



Faithfulness

SERMON SERIES STUDY GUIDE

QUARTER 2, 2025

FAITHFULNESS

Sermon Series Study Guide

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Week 1: Faithful God - The Foundation of Faithfulness - Lance Blythe	2
Week 2: Faithful Choice - Whom will you serve? - Allan Demond	5
Week 3: Faithful in Trials - Trusting God in Hard Times - Sally Agostino	8
Week 4: Faithful in Worship - A Life Devoted to God - Tim Spencer	11
Week 5: Faithful in the Waiting: The Fruit of Patience & Perseverance - Allan Demond	14
Week 6: Faithful in Relationships - Honouring God with Others - Sally Agostino	17
Week 7: Faithful in Witness - Sharing the Gospel Boldly - Phil Gaudion	21
Week 8: Faithful in Prayer - A Consistent Life of Communion with God - Lance Blythe	25
Week 9: 30 Years of Faithfulness - Words of Blessing - Allan Demond	29
Week 10: Faithful in Generosity - Guest Speaker, Bruce Fawcett	32
Week 11: God's Faithfulness to the Church - Sally Agostino	36



Introduction

FAITHFULNESS Sermon Series: May-July 2025

This series explores the unwavering faithfulness of God and our calling to live faithfully in response.

We'll begin by establishing the foundation of faithfulness—God's steadfast commitment to His people, even when we falter. As the series progresses, we'll shift our focus to our response, examining what it means to walk in obedience, integrity, and perseverance.

Though each message emphasises our role as faithful followers, the central truth remains: our ability to remain steadfast is only possible because God is faithful first.

Faithfulness Sermons

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

<https://nhbc.churchcenter.com/channels/16420/series/62910>



Week 1: Faithful God - The Foundation of Faithfulness

Lance Blythe

4 May 2025

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

What does it mean to be *faithful*? And perhaps more honestly, how do we respond when asked, "Are you faithful?"

In this new teaching series, we will explore the unwavering faithfulness of God and our calling to live faithfully in response. We are made in God's image, not the other way around, and this has profound implications for how we understand faithfulness—not as mere endurance or time served, but as a deep, loyal, and consistent love that mirrors God's own.

1. What comes to mind when you hear the word *faithfulness*?
2. In what ways has God shown faithfulness in your life—recently or in the past?

Read Lamentations 3:22-23

The way you picture God in your heart and mind has a profound impact on every part of your life. If you see God as distant, angry, or impossible to please, you may find yourself living with fear, shame, or a sense of never measuring up. But scripture reminds us of the true nature of God—faithful, loving, and just.

We are not meant to create God in our own image, shaped by our wounds or disappointments. We are made in the image of God, and His character is the foundation for our identity and hope.

1. What is one way your current image of God might be limiting your relationship with Him or others? Ask God to show you a truer picture of His heart and character today.

When the Tide Is Out

The promise of Lamentations 3:22-23 wasn't written during a time of peace and prosperity. It was penned in the aftermath of war, exile, and devastation.



At times of grief and loss it can feel like you're standing on a wide, dry beach at low tide. Where once there was joy and refreshment, now there's only heat and barrenness. The water has disappeared. You wonder: *Will it ever come back?*

But of course, it will. It always does.

And just as the tide will always return, God's faithfulness always remains. You can't hold it back. You can't outrun it. You can't destroy it. It remains. Steadfast, sure, unshakable. No matter how we feel in the moment, no matter the emptiness we might stand in, God remains faithful.

1. Have you ever gone through a "low tide" season? In what ways did you sense God's faithfulness even in the midst of hurting?
2. What does your current season of life look like - high tide, low tide, or somewhere in between? What does it mean for you to be faithful in this season?

Read 2 Timothy 2:11-13

God's faithfulness is never separated from His justice. Our calling is to live responsibly, knowing that God's love is steadfast but not enabling. His justice means He cares deeply about what is right and good, and His faithfulness means He never gives up on you.

God won't override our will. If we walk away, He lets us. But He never stops being who He is. The door is always open. The invitation always remains.

1. How do you balance God's justice and faithfulness in your own understanding?
2. Are there any choices in your life that you sense God is inviting you to re-examine?
3. What would it look like to return to Him and seek both His love and His righteousness today?

Read 1 John 1:9

Jesus is the ultimate expression of God's faithfulness and love. In His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus took on our humanity, served the least, and endured suffering to remove every barrier between us and God. He shows us what it means to be truly faithful—loving to the end, even at great cost.



Jesus offers you His fullness in exchange for your brokenness, and calls you to live as a child made in His image. As you realign your life with His example, you step into the inheritance of faithful love that God has always intended for you.

1. What does Jesus' example of servanthood reveal to you about the character of God?
2. How does the cross challenge or encourage your understanding of faithfulness?
3. As you remember Jesus' faithfulness, what is one area of brokenness or need you can bring to Him today, trusting Him to exchange it for His fullness and love?

Closing Prayer

Invite the group to share prayer requests if comfortable, especially around areas where they feel dry or weary.

Pray specifically:

- In thanks for God's unchanging nature
- For strength to remain faithful even when it's hard
- For anyone in the group who feels like they're in a "low tide" season.



Week 2: Faithful Choice - Whom will you serve?

Allan Demond

11 May 2025

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

NewHope is on the threshold of change. We find ourselves standing at a significant moment, in a significant place, with a significant invitation before us. Just as Joshua once called the people of Israel to choose whom they would serve, we too are invited to consecrate ourselves afresh, reaffirming our trust in the Lord, and committing ourselves to Him who has carried us this far—and who will continue to lead us forward.

Read Joshua 24:14-15

In these beautiful verses, Joshua is addressing the people of Israel at a very significant moment in their journey (you may like to read all of chapter 23 and 24 for context).

Israel is on the threshold of leadership change—sound familiar? Their leader Joshua is old, his time serving God on earth is drawing to a close, and so he gathers the people together at Shechem. This is a significant place full of history and sacred memories. It's a place that represents God's faithfulness through the generations (see Genesis 12:1-7) and the people's response of faithfulness to God (see Genesis 35:2-4).

At this significant moment, in this significant place, Joshua calls the people to a significant action: "choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve."

1. Joshua is inviting the people of Israel to make a life-defining choice. Can you recall a big decision you've made that had a significant impact on the direction of your life? Was it easy or difficult to make that decision? Why?
2. Shechem was a significant place for the Israelite people. A place of sacred memories and stories of faithfulness. In this season, we will celebrate the significant place NewHope has been over many years. Do you have a story to share about how our church and the NewHope community has helped shape your faith journey?



