. Why is it so important for the disciples to wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit before beginning their journey as witnesses to the world?
2. Reflect on Luke 24:49. What stands out to you as you think about the image of being clothed with power?
3. How can you actively seek the Holy Spirit's empowerment in your daily life as you bear witness to Christ?

As we continue reading through the book of Acts, we find powerful examples of what it means to be a witness in the lives of Peter and Paul. Peter was there in the room when the risen Jesus appeared. Once timid and uncertain, he becomes a bold leader, preaching and performing miracles, but always willing to submit his own understanding and allow Jesus to open his mind (Acts 10:9-23). Similarly, Paul, once a persecutor of Christians, is transformed into a passionate apostle, spreading the gospel across regions and enduring hardships for the sake of Christ (Acts 9:1-19).

1. What can we learn from the lives of Peter and Paul about the nature of being a witness for Christ?
2. Encountering the risen Christ changed everything for Peter and Paul. How have you experienced this, and how can you use your testimony to encourage and witness to others?
3. Consider the week coming up. Where are there opportunities to reflect God's love and hope in your interactions with others this week?



Week 3: Salt and Light

Sally Agostino

23 February 2025

Visit the [NewHope Teaching](#) page to find this week's sermon

1. We are in week three of our Witness series. What has been stirring for you as we've delved into this teaching together?
2. Have you seen the Lord open doors and give opportunities to witness? If so, what happened?

Read Matthew 5:13-16

From Sunday School lessons, to Youth Bible studies and church services, you've probably heard a number of sermons and a variety of interpretations on this well-known passage. The images of salt and light are just so rich and multifaceted.

Think about salt. It serves as a preserver, a taste enhancer, a purifier, and much more. With so many uses, it can be a challenge to discern which aspect Jesus wanted to emphasise. Scholar and theologian, Jonathan Pennington, suggests that the key is to link salt with light and look for the intersection of their meanings based on scripture (if you're the type of person who loves a good Venn diagram, why not grab a pen and paper, and do this exercise yourself!) For Pennington, the overlapping theme is *covenant*.¹

1. Have you heard a sermon on Matthew 5:13-16 before? Which aspect of salt was emphasised and how did it help (or hinder) your thinking about witness?
2. Turn back a few pages and read Matthew 4:15-17. This is just one of the many places where the theme of light is used in the Bible. Can you think of other examples and what they tell us about witnessing?
3. When looking at where the metaphors of salt and light intersect, scholar Jonathan Pennington suggests covenant as the key theme (Numbers 18:19; 2 Chronicles 13:5; Isaiah 42:6-7). What does the concept of covenant mean to you?

The concept of covenant has many beautiful layers to unpack and explore, yet a simple definition could be: 'the relationship agreement between two parties'. This is

¹ You can explore some of Jonathan Pennington's sermons by visiting The Human Flourishing Podcast at jonathanpennington.com. To find out more about this particular topic, see his devotional series on The Sermon on the Mount, especially part 3.



a commitment like you would make at a wedding. A 'joining together' relationship between God and humanity.

Read Isaiah 42:6-7

God's covenant promise is ultimately ushered in through the blood of Jesus, who brings light to the darkness and hope for the world. Yet, Jesus speaks to his followers and says, "*You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world.*"

For followers of Christ, being salt and light is not a conditional invitation but a definitive statement of our identity in Him. We are representatives of this covenant relationship and our task is to let our light shine, to be visible and impactful in our daily lives, whether at home, work, or in our communities.

1. What does it mean for you to understand 'salt and the light' as a statement of your identity in Christ?
2. Think about a time when you felt like hiding your light. What was the situation, and how can you approach similar situations differently in the future to ensure your light shines brightly?

Being salt and light involves understanding how God has uniquely equipped us to share His love. Some may resonate with apologetics, engaging in thoughtful conversations about faith and reason. Others may focus on creating experiences that allow people to taste and see the goodness of God through community. And, still others may be wired for action and taking practical steps towards justice and mercy in the world. Regardless of our approach, the call is to let our light shine before others, so they may see our good deeds and glorify our Father in heaven.

