



The Story

God's relentless pursuit through
history to call us home.

SERMON SERIES STUDY GUIDE

QUARTER 3, 2025

THE STORY

Sermon Series Study Guide

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Week 1: The Grand Narrative of Scripture - Lance Blythe	2
Week 2: The Forming of Israel - God's Chosen People - Sally Agostino	5
Week 3: The Exodus - Freedom Through God's Power - Lance Blythe	8
Week 4: The Kings - God's Rule Through Human Authority - Phil Gaudion	11
Week 5: Wisdom, Worship and Lament - Sally Agostino	15
Week 6: The Prophets - Longing for God's Restoration - Darrell Jackson	19
Week 7: The Exile - God's Judgement, Faithfulness & Restoration - Sally Agostino	23
Week 8: The Fulfilment in Christ - God's Promises Kept - Tim Spencer	27
Week 9: The Great Commission - Simon Longden	30
Week 10: Jesus - Our High Priest & Perfect Atonement - Sally Agostino	34
Week 11: The Holy Spirit - Knowing and Experiencing God - Adam Southwood	37
Week 12: The Return of Christ - The Completion of God's Plan - Lance Blythe	40



Introduction

THE STORY Sermon Series: August-October 2025

The Bible is more than a collection of disconnected stories—it is a unified, sweeping narrative of God’s pursuit of humanity. Over this 12-week series we will explore ‘*The Story*’, of God’s redeeming work in the world as we reflect on the major turning points of Scripture and uncover the deep, consistent heartbeat of God’s redemptive love.

From creation to new creation, from covenant to Christ, we will trace the powerful thread of God’s sovereign plan to redeem His people and restore all things. From the forming of God’s chosen people, to His deliverance through the Exodus, the longings voiced in wisdom and worship, and the warnings of the prophets. We’ll reflect on the tragedy and hope of exile, the fulfillment of God’s promises in Jesus, and the explosive birth and growth of the Church.

At the heart of this series is the transforming truth of the gospel: through the cross and resurrection, God has defeated sin and death. Through the Holy Spirit, He empowers us to live as His people in a broken world. And with the return of Christ, we look forward to the final restoration of all things.

This series is for everyone—whether you are new to the faith, exploring Christianity, or a long-time believer seeking a richer view of Scripture. Our goal is to deepen your love for the Bible, increase your confidence in God’s plan, and call you to live as participants in His ongoing story. It is an amazing Story, it is our Story and it is a Story that calls us home.

The Story Sermons

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

<https://nhbc.churchcenter.com/channels/16420/series/67882>



Week 1: The Grand Narrative of Scripture

Lance Blythe

3 August 2025

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

In life, it can be easy to drift without realising it. Like a surfer carried by unseen currents, we can be subtly moved by the influences around us until we look up and realise we've lost sight of where we should be. We need a fixed reference point, a true and time-tested touchstone that not only endures but transforms lives. The Bible is that touchstone.

Over this 12-week sermon series we will explore 'The Story' of God's redeeming work in the world and His relentless pursuit through history to call us home.

Read Genesis 2:25, 3:1-13 & 3:21-24

The grand narrative of Scripture begins with a loving, all-powerful God who creates a world of beauty and worth. Adam and Eve are created and placed in the garden where they live in peace and connectedness with God. The story starts not with sin and pain, but with good at its core, until Adam and Eve lose their point of reference and this beautiful picture is fractured.

The Genesis story shows how evil and sin work to subtly twist the truth and lead us to make choices that ultimately harm us. Evil rarely comes to us in obvious forms; it often masquerades itself as good, playing on our God-given longing for goodness and fulfillment. Therefore, we must be vigilant and learn to test our ways against the true reference points of God's word and a discerning community.

1. What is one influence in your daily life that may be subtly shaping your direction? How can you intentionally check your bearings and realign with God's truth today?
2. Are there areas in your life where you've rushed to decide what's "good" or "right" without seeking God's guidance?



The Word of God

Read Hebrews 4:12

The Bible is not just a book to be understood intellectually, but a living word meant to be read, engaged with, and allowed to read us in return. Research shows that regular engagement with Scripture—at least four days a week—leads to significant transformation in our lives, from sharing our faith more to gaining freedom from destructive habits. The stories and teachings of Scripture become a mirror, revealing both our strengths and our weaknesses, and inviting us into deeper self-awareness and growth. The discipline of immersing ourselves in God’s word is a practical, powerful way to anchor our lives in truth.

1. When was the last time you let a passage of Scripture challenge or correct you, rather than just encourage you? You may like to use the NewHope Bible Reading Plan or a spiritual practice like Lectio Divina and ask God to show you what He wants to reveal to you today.

A Discerning Community

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

Adam and Eve’s downfall was not just about personal failure, but about the absence of a discerning, truth-speaking community. We are not meant to navigate the complexities of life and faith alone; God gives us the gift of community—small groups, friendships, the local church—to help us discern, reflect, and challenge one another. When we isolate ourselves or rely only on secondhand faith, we become vulnerable to deception and drift, but true community helps us stay oriented toward God’s purposes.