Whom will you serve?

Joshua speaks of three types of gods the people could turn to, each representing something that could pull them away from full devotion to Yahweh:

- The gods beyond the Euphrates River (Israel's early days—the past)
- The gods of Egypt (Israel's captivity—the things that bind)
- The gods of the Amorites (Israel's present—the current culture).

The “gods” that compete for our loyalty today may not look like ancient idols of gold or precious metal, but they are just as real—family patterns from the past, harmful habits that hold us trapped, cultural values that are all around. We must choose where our allegiance lies, and like an ancient suzerain-vassal treaty, this decision is not a casual one. It's a covenant commitment with life-defining consequences (Deuteronomy 30:19).

Choosing faithfulness to Yahweh will require honest self-examination and a willingness to lay down all other “gods”, symbolically burying them as Jacob did at Shechem. For this we will need God's help, His power, His grace—and His people.

1. What “gods” or loyalties are competing for your devotion to God? Take a moment to name one and ask God for the courage to lay it down today. You may like to share this with others if you feel comfortable to do so, and seek to support each other.

Faithfulness Together

Joshua's challenge to Israel was a communal one. The people gathered to remember, respond and consecrate themselves to the Lord *together* as one body. Present church culture often promotes personal faith decisions and an individual's walk with Jesus, but the beauty of the gospel is this *and more!* We are called to a community of faithfulness where our shared commitment matters—not just for today, but for the generations to come.

1. What is a practical way the body of Christ can encourage one another in our shared journey of faithfulness and commitment? What does this look like for you?

A Significant Invitation

On Sunday the 29th of June at 10am, our NewHope family will gather to mark a significant moment in our journey together—a moment of leadership change.



Together, we will celebrate God's incredible faithfulness and offer Him our own, consecrating ourselves afresh for the next chapter.

So, who will you choose? And who will you serve?

May we be a people who say, with all our hearts: "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

Closing Prayer

Take a few quiet minutes. Ask yourself:

- What is God inviting me to choose today?
- What do I need to leave behind?
- What does it look like to serve Him wholeheartedly?

Then come back together for prayer. Consider praying together:

- Thanking God for His faithfulness over the years
- Asking for strength to remain faithful
- Praying for each other, and the whole NewHope family, as we prepare to consecrate ourselves to the Lord and recommit our journey together to Him.



Week 3: Faithful in Trials - Trusting God in Hard Times

Sally Agostino

18 May 2025

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

Have you ever been in a season where life just feels... barren? Where everything around you seems dry and lifeless, like hard, sunbaked soil where nothing could possibly grow? Most of us have been there. Whether it's through grief, disappointment, conflict, or just a general sense of feeling stuck, seasons of suffering are a reality of the human experience.

This week we explore what it means to live with a posture of trust that doesn't avoid or dismiss our pain, but allows Jesus to meet us right in the middle of it.

Read James 1:2-4

In these verses, James doesn't glorify pain for its own sake—he gives us a hopeful lens through which to view suffering. The Greek word for joy used here is *chará*. It's not some fleeting moment of emotion or superficial kind of cheerfulness. It's a deliberate posture that's possible because of the Spirit at work in us, and it comes from knowing Jesus is *with* us and *for* us, even in the hardest seasons.

Trials are not evidence that God has abandoned us or that we have failed spiritually. Instead, they are invitations to draw closer to God, to press into His presence. God does not waste our pain. Even when we cannot see it, He is at work in the midst of our suffering, shaping us and inviting us into deeper relationship with Him.

1. How does the concept of “rejoicing in suffering” challenge your usual response to pain?
2. Have you ever seen God use suffering to produce something good in your life—like perseverance or character?

Read Romans 8:22-24 (also Ps 126:5; Rev 21:4; Ps 30:5)

Suffering is not a detour from the Christian life; it's a shared experience of longing for something better. In Romans 8, Paul uses the image of creation groaning as we



wait for renewal with hope and a deeply rooted conviction that our pain is not the final word. Whatever we're walking through—no matter how raw or overwhelming—it doesn't end here.

1. Where in your life are you groaning right now? Can you identify areas where you're longing for healing, hope or clarity?
2. How do we hold on to hope while we wait?

"The hard work of sowing seed in what looks like perfectly empty earth has a time of harvest. All suffering, pain, emptiness and disappointment is seed: sow it in God, and He will finally bring a crop of joy from it." - Eugene Peterson

This quote from *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, speaks of an incredible promise. That even in suffering, there is the potential for fruit. The struggles we face can become the very ground where our faith is refined and our trust in God grows.

However, it is natural to want to protect ourselves after we have been hurt—to build walls or don armour that keeps pain at bay. But over time, these defenses can also numb us to joy, connection, and the healing God wants to bring. God invites us to lay down our self-made armour and allow Him to transform our wounds and shape our brokenness into something beautiful—a mosaic that testifies to His redemptive power.

1. Can you look back on a season that felt barren and see any growth that came from it? What prayers from that time has God since answered?
2. Is there a difficult situation in your life right now that you can "sow" in trust, even if you can't yet see the harvest?
3. Are there emotional walls you've built for protection that might now be holding you back? How might God be inviting you to lower those walls?

A Challenge to Slow Down

In our fast-paced world, taking time to be still and reflect feels like a luxury, but it's such an important and powerful act. In our pain, busyness can become a kind of escape, but God often meets us most powerfully when we stop running and finally pay attention.

What if, for just one hour a week for four weeks, we created space to be with Jesus—to slow down, reflect, and ask:

- Where is my pain?



- Where is my armour?
- Where are you, God, in this part of my journey?

Could you carve out one hour this week to slow down and be with God? What would it take to make that happen?

Closing Prayer

Invite everyone to sit in silence for a minute or two and ask God:

“Where in my life do You want to meet me in my pain?”

“What is one way I can trust You more this week?”

Then, offer time for a few people to pray out loud (if comfortable), followed by a short prayer from the leader.

Suggested prayer:

Jesus, thank You that You are with us in the hardest parts of life. Help us to trust You, even when we don't see what You're doing. Teach us to sow our tears with faith, knowing You can bring joy. Give us courage to be vulnerable, to take off our armour, and to share our stories with one another. Amen.

Closing Encouragement for Leaders

Remind your group that everyone's journey with suffering is different. Some may be in the thick of it; others may be emerging. Honour each story. Trust the Spirit to gently lead the group. And don't rush through the hard bits—sometimes, simply sitting in shared silence is the most healing thing you can do.