1. Reflect on your unique gifts and talents. How has God built you to be salt and light in this world? Do the ideas of Apologetics, Experience or Action resonate with you? And, how could you use these approaches to share God's love with others?
2. Hamish shared his experience of witnessing and being involved in Beach Mission over the summer. Have you ever had an experience of being an ambassador for Christ in a focused way like this? For example, going on an overseas mission trip or being involved in a concentrated outreach program? What was this like and how can we bring learnings from these experiences to our everyday lives?
3. What specific actions can you take this week to shine God's light in a situation or relationship that feels particularly dark or challenging?



Week 4: Sticks and Stones

Allan Demond

2 March 2025

Visit the [NewHope Teaching](#) page to find this week's sermon

Last week, we reflected on our role as salt and light, and what it means to represent God's covenant relationship to the world. This week, we turn to the theme of sticks and stones, and explore the *why*, *what* and *how* of suffering for Christ. This is the core of witnessing. In fact, effective witness cannot happen without it.

Why Do I Need to Suffer?

Suffering is not a popular topic, but it is a common experience. From small inconveniences like traffic jams, to significant hardships like illness; we all know what it's like to be human in a broken world and to deal with the consequences of sin.

And yet, not all suffering is necessarily bad. There is a kind of suffering which is purposeful. Think about running a marathon, building a business or investing in a relationship. When the goal is important enough, we embrace suffering to get there. We are wired to pursue things that matter, even when it costs us, and the Kingdom of God matters. It is worth suffering for.

1. What was your initial reaction to this week's topic of suffering?
2. Share about a time when you chose to endure suffering for a goal that mattered to you.
3. Why do you think we sometimes resist suffering for our faith?

Read Acts 9:1-23

God calls Paul his chosen instrument. This man, who was once a source of pain and persecution for the followers of Jesus, will now bear witness to His name, but it won't be an easy road.



What Will I Suffer?

Verses 15 and 16 say: But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. *I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.*”

Consider the word *show*. If we infuse this word with Christ-like love and patience, it no longer feels like a vindictive statement. Instead, we can see these words as an invitation from a Saviour who longs to walk the road of suffering with us and show us the way.

Each person’s path is different and shaped by God’s unique call. For Paul, suffering looked like beatings, shipwrecks, hunger, and more (2 Corinthians 11:23-28). For Stephen it was martyrdom (Acts 7). Peter went to prison only to be miraculously set free by God (Acts 12:1-19), and Barnabas suffered relational pain after a disagreement with Paul (Acts 15:36-41).

As you trust in Jesus, He will show you the unique race that is yours to run, and help you persevere for His name’s sake.

1. Does seeing your suffering for Christ as an invitation rather than a punishment impact your perspective?
2. For Louis, hearing someone else’s testimony of suffering had a profound impact on his faith and his willingness to embrace discomfort for the gospel. What stood out to you as you listened to Louis’ story?
3. Can you think of a time when someone else’s testimony has inspired and encouraged you? Can you think of a time when comparing your story to someone else’s was unhelpful?
4. Each person’s call to suffer is unique. How can you discern what God might be calling you to endure for His Kingdom?

How Should I Suffer?

Read Philippians 3:10-11

When we suffer, we are not alone; we are united with Jesus in a profound way, participating in His suffering, and bearing witness to His death and resurrection.

So, how should we suffer? With grace and perseverance, knowing that our suffering is not in vain but is part of God’s redemptive plan. There is no witness without a choice to suffer, but with Christ, we can find joy even in the midst of hardship, because our eternal goal is assured! Hallelujah!



1. How does the idea of participating in Christ's suffering change the way you view your current challenges?
2. Suffering in partnership with Christ is purposeful and redemptive, but suffering brought on by foolish decisions and selfish motivations can be destructive. How can you create space in your daily routine to listen to the whispers of the Spirit and respond to God's guidance?
3. Where might you experience suffering or sacrifice as you seek to bear witness to Christ? What steps can you take this week to invite Jesus' help, embrace the discomfort and respond to the call?



Week 5: Giving An Answer Lance Blythe

9 March 2025

Visit the [NewHope Teaching](#) page to find this week's sermon

Are You Ready?

Read 1 Peter 3:15-16

“But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”

We are called to always be prepared to give an answer for the hope we have in Jesus. This is how we bear witness to His name. So—are you ready?

For many of us, this question prompts some anxiety and doubt.

What if I get it wrong?

What if I offend someone?

What if I don't have the answers?

What if I blow it and lose the opportunity for good?