1. How has Christian community helped you see things differently or more clearly?
2. Who in your life can you invite to speak truth and encouragement to you this week? How can you take a step toward a deeper, more honest community today?

God’s Response to Evil: Justice and Grace

Read Isaiah 61:10

Even in the midst of judgment and consequence, God’s response to our failure is marked by both justice and grace. He does not ignore wrongdoing, but neither does



He abandon us in our shame; instead, He moves toward us, clothing us as He did for Adam and Eve, restoring dignity, and preparing us for the journey ahead.

Genesis 3 finishes with exile from the garden—but that’s not the end. The story flows forward to Jesus, who restores access to the tree of life and offers freedom from shame and separation. In Jesus, God Himself bears the cost of our brokenness and invites us back to Him. Our response should not be to hide behind our own fig leaves, but to surrender to His grace, trusting that He will redeem, restore, and guide us home.

1. Where are you tempted to hide in shame or self-reliance instead of receiving God’s grace? What would it look like to let God “clothe” you with His forgiveness and restoration today?

Bible Reading Plan & Resources

Engagement with God’s word is a practical and powerful way to fix your reference point and stay anchored to what is true. As we engage in this sermon series and reflect on ‘The Story’ of God’s redemptive pursuit of humanity, we invite you to practise the discipline of regular Bible reading.

You may like to use the [NewHope Bible Reading Plan](#) which has been developed to accompany each sermon over the next 12-weeks. Get a physical copy at church, download a digital copy from our website or follow NewHope in the Bible App for daily updates.

There are also many other wonderful ways to engage with Scripture and you can find a collection of resources, such as books, apps, courses, and more at newhope.net.au/the-story.

Suggested Closing Prayer

Gracious God, thank you for your word, which speaks truth and life, and for the gift of community, which helps us discern your voice in a world of noise. May we anchor ourselves in you as the reference point for our lives. You are the God of justice and grace, redeeming all things in love, and we open ourselves up to your forgiveness and freedom today. In Jesus’ name, Amen.



Week 2: The Forming of Israel - God's Chosen People

Sally Agostino

10 August 2025

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

This week we are exploring the formation of Israel as God's chosen people. The deep complexities and pain in the Middle East, especially in light of current events, can raise questions as we come to this part of 'The Story', but God's choice was not about favouritism or exclusion; it was about purpose. Like Abram, we are invited to see ourselves as chosen, not to hoard God's goodness to ourselves, but to share it as channels of blessing to the world.

Read Genesis 12:1-9

When God called Abram (who would later become Abraham), it was not to create an exclusive club, but to begin a story of blessing that would touch every nation. God's choosing is about purpose, not favouritism, and this helps to reframe our understanding of what it means to belong to God's people. It is not about status or privilege, but about being a channel through which God's goodness can flow outward.

To be chosen by God is to be given a mission for the sake of others: to reflect His love, justice, and mercy to the world.

1. What does it mean for God to choose someone "for the sake of others" rather than just for their own benefit?
2. Who in your life today might God be inviting you to bless, so that His love can reach them through you?

Read Genesis 11:1-9 & Genesis 12:10-20

God's blessings are never meant to be hoarded or kept behind walls. From the scattering at Babel to Abram's own journey, the story of Scripture warns against a self-exalting mindset and the temptation to keep God's gifts for ourselves. When we try to contain or control what God gives, we miss the very reason we were blessed in the first place.



Yet God's faithfulness remains steady. Abraham was a man who stumbled, doubted, and sometimes failed, but his weaknesses did not disqualify him from being used by God as a channel of blessing and grace—and neither do ours. The only criteria that is needed is an open heart, willing to answer the Lord's call to "come follow me".

1. Are there areas in your life where you tend to "hoard" God's blessings—whether that's your time, resources, or even your faith? What would it look like to open up those areas to others?
2. Where have you felt disqualified or discouraged by your own shortcomings? How might God be inviting you to trust Him to work through you, even in your weakness, today?

Read 1 Peter 2:9

All of Scripture points to the need for a perfect channel of blessing, which is fulfilled in Jesus. Through His life, death and resurrection, we are invited into a new identity: a chosen people, a royal priesthood, called to both receive and share God's love.

Jesus invites us to join His mission in the world. The question is not whether we are chosen, but how we will respond. Will we be part of 'The Story' and allow God's blessing to flow through us?

1. How does being part of God's people change the way someone experiences faith compared to just having a private relationship with God?
2. Jesus is the perfect channel of God's blessing. How does looking to Jesus change the way you think about your own role in God's story?

Optional Activity

If you are able, consider going for a prayer walk around your neighbourhood and asking God where He wants you to be a channel of His blessing. You may like to consider this invitation as individuals and/or go together as a group.

As you walk, take time to pray slowly and deliberately for your community, your personal relationships, our church family and our world. Ask the Lord: Where can I/we be an Abram this week?



Suggested Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for your word and for the reminder that you choose us not to hoard your blessings, but to channel them out into the world. Thank you for the gift of Jesus, who is the perfect channel of your love and grace.