Week 4: Faithful in Worship - A Life Devoted to God

Tim Spencer

25 May 2025

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

This week we reflect on a powerful and expansive view of worship—one that goes far beyond singing songs on Sunday. True worship is a way of life. It's offering every moment, task, and relationship to God in devotion and trust.

Where do we worship?

Read Romans 12:1-2

Paul's invitation is radical—he calls believers to present their entire lives to God as an act of worship. This isn't just about Sundays, music, or church attendance. While it is powerful and beautiful to gather together and lift our voices as one, worship doesn't start and stop when we enter and leave the auditorium.

We are called to be 'living sacrifices'. This is not a one-off moment. It's an ongoing, daily choice to offer ourselves to God, and unlike a burnt offering, which can only be given once, our lives are to be continuously poured out in devotion, love, and obedience.

So, where do we worship? Everywhere and anywhere!

1. What do you think it means to be a 'living sacrifice' in 2025 Australia?
2. In what areas of your life is it easiest to worship God? Where is it hardest?
3. Have you ever experienced a moment where an ordinary task became worship?

How and when do we worship?

Read 1 Corinthians 10:31 and Colossians 3:23-24

Worship is a holistic, 'all-of-life endeavour'. Every act—eating, working, studying, even commuting—can be an act of worship when offered to God with the right heart. Worship is not a place; it's a posture. Not a song; but a surrendered life.



Paul urges followers of Jesus to serve with passion and integrity as if they were serving God himself. So, whether you're flipping burgers, parenting, studying, stacking shelves, running a business, or whatever you put your hand to—do it as worship.

How and when do we worship? With everything, all the time!

1. What would it look like to approach your daily tasks—like cooking, working, or parenting—as acts of worship?
2. How do you think your attitude or energy might change if you worked “as unto the Lord”?
3. Is there an everyday task that you could turn into an act of worship this week?

What hinders worship?

Read Amos 5:21-24 and James 1:27

God isn't impressed by hollow rituals. True worship isn't about noise or performance, it's about justice and righteousness, and when our lives don't reflect God's character, our songs become empty.

Real worship is lived out through soft hearts, compassionate action, and alignment with God's heart for the vulnerable. We cannot raise hands in worship on Sunday and ignore injustice on Monday. Worship and justice are deeply connected.

1. Why do you think God rejects worship that isn't accompanied by justice?
2. How can we make sure our worship isn't just a performance?
3. Is there a situation or issue where you feel God is calling you to “roll justice like a river”? Where might God be calling you to seek justice this week?

Read Mark 13:26

Briefly retell or watch Tim's moving story about Garbage City in Cairo, where thousands live and work among rubbish, and where the largest demographic of people are Christian.

In Garbage City, amidst disease, rubbish, and heartbreaking conditions, believers have etched their hope into stone—literally. Above the town, carved into a massive cliff face, is an image of Jesus and the words of Mark 13:26.



Sometimes, worship is costly. It's an act of defiance against despair. A declaration of hope, even in suffering. These followers in Egypt choose to lift their eyes, and live and work "as unto the Lord," because they know that Jesus is present—and He's returning soon in glory.

1. Have you ever experienced God's presence in a difficult or "messy" place?
2. What might it look like to worship God in the hard parts of your life right now?
3. If someone looked at your life, would they see where your hope is fixed? How can you etch the eternal hope that you have onto the cliff face of your life?

Closing prayer & response

Encourage each person to name one area where they want to invite God into their daily life as an act of worship—at work, in their family, in a hard relationship, in an act of justice etc. You may want to write these on cards, pray for one another, and return to these next week.

Suggested closing prayer:

Gracious God, Thank you for reminding us that worship is not just something we do with our voices, but with our whole lives. We offer you every part of ourselves—our work, our rest, our relationships, our joys, and even our struggles—as acts of worship.

Give us hearts that are soft toward justice, eyes that notice those in need, and hands willing to respond with compassion and love. May we live as people who lift our eyes to Jesus, our hope and our Saviour, and may our lives reflect Your grace and truth to those around us.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.



Week 5: Faithful in the Waiting: The Fruit of Patience & Perseverance

Allan Demond

1 June 2025

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

This week we explore the theme of faithfulness through the lens of waiting and consider two “flavours” of waiting: patience and perseverance. We are called to be patient with people and the slow work of growth, and to persevere in the face of wrong, trusting that God’s justice is coming; because how we wait matters.

1. When you hear the word *waiting*, what comes to mind?
2. What is something you are currently waiting on — big or small?

Read James 5:7-11

Christian waiting is hopeful, not stoic. Unlike the world’s approach to waiting, which often amounts to gritting our teeth and bearing with whatever happens, Christian waiting is rooted in hope, “because the Lord’s coming is near” (v. 8). We are not pushed by the randomness of fate, but pulled by the promises and love of God. Therefore, our waiting is not empty or resigned, but filled with anticipation that God is actively crafting our future, even when we cannot see it.

So, how should we wait? With *patience* and *perseverance*. Both are essential, but they are not the same. Recognising which is needed in a given moment helps us respond wisely.

1. What is your usual approach to waiting when it’s hard — withdraw, complain, grit your teeth and push through, pray?
2. Where in your life do you feel tempted to give in to resignation and adopt a stoic mindset? How might you invite God to fill that waiting with hope and anticipation today?

Perseverance: Waiting in the Face of Injustice

Perseverance is the strength to endure when we face suffering, injustice, and the “principle of death” in the world. James points to the example of Job — a righteous



man who lost everything and endured deep loss, grief, and physical torment. Through it all, Job persevered and waited for justice. And he wasn't quiet about it. In fact, he protested. He cried out. He grumbled.

“Is my complaint directed to a human being? Why should I not be impatient?” Job 21:4 NIV

The story of Job reminds us that it is possible—and even faithful—to be impatient with injustice and suffering in the world. God does not ask us to call evil “good” or to ignore what is wrong. Instead, we are invited to persevere, to bring our honest prayers to God, to act for justice, and to trust that evil has and will be dealt with because the “Judge is standing at the door” (James 5:9).

1. What does Job's example teach us about how we can wait well in seasons of suffering?
2. What does it mean to say “the Judge is at the door”? How does that give you hope in the face of injustice and suffering in the world?
3. Where in your life are you being called to persevere right now?

Patience: The Seed and the Harvest

In the waiting, sometimes we cry out like Job did. Sometimes we groan. And yes, sometimes we grumble. But there's a tension here. While we're invited to bring our raw, honest prayers to God, James also warns: “Do not grumble against each other” (v. 9). Why? Because perseverance is for dealing with circumstances, but *patience is for dealing with people*.