One of the biggest barriers to having spiritual conversations with those around us is the fear that we're just not ready. But sharing our faith isn't about having everything figured out. In fact, if you believe that Jesus is Lord, then you have everything you need. If you have enough to believe, then you have enough to speak. You are ready!

1. What are some of the anxieties you have about sharing your faith?
2. Can you think of a time when these fears held you back from sharing the hope you have with others?

The Role of the Holy Spirit

Read John 14:15-27 & 16:7-15

The Holy Spirit is the true agent of change and conviction in people's hearts. This is His work. Ours is to live with gentleness and respect, seeking to love, serve and be ready to give an answer for the difference people see in us.



When we understand this, it helps to focus our thinking about faith conversations. The goal is not to convince people with a perfectly packaged argument or pressure-filled persuasion; that approach sets us up for a win-loss mentality. Instead, the goal is to embrace the kind of relational conversations that might lead to consideration. Sharing our faith is an opportunity to bless someone, and like the giving of a gift, there are no strings attached.

1. How does Jesus describe the role of the Holy Spirit in John 14:26 and how does this influence your approach to witnessing?
2. Why is gentleness and respect important when discussing faith with others? What does this look like practically?

Interestingly, when we look at the ministry of Jesus, we find this is the approach he often takes. Jesus loved to engage in genuine, relational conversation with people, offering food for thought and an invitation to explore. We see this in the story of Nicodemus.

Nicodemus: A Journey of Faith

Read John 3:1-21

In a world that often celebrates instant transformation, we may tend to think of coming to faith as a lightning-bolt moment, like the Apostle Paul's conversion in Acts 9:1-19. But for many people, faith is more like a slow sunrise rather than a flash of lightning.

Nicodemus had this kind of transformation. A Pharisee like Paul, he wasn't struck down in an instant. Instead, he took his time to consider and explore—first bringing his questions to Jesus at night, later defending him in front of the Pharisees, and finally, seeking to honour Jesus as a king after His crucifixion (John 3:1-21; John 7:50-52; John 19:38-42).

Like Nicodemus, many people in today's culture come to faith through a process of questioning, considering, and experiencing moments of God's love over time. As witnesses to the hope we have in Jesus, we get to be a part of the journey, and that's worth preparing for.

1. Do you relate more to Paul's sudden conversion or Nicodemus' gradual journey of faith? Why?
2. What are some moments or experiences that have shaped your faith over time?



3. Rather than thinking of evangelism like a full meal that needs to be served all at once, Doug Pollock's book, *God Space*, talks about the idea of a "spiritual appetiser"—a digestible offering that invites people to taste and see the goodness of God. What's one "spiritual appetiser" you could offer to someone who is exploring faith?

Faith Conversations Don't Need to be Intimidating

Your story is a powerful tool for sharing the gospel. Take some time to reflect on these key questions and consider how you can be prepared to give an answer for the hope you have in Jesus. Then pray for one another and invite the Holy Spirit's help for the week ahead.

1. Is there a moment in your life when God made a lasting impression on you?
2. If you had to sum it up, why do you follow Jesus?
3. How has God changed you?
4. What does spirituality mean to you?



Week 6: Listening

Allan Demond

16 March 2025

Visit the [NewHope Teaching](#) page to find this week's sermon

Good listeners make good witnesses. Today we will reflect on cultivating a posture of listening, both horizontally to those around us and vertically to the Living God.

Horizontal Listening

In faith conversations, we can often feel pressure to speak the right words, but real connection happens when we listen well. Horizontal listening is about truly hearing others—their questions, struggles, and stories—without rushing to respond or fix. It's the practice of being present, setting aside our own assumptions, and allowing space for genuine conversation.

Whether in business, marriage, parenting, or friendships, quality listening strengthens relationships and allows us to be better witnesses of Christ's love and grace.

1. Share a time when you felt truly heard by someone. How did it impact you?
2. Do you find it easy to genuinely listen to others, or is this a skill you are working on? What practical steps can we all take to become better listeners?
3. Who in your life might need a listening ear right now? How can you be present for them?

Vertical Listening

Listening isn't a passive act—it's a skill that requires practice. Vertical listening is about cultivating a posture of openness and tuning our hearts to hear God's voice. This kind of listening requires stillness, prayer, and a willingness to follow where He leads—even when it feels unexpected—so we can be in the right place at the right time, ready to share the hope we have in Jesus.