Lord, as we go from here, help us to be brave like Abram, to trust you even when the path is hard, and to be willing to share your blessings with those around us. Show us where you are calling us to be a blessing this week—whether through our words, our actions, or our willingness to serve.

We pray for peace and understanding in the midst of the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East. We trust in your sovereignty and love for all people. Renew our commitment to be channels of your blessing in our families, communities, and the world.

In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.



Week 3: The Exodus - Freedom Through God's Power

Lance Blythe

17 August 2025

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

God's gift of salvation isn't only about saving us *from* something, it's also about saving us *into* something. This week we reflect on the Exodus narrative, a three-part story of God leading His people out of slavery, through the wilderness, and into His promises. We can trust Him to lead us in the same way today.

Read Exodus 5:1-9

Moses and Aaron's first encounter with Pharaoh doesn't seem to go according to plan. Pharaoh's response is swift and brutal: "Who is the Lord? I don't know this God, and I certainly won't obey Him." But Pharaoh's question—"Who is the Lord?"—sets up the entire narrative that follows. Over the coming chapters, God will answer that question comprehensively, revealing His power, justice, and heart for all people to know Him.

In a reverse of Genesis creation, the plagues in Exodus show God uncreating the framework of evil, systematically unwinding its very fabric. This act of justice is not rushed; it is thorough and redemptive, giving all people—not just the royal elite—a chance to witness, understand, and respond. In our own lives, we may long for quick resolutions, but God's heart is to bring about deeper transformation and a wider invitation to all. We can trust His timing.

1. When you face opposition or setbacks in following God's leading, how do you typically respond? What can we learn from Moses' honest complaint to God after this encounter? (see Exodus 5:22-23)
2. Where in your life or in the world do you long to see God's justice "unwind the fabric of evil"? How can you trust His timing whilst still caring about injustice?

Read Exodus 12:21-28

With the final plague—the Passover—the Exodus story becomes a powerful foretelling of Jesus, the Lamb of God, whose blood marks our lives and sets us free. In Jesus, we see that salvation is not only about rescuing us *from* sin and death, but also about saving us *for* a beautiful purpose and *into* an eternal future.



The Exodus narrative isn't just about an exit—it's a three-part story that repeats throughout Scripture. God leads His people out of slavery, through the wilderness, and into His promises. Today, these three parts are stacked on top of each other. We're simultaneously saved from the slavery of sin, walking with purpose through the wilderness of this current life, and living into God's promises now whilst anticipating their fulfilment to come.

God calls us out, leads us through, and brings us in. If we focus only on what we have been saved from, we risk missing the fullness of His purpose for us.

1. In what ways have you focused more on what God has saved you *from*, rather than the purpose He has saved you *for* and the future He has saved you *to*?
2. What does it mean practically to live "under the blood of the lamb" in your daily life? How does this freedom change how you approach challenges, relationships, or decisions?

Read Exodus 32:1-6

Perhaps the most confronting part of the Exodus story is the golden calf. How could the very generation that witnessed the plagues and parting of the Red Sea turn so quickly to idols? The answer is uncomfortably simple: they looked at the nations around them, who had gods they could see and touch, and decided they needed the same.

Idolatry is often subtle and personal. It can be a relationship, a career, a habit, or even a good thing that becomes ultimate in our lives. God calls us to honest self-examination and to surrender anything that competes with Him for our devotion.

How often do we, like the Israelite people, grumble, doubt, and chase after things we shouldn't? The Exodus narrative is a mirror. We're meant to see ourselves in these stories, invite the Spirit to reveal His truth to us, and return to the cross of Jesus, where we find true freedom and the assurance that He alone is worthy of our worship.

1. What are some "idols" (things that take God's place) that you are tempted to trust or rely on in your own life?
2. What are some practical ways you can keep the Lord before you and remember the things He has done for you in the past?



Optional Reflection Activity

Encourage each person to sit quietly and reflect on these questions. Consider having people write their answers on a card or save it on their phones as a reminder.

- **Out:** What has God saved you from? Thank Him for His rescue.
- **Through:** What wilderness are you currently walking through? Ask for His daily provision and trust in His preparation.
- **Into:** What promises is God leading you towards? Pray for faith to live into those promises now.

Suggested Closing Prayer

Faithful God, Thank you for the powerful reminder of your love, justice, and mercy revealed through the story of Exodus. Thank you for the gift of Jesus, the Lamb sacrificed for us, who leads us from slavery into freedom, purpose and eternal life.

Please reveal to us any idols we have set up in our lives. Show us where we have placed things above you. Help us to repent and return to your cross, Jesus. Strengthen us to walk in your truth, to live as your disciples, and to carry your love into the world. In Your name, we pray. Amen.



Week 4: The Kings - God's Rule Through Human Authority

Phil Gaudion

24 August 2025

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

We all long for good leadership. Whether in our families, workplaces, or nations, we want leaders who are trustworthy, wise, and truly care for those they serve. This week we explore Israel's demand for a king and discover that whilst human leadership may disappoint, God's response reveals His incredible patience, humility, and faithfulness—qualities perfectly displayed in Jesus, our true King.