James uses the illustration of a farmer planting seeds and waiting for the rain to come and the field to yield its crop. Much of the good in life grows at the pace of a garden, and the seeds we plant—acts of love, words of encouragement, prayers, and obedience—often take years to bear fruit.

We must be careful not to “dig up” what God is growing in others or ourselves out of impatience, because this kind of slow growth is fragile. That's why James warns not to grumble against each other. When someone around you is growing — even if it's painfully slow — your impatience or criticism might damage what God is nurturing. Be patient, because fruitfulness follows faithfulness.

1. Who in your life are you being called to be patient with?
2. What is one area where you can trust God's slow and faithful work instead of trying to force quick results?



Closing prayer & response

Ultimately, both perseverance and patience are rooted in the character and promises of Jesus, who is “full of compassion and mercy”. So whether you’re in a season of suffering, longing, or quiet sowing... keep going. Keep praying. Keep planting. Because our waiting is not in vain.

Take some time to quietly reflect. Give each person a small seed (or imagine one) and ask:

1. What kind of growth do you want to see in your life or in someone else’s life?
2. What seed can you plant this week — something small, faithful, consistent?
Encourage everyone to take the seed home as a reminder that growth takes time.

Suggested closing prayer:

Loving God, Thank you for being present with us as we’ve opened your Word.

Teach us to wait well with perseverance and patience, whether we are waiting for your promises to be fulfilled or standing firm in the face of injustice and suffering. Fill us with hope and confidence, trusting that you are always at work, even when we can’t see it. Your love never fails.

Go with us now and guide us in the week ahead.

In Jesus’ name we pray,
Amen.

Going Deeper:

- Psalm 13 – A prayer of complaint and trust.
- Romans 5:1–5 – Suffering produces perseverance, character, and hope.
- Isaiah 40:28–31 – Those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength.
- 2 Peter 3:8–9 – God’s timing and patience with humanity.



Week 6: Faithful in Relationships - Honouring God with Others

Sally Agostino

8 June 2025

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

Relationships can be complicated. From the playground to the political stage, human connection is often messy, painful, and—let's be honest—really hard work. And yet, at the heart of our faith lies a call to live differently. Jesus invites us to love our enemies, to forgive those who hurt us, and to pursue peace in a world bent on division. But how do we do that when the people around us are difficult, when trust has been broken, or when our efforts seem to go nowhere?

This week we take a closer look at what it means to be faithful in relationships, and how we might reflect the heart of God even when it's hard.

Read Matthew 5:38-45

Jesus calls His followers to a standard of relationship that goes far beyond what is considered fair or just in human terms. He invites us to actively love, even when it feels undeserved—to not just tolerate our enemies, but to love them and pray for them. This is radical living. When we choose to love our enemies and do good to those who wrong us, we participate in God's work of breaking the cycles of hate and violence that so often define our world.

1. Jesus often used hyperbole in his teaching—exaggerated language used to evoke a strong impression and get our attention. What stirs in you as you read these verses from the Sermon on the Mount?
2. What does loving an enemy actually look like in everyday life?
3. Can you think of a time when someone showed you grace or forgiveness you didn't deserve?

Read 1 Samuel 24:1-7

David was anointed king as a boy, but he had to wait over a decade for that calling to be fulfilled. In the meantime, he served King Saul—who became his enemy—and



then spent years running from him. David's "in-between" was filled with danger, betrayal, and loneliness.

True faithfulness in relationships often means making the right choice even when it costs us and no one else sees. David's decision to spare Saul's life, despite having every reason and opportunity to retaliate, is a powerful example. He chose to trust God's timing and justice rather than take matters into his own hands. This kind of faithfulness is rarely rewarded immediately; it can feel slow and even pointless at times.

Yet, it is in these hidden moments—when we choose patience, restraint, or quiet service—that our character is shaped. God sees every act of faithfulness, even those that go unnoticed by others. Over time, these choices form the foundation of a life that reflects God's heart to the world.

1. Have you ever found yourself in an "in-between" time—waiting for God to act or for justice to be done? What helps you remain faithful during those seasons of waiting?
2. Is there a relationship or situation where you are tempted to take matters into your own hands? What would it look like to trust God and remain faithful, even if no one else notices?

Read Psalm 120

David didn't bottle things up. He cried out to God often—and with raw honesty. Psalm 120 captures the frustration many of us feel. The Message version puts it this way: *"I'm in trouble. I cry out to God, desperate for an answer. Deliver me from the liars, God. They smile so sweetly but they lie through their teeth."*

Many of us know what it's like to be hurt by people who claim to care. We live as people of peace surrounded by those who prefer conflict. We try to forgive, only to be wounded again. And still, the call of Jesus remains: *forgive one another*. Not because it's easy—but because it's the path to life.

Forgiveness is rarely a single moment or decision; it is often a process that unfolds over time, especially when the wounds are deep. Sometimes, we may find ourselves unable to forgive, no matter how hard we try. In these moments, God invites us to bring our pain and struggle to Him, asking for His strength to do what we cannot do on our own.

Remember, Jesus walked this road of injustice and forgiveness before us, and he walks with us still. His Spirit empowers us to do what we cannot do on our own. His



grace covers our mistakes and missteps. His love carries us when we feel too tired to try again. Faithfulness in relationships is costly, but when we choose love over hate, peace over retaliation, grace over bitterness—we participate in something much bigger than ourselves. We help usher in the kingdom of God.

1. Have you ever experienced God's help in forgiving someone when you felt unable to do it alone?
2. Corrie ten Boom's story of forgiving a Nazi guard is a powerful example. She had to pray, "Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give me your forgiveness." And in that moment, God gave her the strength she lacked. How might our relationships—and our world—change if more people lived this way?

Forgiveness is Not...

Forgiveness doesn't excuse what was done or minimise the pain. Instead, it's a decision to release the burden of payback and entrust the outcome to God. It also doesn't always lead to reconciliation—sometimes boundaries are still needed.

Faithfulness in relationships is not about staying in an abusive situation. If you are in harm's way—emotionally, physically, spiritually—this is not a call to endure suffering in silence. Reach out. Speak up. Talk to a pastor or a trusted friend.

Not every relationship can be redeemed. Romans 12:18 tells us: "*If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*" Sometimes, relationships end. Forgiveness doesn't always lead to reconciliation. Some connections have to be released, and that's part of living wisely and faithfully too.