1. How do you currently make space to listen to God?
2. What are some barriers that prevent us from listening to God? How can we overcome them?
3. What are some practical ways you can incorporate both horizontal and vertical listening into your daily routine to become a more effective witness for Christ?



Read Acts 8:26-40

The story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch is a powerful example of how listening shapes faith conversations. Philip was both spiritually and practically present. He was open, available and obedient; willing to follow God's prompting and embrace a divine appointment (Acts 8:26 & 8:29).

Philip also practised horizontal listening. He was attentive to the Ethiopian official, slowing down to notice, listen and ask questions so he could engage in life-giving, transformative conversation that truly mattered (Acts 8:30).

1. Consider a time when you felt prompted by God to reach out to someone. How did you respond, and what can you learn from Philip's example of obedience to God's guidance?
2. Can you think of a situation where asking a thoughtful question could open the door to a deeper conversation about faith?
3. Philip was **open, available and obedient**. Which of these three qualities do you want to grow in most?

21 Days of Prayer: Your Kingdom Come

Over the next 21 days, we will be dedicating intentional time to pray for our witness. You are invited to reflect on this question: *Lord, who are You calling me to pray for and witness to in this season?*

- **Write down the names** of three people who do not yet know Christ.
- **Set a daily reminder** (e.g. 11:02 AM for Luke 11:2) to pray for them and ask God for an opportunity to listen and witness.
- **Be intentional** in conversations—practise asking deeper questions and really listening.
- **Think about 'Invitation Month'** and explore opportunities to invite people to events in April, such as church services, Easter gatherings, Alpha, and more.

As we pray, we should expect God to lead us and open doors for us to share His love and truth with others—doors we never could have forced open ourselves.

1. Who are three people in your life that you feel God may be prompting you to pray for over the next 21 days?
2. How can you commit to this and make space to actively listen to God's leading and to those you are journeying with?



Week 7: Serving Lance Blythe

23 March 2025

Visit the [NewHope Teaching](#) page to find this week's sermon

Serving one another is a key part of our witness and discipleship. This week we explore the theme of true service that goes beyond random acts of kindness and speaks to the heart of what it means to be a family.

A family at its best is defined by radical service and the pursuit of caring for one another—not because you are *meant* to, but because you *long* to as an expression of love. Think of a parent who sacrifices hours of quality sleep to care for their young child through the night. Or a grown child who welcomes an aging parent into their home to protect and care for them in a vulnerable season of life.

A family who serves each other—not out of duty but out of love—is a powerful picture of what we are called to be as we bear witness to Christ.

1. In what ways are you currently serving others?
2. Are these acts motivated by love, or do they sometimes feel like obligations?

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-13

Here Paul writes to the church in Thessalonica and reflects on his time of ministry with Silas and Timothy. They came to witness and preach the gospel, not for personal gain, affirmation, or praise, but out of genuine love and humble service. As they did, something profound happened: the people they served became family.

Paul uses intimate metaphors to describe living among the Thessalonians as brothers and sisters, parents and children. It is not the biology of blood that dictates family, but the nature of love.

“Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.” 2:8

1. Who in your life feels like family, even if you're not related by blood?
2. How do you build relationships based on genuine love and service rather than approval or personal gain?



Preach the gospel at all times and use words if necessary.

You've probably heard this saying before. This is a well-known quote often attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi, and while this phrase captures the importance of living out faith through actions, we should caution against taking it too far. Paul, after all, was never afraid to use words. The two should go together.

Let's use tap water as an analogy. The life-giving water that nourishes us doesn't arrive at our taps by itself—it travels through a network of pipes. Without the pipe, the water spreads aimlessly and is harder to access. Without the water, the pipe is just an empty conduit. In the same way, service without God's word is hollow, and the word without service lacks a channel to flow through. But together they form a partnership that enables our witness.

1. Have you ever experienced someone's faith through their actions before their words? How did it impact you?
2. Does understanding acts of service as a conduit for sharing the word of God change the way you might approach serving others?

Read Ephesians 1:5-6 and Romans 8:14-17

God has ordained His Kingdom to advance through our deep yearning for family—for love, intimacy, and caring relationships. This is the conduit through which the word of God finds nourishment to grow. But, creating family-like relationships isn't always easy.