Read 1 Samuel 8:4-22

It was a striking moment in Israel's history. God had already led his people out of Egypt with miraculous power, parted the Red Sea, and brought them through the wilderness into the promised land. Along the way, he'd raised up judges and prophets to guide them and to help them live in community with Him at the centre. But now, just a couple of hundred years later, the people wanted something different: "Give us a king, like all the other nations have."

They wanted a visible king—a leader they could point to and rally behind. God warned them through Samuel that this choice would come at a cost. Kings would demand taxes, claim land, send their sons to fight wars, and take their daughters into service. But the people insisted. So God allowed it.

From there unfolded centuries of monarchy—forty-three rulers in all—and even the best of them fell short.

Saul, Israel's first king, began with humility but quickly fell into pride. He disobeyed God, making sacrifices on his own terms, and became self-absorbed. His reign set the pattern: human kings, however promising, always came with flaws.

David followed. Many know David as the shepherd boy who defeated Goliath, the poet who wrote psalms, and the man "after God's own heart". David loved God deeply, and he modelled worship for the nation, calling people to sing, repent, and seek God's presence. But even David fell. His adultery with Bathsheba and subsequent choices showed that even the best human leaders are not immune to sin.



Solomon came next. The king who famously asked God for wisdom instead of wealth. For a while, he embodied that wisdom, building the temple and establishing peace. Yet later in life, he married foreign wives who led his heart astray toward idols. His reign unravelled in compromise.

We love the idea of a strong leader who will fix everything. The Israelites wanted a king they could see, touch, and follow into battle. And if we're honest, aren't we often the same? We put our hopes in politicians, CEOs, influencers, and cultural heroes. But history tells a sobering story. There is no human authority that can bear the weight of our ultimate hopes and expectations.

1. Think about leaders in your life (political, business, church, or personal). Who is someone you admire as a leader, and why? Where have you experienced disappointment with a leader and how did you navigate it?
2. Who or what are you tempted to look to as your "king"—a person or system you hope will fix everything for you?

Read 2 Peter 3:9

Despite Israel's rejection of his leadership, God didn't abandon them. He allowed them to have kings, but he continued to work patiently, guiding history toward his ultimate redemptive plan.

Phil reflected on the sheer scale of God's patience and faithfulness. The closest human comparison he could think of was the love of his wife—thirty years of putting up with his flaws, day in and day out. Then he thought of his parents' marriage, approaching sixty years. That kind of long-term commitment gives a glimpse of faithfulness, but even that pales compared to God's.

Imagine multiplying the patience and humility of the kindest person you know across millions of people, across a whole country, across the entire globe. Then stretch it across not just years, but millennia. That's the kind of faithfulness God demonstrates. His patience is bigger than we can imagine. His desire is that more people come to know His love, but the choice is ours.

God gave humanity free will because love cannot be forced. He doesn't want robots. He wants people who choose him freely. And so, he allows us to decide whether to keep running after our own kings or to turn back to him.

1. Why do you think God values free will so highly, even if it leads us to poor choices?
2. When you think about God's patience in your life, where have you seen him stick with you even when you wandered?



3. The word "repentance" can feel heavy, but it simply means "changing our minds"—deciding to go God's way instead of our own way. Where might God be inviting you to change your mind about something today?

Read John 13:1-17

Israel longed for a visible king, and in time God sent one—but not the kind they expected. The invisible Father sent his visible Son, Jesus.

The perfect example of patience, humility, and faithfulness, Jesus embodied everything the kings of Israel failed to be. He commanded the wind and waves yet washed His disciples' feet. He had all authority yet chose a donkey over a warhorse. He could call down angels but instead went to a cross.

The image of Jesus washing the disciples' feet captures the essence of His kingship. Peter's resistance—"You can't wash my feet!"—reflects our discomfort with a king who serves. But Jesus insists: "Unless I wash your feet, you can have no part with me." This king comes close, serves humbly, and calls us to do the same.

1. Like Peter, do you sometimes resist letting Jesus get too close or serve you too personally?
2. What might it look like for you to "wash the feet" of someone in your life this week?

Optional Activity

- **Pray:** Take a few minutes to pray for those who lead us (e.g. pastors, teachers, local council, national leaders, workplace managers). Ask God to guide them with wisdom, humility, compassion, and courage. You may also like to encourage each person to pray for one leader during the coming week.
- **Serve:** Brainstorm one way your group could serve together—something practical and humble that reflects Jesus' heart.

Suggested Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, You are the King of Kings. Thank you for showing us what true leadership looks like—humble, patient and faithful. Help us to receive your love, to trust your grace, and to follow your example in humility. Teach us to wash the feet of others and show us how to love. In your name, Amen.