Forgiveness takes time. Sometimes it comes quickly; sometimes it takes years. There's no formula. What matters is the willingness to begin the journey—and to let God shape your heart along the way.

1. Which of these truths do you need to hear most today? Is there a relationship in your life that needs boundaries—or perhaps grace?
2. What's the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation?
3. How do you know when you've done "as far as it depends on you"?

Creative Exercise (Optional): "The Letter You May Never Send"

Invite each group member to take five minutes to silently write a letter to someone they are struggling to forgive. They can express what hurt them, how it made them



feel, and what they wish could happen. They don't need to send the letter—it's just a way to begin the process of naming and releasing the pain to God.

Afterwards, invite those who feel comfortable to reflect briefly:

- Was this exercise helpful or confronting?
- Did it change how you're thinking or feeling about the situation?

(Note: Be sensitive to group dynamics and make this exercise optional or a "takeaway" exercise for group members to do in their own time.)

Closing Prayer

God of grace, we thank you for your faithfulness to us—even when we fall short. Help us to be people of integrity, peace, and forgiveness. Give us courage to take the next step in our relationships, even if it's hard. May your Spirit empower us to love as Jesus loved and to trust you with the outcomes. Heal what is broken in us and between us. We entrust our lives and our relationships to you. Amen.



Week 7: Faithful in Witness - Sharing the Gospel Boldly

Phil Gaudion

15 June 2025

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

This week we reflect on the Great Commission and what it means to “make disciples”. God’s invitation is for each of us to participate in His mission to the world, not with manipulation or fear, but with expectation and joy.

Read Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 1:8 & Matthew 11:30

At first, the call to “go and make disciples” may seem like a heavy burden—overwhelming and difficult. But true faithfulness in witness begins with surrender, not striving. This is not a demand to be the perfect evangelist or an instruction to manipulate and coerce people into believing. In fact, the Greek word for “make” used in Matthew 28:19 is *matheteuo* meaning to become a pupil or learner. You and I have been given a joy-filled invitation to help others become learners of Jesus.

We are not responsible for the outcomes of our witness or required to carry the weight of the world; our role is to be open and willing to respond to God’s gentle nudges, even if it means starting small or feeling inadequate. As we release our striving, we discover the freedom and joy that comes from partnering with the Holy Spirit, who empowers us far beyond our own abilities.

1. Have you ever sensed the Spirit nudging you to reach out to someone?
2. What is one area where you feel pressure to “get it right” in your witness?
How might you surrender that pressure to God today and trust Him to work through your willingness instead of your expertise?

How Can We Be Faithful in Witness?

Be Yourself - 1 Samuel 17:32-50

This is a well known and loved story. David, a young shepherd boy, volunteers to fight the Philistine giant Goliath. King Saul tries to dress him in heavy armour, but



David refuses. He knows he's not built for that. Instead, he goes into battle with his slingshot and the skills he's already been using to protect his sheep. And he wins.

The message is simple: you don't need someone else's armour. God hasn't made a mistake in the way he's made us. You already have everything you need to step into the spiritual battle of helping others find their way to God. So, use what *you* have and be faithful with what *you've* been given.

There's no formula for how to share the Good News. What worked for one person won't be the same for another because the Holy Spirit leads us differently depending on our relationships, circumstances, and personalities. The key is being *open*—open to listening, open to responding, open to trusting that God is already at work in the lives of those around us.

1. What unique gifts, experiences, or insights has God given you to share His love with others? Are you using them?

Turn Judgement into Prayer - Matthew 7:1-5 & 1 Corinthians 5:12-13a

It's easy to make quick judgments about who might be open to God and who isn't. Sometimes, past experiences or our own assumptions cause us to close doors before we've even knocked. But God invites us to trade our judgments for prayers—to bring before Him those we might overlook or write off, asking for His mercy and guidance.

When we pray for others instead of judging them, our hearts are softened and aligned with God's desire to reach every person. Prayer transforms our perspective, helping us see people as God sees them: beloved, valuable, and never beyond His reach.

1. Is there someone you've quietly assumed would never be interested in Jesus? Will you take a moment today to pray for them by name, asking God to open both your heart and theirs?

Look for Persons of Peace - Luke 10:1-7

Jesus' framework for witness is surprisingly simple: look for "persons of peace"—those who are open, who like you, listen to you, and are willing to serve. These are people who we might come across in our everyday rhythms of family, work, and community. Recognising and responding to these relationships can open natural pathways for spiritual conversations, without pressure or pretense.



Instead of forcing opportunities, we are invited to pay attention to where God is already at work. When we notice someone who is receptive, we can explore deeper conversations, trusting that God is leading the way. Sometimes, the most significant spiritual moments happen in the midst of everyday routines, simply because we were willing to notice and respond.

1. What does a “person of peace” look like to you?
2. Can you think of someone like this in your life?

Let Scripture Speak - Hebrews 4:12

The heart of sharing the gospel is not about having the perfect argument or clever words. After all, we are not called to make followers of *us*. We’re called to lead people to *Jesus*—the way, the truth and the life. That’s why Scripture is so important. Real power lies in the living Word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit. When we invite others to read Scripture and discover Jesus for themselves, we give space for God to speak in His own timing and way.

Our role is to be present, listen, and ask thoughtful questions, not to rush the process or impose our opinions. Sometimes, transformation happens slowly, as seeds are planted and watered over time. Other times, God moves suddenly and unexpectedly. Either way, we can trust that God is faithful to complete the work He begins in people’s hearts.

1. Have you ever allowed Jesus’ words to really confront you? How might they do the same for someone in your life?

Don’t Miss Out - Luke 15:7

There is a unique, deep joy that comes from seeing someone encounter Jesus—one that far surpasses surface-level happiness. This joy is not reserved for those with special gifts or bold personalities but is available to anyone who says yes to the Spirit’s leading, even in small, trembling steps.

Don’t miss out. Don’t sit on the sidelines when God is inviting you into the joy of the game. Don’t let fear, comparison, or hesitation stop you from being part of someone else’s journey toward Jesus.

1. Where is God inviting you to participate in His mission? What step can you take this week?



Optional Activity (for midweek application or the next meeting)

Lectio Divina with John 1:35–39 – Come and See

Invite group members to slowly read and reflect on John 1:35–39 during the week, where Jesus invites two curious men with the words, “Come and see.”

Ask them to journal:

- What is Jesus saying to you through this passage?
- Who in your life might be ready to “come and see”?
- What invitation might you offer this week?