Family—whether biological or spiritual—is never a perfect, linear journey. There are ups and downs. Some weeks, we feel like we're doing well in our relationships; other weeks, we feel distant or disconnected. The key is to keep showing up, to continue seeking love and service for our “horizontal” family, even as we remember our identity and place in the “vertical” family.

Before anything else, Christians are children of God, adopted into his family. Ephesians 1 says believers are sons and daughters of God—not because they earned it, but because they were invited. Romans 8 goes even further, describing believers as co-heirs with Christ, fully embraced into God's inheritance.

This identity should encourage and empower us; and shape our approach to relationships. When we recognise that we have been adopted into God's family, we can extend that same love to others, even if they haven't “earned” it.



1. Reflect on your identity as an adopted son or daughter in God's family. How does this understanding empower you to live out your faith with confidence and love?
2. What changes might you make in your daily life to align more closely with this identity?

Who is your family? And who is becoming your family?

Each of us have people we naturally gravitate towards. People we love and care for. You may like to take some time to thank God and pray a blessing over these people now.

As witnesses to the love of Jesus, we are called to go a step further. Take some time to consider who might need to experience the best of what God designed a family to be—a place of love, security, and service. Who can you welcome in? Maybe it's one of the names you wrote down to pray for over our 21 days of focussed prayer. Keep on praying and ask the Holy Spirit to foster the kind of deep connections where faith can be shared and nurtured.

1. Reflect on your current relationships. Who in your life is becoming family to you, and how can you nurture these relationships through acts of love and service?

If you have experienced pain or brokenness in your family relationships, I would encourage you to bring these wounds before God who loves you. Seek healing through prayer or by reaching out for support.



Week 8: Prophecy and Witness

Cath Livesey

30 March 2025

Visit the [NewHope Teaching](#) page to find this week's sermon

This week we had the privilege of hearing from guest speaker Cath Livesey, from *Accessible Prophecy*, as we reflected on joining the Holy Spirit in God's mission to the world.

The Spirit of Regeneration

Read John 3:5-8 and Romans 8:14-17

The term *Missio Dei*—meaning the mission of God—reminds us that mission isn't just an activity of the church, but the very heartbeat of God. It's in His nature to restore and heal a broken world, and the Holy Spirit is constantly at work, drawing people to God and birthing new life.

When we say yes to being witnesses, we're not starting from scratch. We're stepping into divine work which is already happening. Evangelism isn't about working for God, but working with Him.

1. Consider the idea of witness as a partnership with the Holy Spirit. How does it change your perspective to think of evangelism as joining in the Spirit's work rather than striving on your own?
2. How can you actively participate in what the Spirit is already doing in your community, workplace, friendships and family?

The Trusted Friend

"I will ask the Father and he will give you another *parakletos* to be with you forever." John 14:16

Read John 14:16 in a few different Bible versions (eg. NIV, KJV, NLV, MSG). Jesus describes the Holy Spirit as the *Parakletos*—a multifaceted Greek word meaning helper, comforter, advocate, and friend. The Holy Spirit is a personal, trusted companion who walks with us every day.

When we build a friendship with the Spirit, His voice becomes more familiar. We start recognising those small nudges, those inner prompts that lead us to share a



word, pray for someone, or step into an opportunity. Being a witness is about paying attention and keeping in step.

1. Have you ever experienced a nudge from the Holy Spirit? What happened?
2. What practical steps could you take to better recognise and respond to the Spirit's whispers?

The One Who Empowers Us

Read Acts 1:1-10 and Acts 2:1-41

The Holy Spirit isn't just a source of comfort, He also equips us for action. Before Jesus sent His disciples out, He told them to wait until they were "clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). This same power is available to us today. But, the power of the Holy Spirit isn't about worldly strength or domination—it's about divine strength in our weakness.

When we look at the transformation in the disciples after Pentecost, we see the incredible difference the Holy Spirit makes. We are like jars of clay, carrying the all-surpassing power of God within us; empowered to be bold witnesses, to love beyond our limits, and to be a peaceful presence in our workplaces, neighbourhoods, and relationships.

1. How does the power of the Holy Spirit differ from worldly power?
2. In what ways do you tend to rely on your own strength rather than the Spirit's power?