Week 5: Wisdom, Worship and Lament

Sally Agostino

31 August 2025

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

This week we take a journey through the rich landscape of Old Testament wisdom literature. These books are filled with many treasures, and in this study we will touch on just a few from Proverbs, Lamentations and Psalms. Together, we'll explore how these writings invite us to bring our whole selves before God; offering not only our praise and gratitude, but also our honest questions, doubts and lament.

Proverbs: Applied Wisdom for Daily Life

Read Proverbs 1:1-7

Proverbs teaches us that wise choices lead to good outcomes, but it's important to remember that this is a book of probability, not promises. Our job is to seek after Godly wisdom, humbly align our lives with God's design, and trust Him with the outcome.

The Hebrew word for wisdom is *chokmah*. This is more than just intellectual knowledge; it's applied knowledge. It's wisdom that shows up in the way we live. The Proverbs invite us to pursue this kind of wisdom as a lifelong journey.

1. How does it help to know Proverbs are about probabilities, not promises?
2. What's one area of your life where you need more *chokmah*—applied wisdom rather than just head-knowledge? How might you seek God's guidance in that area?

Lamentations: Order from Chaos

Read Lamentations 3

If Proverbs teaches us to live wisely, Lamentations shows us how to grieve wisely. Written after the Babylonian invasion of Jerusalem, Lamentations is a memorial to pain. The anonymous author lived through exile and captivity, yet created something beautiful from the wreckage—carefully structured acrostic poems that bring order to chaos. A picture of what God does.



“Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.” (Lamentations 3:22–23).

These verses, often memorised and quoted in isolation, sit in the middle of deep grief and questioning. The anguish that surrounds them can seem overwhelming, but not to God. He welcomes our honest cries and does not ask us to hide our brokenness. In fact, it is in the act of lament that we often discover new hope and healing. By bringing our pain to God, we create space for Him to meet us, comfort us, and begin the work of restoration.

1. Have you ever experienced God bringing a sense of order or meaning into a season of chaos?
2. Why do you think we’re more comfortable with hopeful verses like “new mercies every morning” than we are with the lament that surrounds them?

Psalms: Prescriptive Liturgy

Read Psalm 22:1-10

The Psalms weren’t just written for personal quiet time. They’re “prescriptive liturgy,” offering us a framework for prayer that is honest, raw and real. They teach us that God is not looking for polished words or perfect emotions, but invites us to bring our whole selves—joy, anger, doubt and praise—into His presence.

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish? My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, but I find no rest.” (Psalm 22:1-2)

Have you ever dared to pray like that? To simply tell God how you feel, even without asking Him to fix it?

We often turn to the Psalms for words of comfort or praise, but nearly a third of the Psalter consists of lament. These first lines of Psalm 22 show us that even Jesus used the Psalms as a vocabulary for raw honesty with His Father. And what’s remarkable is how God welcomes these prayers. He not only allows but *invites* them, because lament is not the end of faith—it is a doorway to deeper faith.

1. Writer Anne Lamott, says her prayers often fall into three categories: *thank you, thank you, thank you; I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I’m sorry; or help me, help me, help me*. Do your prayers ever sound like that? How could the prescriptive liturgy of the Psalms help to expand your prayer life?



2. How do you respond to the idea that God welcomes our doubts and questions?
3. What would it look like for you to pray with David's level of honesty as seen in Psalm 22? What fears, doubts or hurts have you been hesitant to bring to God?

Read Psalm 22:11-31

David starts Psalm 22 with honest emotion. He tells God exactly how he feels, acknowledges God's past faithfulness, then contrasts it with his current experience of abandonment. This isn't "polite society" prayer. This is bringing your whole self to God—the good, the bad, and the ugly—and remarkably, God who inspired this book of Scripture, made room for these honest, painful words.

It's only after David has poured out his heart in verses 1-10 that we see his words turn to petition and, finally, to praise. Scholars suggest that Psalm 22 may have been written in two parts: lament in the moment of pain, and later praise after resolution came. Whether or not that's the case, the structure shows us it's okay to linger in lament before moving toward celebration.

1. How was emotion typically handled in your family growing up? Was there an imbalance between silencing your feelings or being ruled by them? How might this affect how you relate to God?
2. The Psalms teach us that part of the human experience is doubt and pain. Honest faith says, "God, I don't understand, but I'm trusting you in the mystery." Can you think of a current situation where you're still in the mystery? How might honest lament help you process this season?
3. How comfortable are you sharing your struggles and doubts with other believers? What holds you back from bringing your "whole self" to Christian community? And how might your small group, family or friendships be different if everyone felt permission to share honestly about both struggles and celebrations?

Optional Activity

Invite group members to reflect on a personal or communal situation of struggle and try praying using Psalm 22 as a template:

- **Verses 1-10:** Start with honest emotion. Tell God exactly how you feel about a current struggle, without trying to fix it or make it sound spiritual.
- **Verse 11:** Move to simple, broad requests: "Don't be far from me. Help me."



- **Verses 22-31:** If you're not ready for praise yet, that's okay. End by acknowledging God's sovereignty and expressing trust, even in the mystery.