Closing Prayer

Jesus, thank you for inviting us into the joy of sharing your love with others. Give us courage to be faithful—not flashy or forceful, just faithful. Help us to see the people you’re already drawing near and show us how we can walk alongside them.

Empower us with your Spirit. May our words, our actions, and our lives point others to you. Amen.



Week 8: Faithful in Prayer - A Consistent Life of Communion with God

Lance Blythe

22 June 2025

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

Somewhere right now—in a bedroom, a hospital, a coffee shop or even a car—someone is praying. They might not even call it prayer. They might say they're manifesting, sending energy to the universe, or simply wishing really hard. But underneath all of that is something deeply human: a longing for connection, for help, for hope. A longing for God.

This week we explore what it means to be faithful in prayer—exercising our faith, seeking God's Kingdom with boldness and humility, and becoming “living prayers”, people whose entire lives are an ongoing conversation with God.

Exercising our Faith through Prayer

There's a shared instinct in humanity to reach beyond ourselves. As followers of Jesus Christ, we know the One we're reaching for, but that doesn't mean that prayer is always easy. There are times when even Christians can wonder—is God listening? Will anything change? Are our prayers making any difference at all? Sometimes, heaven can seem very far away.

It takes faith to pray. It takes faith to *keep on* praying, again and again and again. It takes faith to wait on an answer, and then *to notice* when that answer shows up.

Prayer is like a treadmill for faith. It's where our trust in God gets stretched, strengthened and sustained. Whether we're waiting for a miracle or simply trying to get through another day, prayer keeps us moving forward in trust, even when we don't see immediate results or understand the full impact. Prayer is an exercise of faith from beginning to end.

1. Do you ever wonder if your prayers are being heard? What helps you keep praying even when you don't see immediate answers?



2. Where in your life do you feel like you're walking on a treadmill—moving but not seeing results? How might God be inviting you to keep exercising your faith and trusting Him in that area today?

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 and Phillipians 4:6

How much prayer is enough? It's a question that cuts to the heart of our busy, performance-driven lives. Can we tick the box of prayer like a task on a to-do list? Is two hours enough? Four? Surely ten would do?

It is good to schedule intentional time for prayer and fellowship with God, but what if instead of measuring prayer by minutes, we flip the script entirely and embrace the call to “pray continually” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

We are invited to dedicate every moment of our lives as prayer. This means cultivating an ongoing, honest dialogue with God that weaves through our thoughts, actions, and daily routines. It's about giving God permission to interrupt, guide, and speak into every part of our day, making our whole life an open conversation and an offering which says: “Your Kingdom come and your will be done in *me* as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:5-13)

This is what it means to become a “living prayer.”

1. When do you most naturally talk to God during your day?
2. Do you think of prayer as a time slot or a way of life? How could you invite God into every moment and shift from thinking of prayer as “a set time” only, to a posture of “living prayerfully”?

Let's look at two types of prayer that help us grow in faith and live from a posture of constant prayer: **moving mountains prayer** and **moving me prayer**.

Read Matthew 17:14-20

Moving Mountains Prayer

Jesus tells us that even small faith can move mountains (Matthew 17:20). Mountain-moving prayers are bold, audacious, world-changing prayers that reflect the greatness of the God we serve. These are prayers that dare to ask for the impossible, trusting that the God who parted seas, raised the dead, and transformed enemies into apostles is still at work today and able to do more than we ask or



imagine. Such prayers challenge us to move beyond safe, predictable requests and to trust God for breakthroughs in our lives and in the world.

We serve a powerful God—nothing is too hard for Him. Do we believe that when we pray?

1. Have you ever seen an impossible situation shift through prayer?
2. What's a current "mountain" in your life or the world that needs moving?
3. What stops you from praying bold "moving mountain prayers"?

Read Matthew 5:43-47 and Matthew 7:1-5

Moving Me Prayer

When we pray, we're often inviting God to change circumstances. But sometimes God wants to change *us*.

"Moving me prayers" are honest, humble requests for God to reveal our blind spots, heal our brokenness, and make us more like Christ. These prayers require an openness to the Master Surgeon who can remove the "logs" from our eyes and help us love and pray for others faithfully.

The ultimate goal is to become people whose prayers—whether for mountains to move or for our own hearts to change—are always rooted in love, humility, and a desire to reflect Christ to the world.

1. When was the last time you prayed honestly about your own blind spots? What might God want to reveal in you?
2. What's harder for you: praying for God to change others, or praying for God to change you?
3. Have you ever prayed for someone who's difficult—perhaps even an enemy? What would happen if you took their name out of the prayer, and inserted your own instead? Would you still like that prayer? Or does it reveal some bitterness, some judgment, some hypocrisy? How can you invite God to help remove these logs and keep love at the centre?

Optional Activity

Choose one or both of these guided prayer exercises to help your group respond.



Note: This topic is deeply personal and potentially vulnerable, especially when reflecting on blind spots or long-unanswered prayers. Be gentle and remember that wrestling with prayer is part of growing in faith and bringing all of life before a loving and powerful God.

1: Moving Mountains Prayer

Invite group members to share something that feels impossible right now—something they need God to move. Then, as a group, pray bold, faith-filled prayers over those situations. You might pray out loud together or have a few people lead.

2: Moving Me Prayer

Invite each person to spend a few moments in silent prayer, asking God to reveal any blind spots in their hearts. You might say: “God, is there something I’m not seeing about myself that you want to bring into the light?” Allow a moment of silence, then encourage people to say a simple prayer like: “Jesus, change me. Help me become more like you.” Finish by asking for God’s grace to transform each person in the group.

Going Deeper - Optional Homework

Practise “living prayer” during the coming week with the three simple ideas below. Next time your group meets, take 5–10 minutes to share how it went.

1. **Set a daily reminder** one minute after your morning alarm goes off: “Today is a day of ongoing dialogue with God.”
2. **Pray a bold mountain-moving prayer** each day—for your family, your community, or the world.
3. **End each day with a moving me prayer**—“God, what are you trying to grow in me today?”

Closing Prayer

Faithful God, you are so good to us. Your ways are unchanging. Thank you that we can come to you boldly in prayer—trusting that you hear us, love us, and are working for our good. Teach us to live as faithful prayers—bold and humble, constant and courageous. Help us to pray in faith when mountains need to move, and with honesty when our hearts need to change. Shape us into people who walk with you every moment of every day. In Jesus’ name, Amen.