The Call to Unconditional Surrender

Cath spoke about different levels of relationship with the Holy Spirit—regeneration, friendship, and power—but the deepest level is unconditional surrender. It's when we hold nothing back and align our will completely with God's. It's stepping into the wild waters of the Spirit, letting go of control, and trusting Him fully.

The Holy Spirit isn't something we experience once and then move on. We are called to continuously receive, trust, and follow. So, as you go into this week, take a moment to ask: *Holy Spirit, where are you leading me?* Be ready. Be expectant. When you keep in step with the Spirit, you never know what can "just happen."

1. Are there areas in your life where you're holding back from the Holy Spirit's leading? Are there areas in your life where you sense His prompting to step out in faith?
2. What does unconditional surrender to the Holy Spirit look like in your life and in your witness to others?



Week 9: New Life

Allan Demond

6 April 2025

Visit the [NewHope Teaching](#) page to find this week's sermon

The Creator of the universe has a passion that you should have life, and have it to the full (John 10:10). Through Jesus, God offers a new beginning, a restart which opens the way to a right relationship with Himself. This week we explore this wonderful theme of new life.

Read Genesis 2:15-25 (& 3:1-24)

In the story of humanity, Adam represents the beginning marred by brokenness and sin. Our first parents chose rebellion, leading to a disconnected and broken relationship with God, with each other, and with the world.

This one act of disobedience resulted in condemnation for all people, but one act of righteousness resulted in justification and new life for all people.

Jesus is described as the “new Adam”—what scholars call the progenitor. He is the beginning of a new line, a fresh start for humanity. Where the first Adam made a choice that led to sin and separation from God, Jesus made a choice, through his death and resurrection, that opened the door to restoration.

1. Look up the definition of ‘progenitor’. How does this word help you better understand who Jesus is and what he has done?
2. How have you experienced new life in Jesus? Can you think of a story or example of how your life has changed? Reflect on how you could use this story to witness to others.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:21-22; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; & Romans 5:18-21

The human race has been ‘recalled’. Like a faulty product, humanity’s core issue is brokenness, and you only need to flick on the news or scroll through social media to see there’s something deeply wrong. The line between good and evil runs straight through every human heart.



But in recalling the human race, God makes provision for our salvation by putting himself in the mix and reconciling us to himself through Christ. God's recall has a beautiful result—it brings new life. Not just in eternity, but here and now. And through us, God continues the work of renewal. We don't just receive new life—we bear witness to it, and become agents of hope to the world around us.

1. In His grace, God chooses not to condemn a broken humanity to the bin like a faulty product or reprogramme us to factory settings like a glitchy machine. What does this say about personhood and agency? What does this say about the character of God?
2. God is making all things new and offering a fresh restart for all people. How can we participate and bear witness to those around us?

How do we respond?

Responding to God's recall on our lives requires a little bit of understanding, a little bit of faith, and a response on our part.

Understanding

A little understanding is all it takes to see that the world is not as it should be. And a little understanding is all it takes to respond. Whether it's the start of your new life in Christ, or someone else who you are journeying with, just jump in! Ask questions, do Alpha, explore more about who Jesus is and what He has done—but don't wait to have it all figured out. A little understanding is enough to start now.

Faith

Faith isn't just a religious thing—it's woven into everyday life. When you throw out recalled spinach because the supermarket said it's unsafe – that's faith. When you drop off your car for a recalled part and trust the mechanic to do their job – that's faith. We're constantly making decisions based on trust and a little bit of faith, and our response to Jesus is no different. Wherever you are on your journey – questioning, exploring, committed, or somewhere in between – there's an open invitation for more.

Act

God recalls us not to discard us, but to renew us. He sees the fault lines in our hearts, the sin that tangles our lives, and He calls us back to Himself. And now, God asks us to respond. Becoming a follower of Jesus starts with a little understanding, a little faith, and a bold “yes” to his invitation and gift of new life.



1. Ghaz shared her testimony of saying yes to new life in Christ and deciding to be baptised. What stood out to you from her story? What encouraged you? What challenged you?
2. What is one practical step you can take this week to live more fully in the new life that Jesus offers? Is there a way you can deepen your understanding and grow your faith in response to His invitation? Have you said yes to Jesus?