Suggested Closing Prayer

Gracious God, thank you for the gift of wisdom literature—for Proverbs that teach us to apply your ways and wisdom to our lives; for Lamentations that show us how to grieve in times of chaos; and for Psalms that give us an honest framework of prayer for every season of life.

We confess that we sometimes prefer to bring only our "acceptable" selves to you — the grateful, faithful, put-together parts. Help us to learn from David's example and bring our whole selves to you—our doubts, fears, anger and questions alongside our praise and gratitude.

Thank you that lament is not the end of faith but a doorway to deeper relationship with you. Give us courage to be honest with you and with one another. In the mystery and in the clarity, in the pain and in the joy, we trust that you are good. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Week 6: The Prophets - Longing for God's Restoration in a Broken World

Darrell Jackson

7 September 2025

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

When we think about the Old Testament prophets, it can be tempting to imagine strange and distant figures with lofty, important callings far removed from our world today. But in reality, they were normal people living in the thick of daily life and speaking God's truth into difficult times. Like a doctor's diagnosis, their messages were sometimes painful, sometimes hopeful, but always pointing people back to God as their source.

We, too, live in times of uncertainty, injustice and fear. And we, too, are invited to be people who look to God, listen for His voice, and trust in His promises. This week we have the privilege of hearing from guest speaker Rev Associate Professor Darrell Jackson, Principal of Whitley College, as together we explore the voices of three prophets—Isaiah, Micah and Jeremiah.

Read Isaiah 6:1-8

Isaiah's story begins with a vision of God in the temple. He sees the Lord high and exalted, the train of His robe filling the temple, with angels declaring His holiness. Isaiah is undone. He cries, *"Woe to me, I am ruined!"* He sees his own sin and the brokenness of his people.

But God doesn't leave him there. A seraph touches his lips with a live coal, cleansing him. Then comes the question: *"Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"* Isaiah responds, *"Here am I. Send me!"*

Isaiah's encounter reminds us that before we can represent God or speak on His behalf, we must first be undone by His holiness. The invitation is to **look**—to see and know the living God in a way that strips away our self-sufficiency and exposes our need for grace. Only then can we truly respond as Isaiah does, "Here am I, send me."



1. When was the last time you allowed yourself to be undone in God's presence? What would it look like to set aside your self-sufficiency and simply ask God to show you His holiness today?
2. Darrell noted that Isaiah wasn't called or commissioned—he volunteered when God asked "Who will go for us?" What does this teach us about responding to God's invitation in our lives?
3. In what ways might God be inviting you, like Isaiah, to step forward and say, "Here I am, send me"?

Read Micah 6:6-8

Micah saw injustice up close: leaders exploiting the poor, worship disconnected from real life, and people going through religious motions without living faithfully. Today, as in Micah's day, it can be easy to substitute activity—church attendance, volunteering, even prayer—for the harder work of loving those on the margins and seeking justice for the vulnerable. Yet, God isn't looking for empty rituals, He requires lives that reflect His heart.

Micah calls the people to **listen** and return to what matters, *"To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God."* This is not a checklist, but an invitation to a transformed way of being that responds with our lives, not just our lips.

1. Why do you think God values justice, mercy and humility more than religious performance?
2. What would it look like to "walk humbly with God" in your daily routines?
3. Who in your life or community is vulnerable or overlooked? What is one concrete way you can act with justice or mercy toward them today?

Read Jeremiah 31:31-34

God's promise through Jeremiah is not a new set of instructions carved on tablets of stone, but a new kind of relationship where God's law is written on our very hearts. This new covenant represents a move from external rules to internal transformation—a life so shaped by God's presence that obedience becomes a natural response, not a burdensome duty.

God's love is not something to be earned, but received. This is the gift of the gospel. When we trust that God's Spirit is at work within us, we find ourselves wanting to follow Him, not out of fear or obligation, but out of joy.



The prophets invite us to **trust** in this promise, ultimately fulfilled in Christ our Saviour.

1. Darrell compared having God's law written on our hearts to instinctively knowing your way home without the need for GPS directions. Have you experienced God's Spirit leading you in this way as you walk in close relationship with Him?
2. In what area of your life do you find yourself following God out of obligation rather than love? How might you invite God to write His desires on your heart today?
3. How does experiencing God's grace as a gift rather than something to earn affect how you relate to God and others?

Optional Activity

The prophets show us that God is always speaking—sometimes with comfort, sometimes with challenge, but always with faithfulness. Our calling as disciples is to respond: to **look** for God's presence in both beauty and brokenness, to **listen** for His voice in Scripture and in the cries of the vulnerable, and to **trust** His promises even when circumstances seem hopeless. This is how we become signs pointing others to the truth of God's love and faithfulness in a world that desperately needs it.

Which of these three—look, listen, or trust—do you sense God emphasising for you right now?

Invite group members to write down one area where they feel God is calling them to **look**, **listen**, or **trust** this week. Place the papers in the middle of the circle (or keep them personal if preferred). Spend time praying over these commitments together.