Week 9: 30 Years of Faithfulness - Words of Blessing

Allan Demond

29 June 2025

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

After 30 years of faithful leadership as senior pastor of NewHope, Allan's final sermon was one of blessing—speaking the words of Numbers 6:24–26 over our church community. These ancient words are not only beautiful, they are also “working words”, words that do something, not just say something. This week we reflect on the power of speaking God's blessing into one another's lives.

Read Genesis 1:28 & Revelation 1:3

The first words human ears ever heard were a blessing. When God created humankind He blessed them and told them to be fruitful, to flourish, and to enjoy what He had made. The story ends in the same way, with seven blessings echoing through the final chapters of the book of Revelation (1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7; 22:14). God's heart for humanity begins and ends with blessing.

1. What does it mean to you that God's first words to humanity were words of blessing? How does that shape your understanding of His character?

Read Isaiah 55:10-11 & Proverbs 18:21

Words like “I promise,” “I forgive you,” and “I love you” carry power. Similarly, when we speak words of blessing, we're not just wishing someone well, we're participating in a spiritual act that carries real power. In Scripture, when God or His appointed servants speak blessing, something actually happens: lives are changed and renewed. These are “working words,” performative speech, not empty gestures.

As followers of Jesus, we are invited to take seriously the weight of our words. Our speech can build up or tear down, bring life or cause harm. When we align our words with God's heart and speak blessing over others, we are joining in His mission to heal, restore, and transform. Let us remember that our words, spoken in faith and love, can become instruments of God's grace in the world.



1. Can you think of a time someone's words really shaped you—for better or worse? What does that tell you about the spiritual impact of language?
2. What are some ways we can speak more intentionally as followers of Jesus?

Read 1 Peter 2:9

In the Bible, blessings were spoken by priests, kings, and prophets—those authorised by God. Today, as believers in Jesus, we are part of a *royal priesthood*. This means we have the privilege—and the responsibility—of speaking God's words into each other's lives.

But this authority is not automatic; it flows from our relationship with God and our willingness to walk humbly and attentively in His ways. Authority in God's Kingdom is never about status. It's about alignment. We need to be people who *hear* from God before we *speak* for Him.

1. How do you feel about the idea that your words could be used by God to bring healing, hope or direction to someone else?
2. In what ways can we become more aligned with God's heart so that our words carry His authority?
3. How might we misuse our spiritual voice if we are careless or disconnected from God?

Read Numbers 22:21-23:12

Like Balaam in the Old Testament, we can only truly bless when our hearts and lives are aligned with God's purposes. Words not backed by God can fail—or backfire! But when we yield to God's leading, even unexpected vessels can deliver truth.

It's not about your eloquence, experience, or confidence. It's about whether God is behind your words. Discipleship, spiritual attentiveness, and community are essential, so that our words are not just pleasant or well-meaning, but actually carry the life and power of God into the world.

1. What would it look like for you to become someone who consistently speaks God's blessing into the lives of others?
2. Is there someone in your life you feel prompted to bless—perhaps through a note, a prayer, or a conversation?



Read Numbers 6:24-26

You may like to invite someone to read the priestly blessing from Numbers 6 over the group slowly and reflectively as a closing prayer.

*“The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.”*
— Numbers 6:24-26

God’s heart and intention for His people is that we would live under His favor *and* become conduits of blessing to others. Don’t just *receive* a blessing—*become* a blessing. Carry these words forward. Speak life. Walk humbly with God and participate in His mission.

As you close the meeting, consider breaking into pairs and speaking a short blessing over your partner (e.g. “May you know God’s peace this week as you face your challenges”).

Optional Activity

Encourage your group to:

- Reflect on someone in their life who may need a blessing this week.
- Pray and ask God to give them words that “do work”—words that bring peace, hope, healing or encouragement.
- Consider memorising Numbers 6:24-26 and using it regularly in family life, ministry settings, or personal prayer.



Week 10: Faithful in Generosity

Guest Speaker: Dr. Bruce Fawcett, Crandall University

6 July 2025

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

Scripture speaks extensively about money. Out of the 38 parables Jesus told, 16 deal with money. The New Testament includes more verses about money than about heaven and hell combined. There are around 500 verses about prayer in the Bible, but over 2,000 verses dealing with money and possessions. Money is deeply important to God, and so it should be important to us too.

This week we hear from Dr. Bruce Fawcett, Vice Chancellor of Crandall University in New Brunswick, Canada. Together, we will consider what it looks like to live counter culturally and see generosity as a spiritual discipline that shapes our hearts and deepens our joy in Christ.

Read Matthew 6:19-21

Why does money matter so much to God? Because it reveals our hearts. “Where your treasure is,” Jesus said, “there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21).

Our heart follows our money. The more we invest in God's kingdom and the needs of others, the more our love for Christ grows. Generosity is a discipline that transforms us from the inside out, helping us experience the joy and freedom that come from living with open hands.

God doesn't *need* our money—but He wants our heart.

1. In what ways can money either draw us closer to God or distract us from Him?
2. Growing up, what was your family's attitude toward money? Was generosity something that was talked about or practised?
3. Where is your treasure? What might your spending habits reveal about your heart?



Read Malachi 3:6-10 & 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

In Malachi, God invites His people to return to Him through tithing, promising to bless their obedience. The New Testament continues this theme but lifts the bar, shifting the focus from law to love and a call to give cheerfully, not out of obligation but from the heart.

In other words, giving isn't about fulfilling a rule, it's about embodying the generous heart of God. The goal isn't just obedience, but joyful, willing generosity that reflects God's character.

1. What do you think is the difference between giving out of obligation and giving cheerfully?
2. Are you giving cheerfully, or out of habit or guilt?

Four Obstacles to Generosity

Despite the clear biblical call, generosity can be a real challenge. Let's reflect on four key obstacles that often stand in the way.

Assuming Wealth is Ours

Read Psalm 24

In Western culture, we're often told, "It's your money. You earned it." But Psalm 24 reminds us, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it." Everything we have belongs to God. We are stewards, not owners.

This mindset shift is crucial. When we think of wealth as ours, we feel entitled to spend however we like. But if we understand we're managing what belongs to God, we begin to ask, "What would God have me do with this?"

1. Do you see yourself as an owner or a steward of your money?

Tithing to the Bank

Read Proverbs 22:7 & Romans 12:1-2

It's difficult to be a cheerful giver when you're a depressed debtor. Generosity can seem almost out of reach for those living paycheck to paycheck with mounting debt. We become enslaved to repayments, and generosity slips out of view.