Week 10: New Hope

Sally Agostino

13 April 2025

Visit the [NewHope Teaching](#) page to find this week's sermon

In a world that often measures success by material wealth and achievements, it's easy to get caught up in the pursuit of things that ultimately leave us feeling empty. True hope, however, is not found in these temporary pursuits but in the eternal promises we have in Christ. This hope is steadfast and unchanging, providing a firm foundation even amidst life's struggles and uncertainties.

Read 1 Peter 1:1-25

The first recipients of Peter's letter were early Christians who faced enormous pressure and persecution because of their decision to follow Jesus. Peter writes to encourage them, not with trouble-shooting solutions, but with a powerful reminder of where their hope is found.

Followers of Jesus live with real and certain hope—secured through His death and resurrection. Christ has won. His kingdom is here. His people live in victory!

And yet, the original audience of Peter's letter were still suffering, and if we fast forward 2,000 years, the brokenness remains. We live in a “now and not yet” tension—a space between Jesus' victory and its full expression. Some people may try to alleviate the tension by leaning too far one way or the other. Some may swing toward despair: “What's the point? This life is a bust.” Others fall into spiritual overconfidence: “The victory is won, so if I have enough faith, everything will work out perfectly.” Neither extreme is helpful.

The Christian life involves a delicate balance between living in the victory of Christ and acknowledging the reality of suffering. We don't own the victory fully yet, but we do have hope. Not just wishful thinking, but robust, grounded, hard-won hope.

1. In what ways have you experienced the tension between victory and suffering in your life?
2. Do you tend to lean towards one over the other? When have you found yourself leaning into despair or overconfidence?
3. How does the idea of “now and not yet” change the way you see your current struggles?



How do we respond?

So, what does it mean to have robust hope in a broken world? Let's reflect on three challenges from Peter: live as foreigners, live in joy, and love each other.

Live as Foreigners (1 Peter 1:17)

As followers of Christ, we are called to live as foreigners in this world—not withdrawing from it, but living as though this isn't all there is. The world may have expectations around each stage of life and how it should look (eg. get into a good uni, have a successful career, marry this kind of person, buy the right house, etc.) but we are invited to reject the 'tick boxes' and instead ask God what He wants for us. When we shift our focus from earthly gains to eternal treasures, we can invest in what truly matters and navigate life's challenges with a sense of purpose and direction, knowing that our true home is with God and our identity is in Him.

1. Are you living more like a resident or a foreigner in this world?
2. What comforts or pursuits might be holding you back from living more fully for God's kingdom?
3. In what ways can you begin to live with an eternal perspective in your daily life?

Live in Joy (1 Peter 1:6 & 8)

The Christian journey is not exempt from trials and suffering, but it is marked by a joy that transcends circumstances—a joy that is rooted in hope. The early Christians were persecuted, misunderstood, and scattered. And yet Peter told them to rejoice. Not because life was easy, but because their future was secure. Joy based on Christ and the hope we have in Him, is a powerful testimony to the world.

1. What are some obstacles to joy in your life right now? Are there spiritual practices (like worship, prayer, or gratitude) that help you reconnect with joy?
2. What does it look like for you to live in joy—even when things are hard?
3. How might joy be a witness to others about the hope you carry?

Love Each Other (1 Peter 1:22)

Peter challenges believers to love within the church, across differences, and even toward those who reject or hurt us. Why is this so crucial? Because we're all on the same mission, and we've all received the same hope. Loving each other is not just



about kindness—it's about showing the world what the kingdom of God looks like in action.

1. Why do you think Peter emphasised love in the midst of suffering?
2. Are there people in your community who are hard to love right now?
3. What might it look like to love them in practical, intentional ways?

You may like to close with a reflection on the hymn *It Is Well With My Soul*.

Horatio Spafford, who lost his fortune in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, and then, tragically, all four of his daughters in a shipwreck, penned the words of this famous hymn as he sailed across the same waters where his daughters were lost:

“When peace like a river attends my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll,
Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.”

How could he say such a thing? Because he had hope. Real, unshakable, tested-through-the-fire hope. The same kind of hope Peter wrote about. The same kind of hope available to each of us today.

1. What does this hymn and the story behind it stir in you?
2. Do you think you could say “it is well with my soul” in a similar moment? Why or why not?
3. What does this kind of hope look like in your own story?