For Further Study

Want to dive deeper into the prophets? Why not try:

- Reading the full context of each passage this week.
- Reading through one of the shorter prophetic books (like Micah or Malachi).
- Reflecting on how Jesus fulfils the prophetic promises. Here are a few places to start:
 - Read through Isaiah 53 and compare it with the Gospel accounts of Jesus' crucifixion
 - Explore how Hebrews 8-10 explains Jesus as the fulfilment of Jeremiah's new covenant



- Study the Gospels and look for times when Jesus quotes or references the prophets.

Suggested Closing Prayer

Loving Lord God, thank you for speaking to us through the prophets' messages. We are grateful for Isaiah's vision that calls us to truly see you; for Micah's reminder to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with you; and for Jeremiah's promise of a new covenant written on our hearts in close relationship with you.

Help us to be people who look, listen and trust. Give us prophetic imagination and holy courage for the challenges of our time.

Thank you that these ancient voices still point us faithfully to Jesus, our Saviour and our King, in whose name we pray. Amen.



Week 7: The Exile - God's Judgement, Faithfulness and Restoration

Sally Agostino

14 September 2025

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

This week we explore one of the most sobering moments in Israel's history: the exile. It's a picture of what happens when people lose their point of reference and drift away from God; when they forget to love Him first and fail to love others well. But it's also a story of hope, pointing forward to a shepherd who would come to gather His people and lead them home.

Read Ezekiel 8:9-18

Throughout the Old Testament—from creation, to Abraham, the exodus, kings, and prophets—we see a repeating pattern. The people are faithful for a while, seeking to follow God and obey, but time and time again, they turn away from Him and lose their reference point.

The prophet Ezekiel is called to speak into this bleak setting, delivering a somber message to a divided nation that has wandered from God and the very relationship that sets them apart.

Ezekiel's vision is a confronting one: in the inner court of the temple—where the holiest worship should occur—the people had literally turned their backs on God. Their worship had shifted, their hearts had drifted, and they no longer honoured God as the one who brought them out of Egypt and gave them the land they called home. Failure to love God was their first failure.

1. Despite our best efforts and intentions, “we all, like sheep, have gone astray” (Isaiah 53:6). How does recognising this universal tendency help us approach others with humility rather than judgement?
2. God isn't insecure and doesn't need our worship to feel better about Himself. So why does the call to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength matter so much (Mark 12:30)?
3. Looking at the Old Testament stories we've studied so far in this series (Abraham, the Exodus generation, David, Solomon etc.), what common



factors do you notice in how people lose their focus on God as their unfailing point of reference?

Read Ezekiel 34:1-6

The people failed to honour God as their first love, and this serious failure is followed by another—their failure to love one another. The entire law can be summed up by these two commands: love God and love others (Matthew 22:37–39), but the people failed on both counts.

God’s message through Ezekiel condemns Israel’s leaders (the shepherds) who failed to care for the flock. They consumed the benefits of leadership while abandoning the vulnerable, weak, and lost. This lack of care pushed the most vulnerable to the fringes and ultimately was to the detriment of everyone. The whole community suffered because of it. Until, through the exile, God said, “Enough”.

1. Think about the spheres where you have influence (family, work, community, church etc.). In what ways are you called to “shepherd” or care for others?
2. How can we guard against consuming the benefits of our positions and neglecting the responsibility to care for those who depend on us?

Read Psalm 137:1-4

The Israelites sat by the rivers of Babylon and wept, unable to sing the Lord’s songs in a foreign land where they were captives. It’s a moment of deep pain and disorientation, but the exile is not a random political event; it’s God’s response to His people’s persistent rejection of His ways.

Their sin and rebellion couldn’t continue unchecked. So, like a driving instructor slamming the dual-control brake, God stepped in to bring judgement and justice. Yet, the exile was also an act of God’s mercy, an invitation to realign with His heart and a chance to know once again that “I, the Lord their God, am with them and that they, the Israelites, are my people, declares the Sovereign Lord” (Ezekiel 34:30-31).

1. Most of us have never experienced the kind of displacement described here in Psalm 137. How might reflecting on this help us pray and act with compassion for refugees and displaced people today?
2. The Israelites asked, “How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?” Have you ever felt spiritually displaced or unable to connect with God during difficult circumstances?



3. Even in exile, the Israelites preserved, and in many ways, used their time well (you may like to read the story of Daniel or Esther, or explore the number of Scriptures that were compiled during this period). How can you use difficult seasons as opportunities for spiritual growth and contribution to God's Kingdom?

Read Ezekiel 34:11-16

Even in the midst of judgement, there is hope. God promised to be the shepherd that the human leaders failed to be, and eventually the exiles did return home. Ezra and Nehemiah tell the story of their rebuilding efforts. But even back in the promised land, things were not the same. They were still under foreign rule, still paying taxes, still waiting for the fullness of God's promises.

That "in-between" feeling is something we can relate to today. Jesus is the good shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine to go after the one who is lost and bring them home (John 10:11). By His blood, we are brought into a new relationship with God. And yet, life still feels fractured. We still see injustice. We still feel the ache of a world that is not as it should be.