The culture we live in encourages consumerism, instant gratification, and living beyond our means. But as followers of Jesus, we're called to a different way. A countercultural life—marked by simplicity, contentment, and generosity—speaks loudly in a world shaped by debt and materialism.

When we choose to live differently, we free ourselves to live and give generously, trusting God with our needs.

1. Is debt keeping you from giving? What steps could help you move toward financial freedom?

Thinking Only the Wealthy Can Give

Read Luke 21:1-4

There's a myth that only the rich can afford to be generous. But Australia ranks fourth in global household wealth. Even young adults—struggling with housing or rental costs—are wealthy by global standards.

Generosity isn't about having lots of money. It's about having the right mindset. Even small, consistent acts of giving are deeply meaningful when done in faith.

1. Are you waiting until you "have more" before giving? What could you give now?

Lack of a Plan

Read Matthew 25:14-30 & Proverbs 21:5

Just like prayer or Bible reading, financial planning is a spiritual discipline. Budgeting may take time and effort—but it's vital if we want to be generous. Setting up an emergency fund, paying down debt, budgeting wisely, and setting giving goals all help position us to give joyfully and sustainably.

Jesus' parable of the bags of gold reminds us that God expects us to faithfully steward what He entrusts to us—not to bury it, but to grow it for His purposes.

Planning is how we move from good intentions to actual generosity.

1. Do you have a budget that reflects your values? What small step could you take this week to plan for generosity?



Optional Activity (for families or individual homework)

Ask each participant to privately do the following during the week:

- Track all spending for one week.
- At week's end, review: What does my spending say about my priorities?
- Ask: What one small change could I make to reflect God's values better?

Reflection Questions for Personal Devotion:

- What stood out to you most in this message about generosity?
- How has your upbringing shaped your views on money?
- What changes—small or large—do you feel God prompting you to make?
- Who could support or journey with you in building a generous lifestyle?

Following Christ is both joyful and difficult. Submitting our finances to Jesus is a major part of discipleship—and often one of the hardest. But it's worth it. We serve a generous God—and we reflect Him when we live with open hands and open hearts.

You may like to plan a follow-up study in a few months to check in on progress and encourage continued discipleship in this area.

Closing Prayer

Invite group members to share prayer requests, especially if this topic has surfaced personal or financial challenges. Then pray together.

Suggested Closing Prayer:

Lord, thank You for entrusting us with the resources we have. Help us to see ourselves not as owners, but as stewards. Give us courage to live counter culturally in a world obsessed with more. Break the chains of debt, anxiety, and greed, and grow in us a spirit of joyful generosity. Lead us to live and give like You. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Week 11: God's Faithfulness to the Church

Sally Agostino

20 July 2025

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

We come to the end of our sermon series with a focus on God's unwavering faithfulness to the church and the church's call to be faithful in return. The challenge for us is to be aware of our blind spots, to learn from both the church's successes and failures, and to know the "melody" of Christ so well that we can play it faithfully, with humility and joy, as we reflect His love to all humanity.

Read Isaiah 49:5-6 & Matthew 16:13-18

Long before there were church buildings or denominations, God was already reaching out, preparing a people, and calling communities to Himself. In Isaiah 49:6, God promises to make His people "a light to the nations" setting the tone for a much larger story—one where God's love is wide, welcoming, and global in scale.

The New Testament picks up the story with Jesus stepping magnificently into history. In Matthew 16, Jesus asks His disciples this pivotal question, "Who do you say I am?" Peter responds boldly: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." And upon this faithful confession, Jesus announces His plans: "On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not overcome it."

From a human perspective, this might sound like a risky move. After all, Peter also famously denied Jesus three times. Was this really the foundation on which to build a global movement?

But Jesus wasn't counting on Peter's perfection. He was anchoring the church in His own faithfulness and calling His people to be faithful in return. In this way, the church would be carried forward by ordinary people like Peter, and by people like us.

1. How does it encourage or challenge you to know that God uses imperfect people to build His kingdom?
2. Have you ever felt unqualified to be used by God? How might Peter's story encourage you?
3. What does it mean for us today to confess that Jesus is Lord—not just personally, but as a church?



Read Hebrews 12:1-3

The church is part of a much larger story—a “great cloud of witnesses” spanning centuries. There are moments in history where the church has embodied the love of Jesus beautifully: caring for the vulnerable, challenging injustice, and embodying sacrificial love. Yet, there have also been dark chapters where the church has pursued power, caused harm, or lost sight of Jesus’ mission.

Recognising both the beauty and the brokenness in our story keeps us humble and dependent on God’s grace as we seek to live out our calling. We are invited not to ignore the past but to learn from it. And more importantly, to fix our eyes on Jesus and live humbly in His way.

1. When you think about the church’s history—both its beauty and its failures—how does that shape your own sense of calling and humility? Is there a part of the church’s story you need to grieve or celebrate with God today?

Watch this clip from John Dickson

How to Judge the Church: A Musical Analogy

youtube.com/watch?v=VQMe3z98ua4

In this video by the Centre for Public Christianity, John Dickson compares Christianity to Bach’s *Cello Suites*, asking: should we judge a musical masterpiece by a poor performance?

Sometimes, the church has played the melody of the gospel beautifully—other times, it has missed the mark entirely. But the brilliance of the composition and its author remains. Our task is to know Jesus so intimately that His song becomes our own.

To love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength—and to love our neighbour and even our enemy—is not an easy tune to play. It requires deep surrender and a willingness to be corrected and repent. The good news is that the Holy Spirit helps us recognise when we are out of tune and helps us realign ourselves with the melody of Jesus.

1. Are there areas in your own life where you’re performing the “music” of Jesus faithfully? Where are you out of tune?
2. How can we help each other keep our focus on Jesus and reflect His love?



The same God who was faithful to the early church is just as faithful to His church today. That includes local churches like NewHope. Let's be a people who commit to learning the melody of Christ faithfully, playing it often, and sharing it boldly—because the world is listening.

Optional Activity

Encourage quiet reflection or journalling on the question: *Where is God inviting me to be more faithful in my love for His church—locally and globally?*

Invite a few people to share if they feel comfortable:

- Something they're thankful for about the church
- Something they want to commit to doing differently or more intentionally

Closing Prayer

Pray as a group, thanking God for His ongoing faithfulness to His people and asking for the courage to live out that same faithfulness.

Suggested Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus, You are building Your church, and the gates of hell will not overcome it. Thank You for Your faithfulness through generations. Help us to walk in step with Your Spirit, to love like You, to learn from our past, and to live faithfully in the present. Make us a people who play Your melody well in the world. Amen.