Paul captures this tension in Romans 8:22, saying that all of creation is groaning like it's in the pains of childbirth. God's Kingdom has begun but is not yet fulfilled. We live as people who are waiting for the day when everything will finally be made right.

1. How does God's promise to be the shepherd contrast with the failures of human shepherds described earlier in the chapter?
2. We live as people in between exile and home—still walking through brokenness but with assurance that our eternal home is certain. How do you experience this tension in your daily life?
3. In a world that is increasingly polarised, what pressures do you face to respond with hate rather than love? How can we help each other realign our hearts and our actions to "love God and love others" in all we do?

Optional Activity

Realignment with God is not a one-time event but a continual process. Each day brings new distractions and currents that can pull us away. The call is to pause, reorient, and fix our eyes on God, allowing Him to guide our steps.



Invite the group to spend a few moments in quiet prayer, asking God to show them where they might be out of alignment with His heart. Then, if they feel comfortable, allow members to share one way they want to realign with loving God and loving others this week. Pray together, asking God to strengthen your group to live out His call to love – even when it is costly.

For Further Study

Encourage each person to read **John 10** sometime during the week, reflecting on Jesus as the Good Shepherd. Suggest writing down one verse or phrase that stands out to them and using it as a prayer focus.

Suggested Closing Prayer

Gracious God, we realign ourselves with you today. Thank you for the great shepherd who seeks us, heals us, and brings us home. Help us to love you and love others, even those we find hard to love. We do this with your help, through Jesus, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. May this be our story—not just individually, but as a church community. May we be known as a people who love God wholeheartedly and love others courageously. And may we invite others into this grand story of hope, restoration, and homecoming. Amen.



Week 8: The Fulfilment in Christ - God's Promises Kept

Tim Spencer

21 September 2025

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

From the moment sin entered the world, God has been working to restore humanity to Himself. This week we celebrate Jesus as the fulfilment of God's redemptive plan, and explore what it means to live under His new covenant today.

Read Exodus 24:3-8

God established a covenant with His people, a set of rules for a safe and flourishing life, and at the foot of Mount Sinai the people worshipped and declared, "We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey." Yet, we only need to read a little further in The Story to see the law broken as the people turned away from God and chose wickedness.

The law acts as a mirror reflecting the holiness of God and the depth of human brokenness. It set boundaries and pointed to what is good, but it could not change the heart or heal the root of sin. Instead, the law exposed the reality that no amount of rule-keeping or striving could make us right with God.

Thankfully, the law was never meant to be the final answer, but a signpost pointing beyond itself—a gracious invitation to recognise our deep need for a Saviour.

1. Sin entered the world through disobedience and echoed down through the corridors of time. How do you see this pattern of choosing our own way over God's way continuing today?
2. Can you think of a moment when you realised that no amount of human effort was enough to "fix" yourself? How did this lead you to recognise your need for a Saviour?

Read Galatians 3:23-25 & Matthew 5:17-18

The law's true purpose is to lead us to Jesus, who alone can fulfill its requirements and offer us the righteousness we could never achieve on our own. Throughout history, God's people waited for the fulfillment of promises—covenants made with



Abraham, Moses, and David, prophecies spoken by the prophets, and the deep longing for redemption. Jesus did not come to erase these things, but to bring them to their intended completion.

Jesus embodies the faithfulness of God, living the perfect life we could not, dying the death we deserved, and rising to bring new life. The new covenant He brings is not based on our ability, but on the unearned gift of grace.

1. Paul describes the law as a *paidagōgós* (guardian/tutor). How does this analogy help you understand the role of the Old Testament law?
2. Life in the Spirit replaces life under the written code. How can you surrender to the Holy Spirit's leading, and take one practical step today toward living in the freedom He has given you?

Read Romans 6:1-2

The freedom Jesus offers is not a license to do whatever we want, but an invitation to a new way of life. The Spirit within us creates a growing incompatibility with sin, drawing us toward holiness and love. We are called to live as those who have died to sin and now walk in the light of Christ's victory.

Sanctification is a process, and we will stumble along the way. But the direction is clear: true freedom is found in surrender to Jesus. As we yield to the Spirit, our desires and actions begin to reflect the character of Christ, and we are set free to love, to serve, and to become who God created us to be.

1. Paul's question in Romans 6:1 addresses the idea of using grace as an excuse to sin. Why is this mindset incompatible with new life in Christ?
2. Are there areas where you've been tempted to use your freedom in Christ as an excuse for unhealthy choices? What would it look like to invite the Holy Spirit into those areas?

Our Hope is Not in "What" but in "Who"

The world is full of trouble. Violence, injustice, and darkness seem to have the upper hand. Yet our hope is not in human solutions, but in Jesus Christ, the Saviour who has overcome the world (John 16:33). Because He has defeated sin and death, we can live with confidence and hope, even in the midst of chaos. Because of the finished work of Christ, we can love as He loved and carry His light into a world still longing for redemption.



Discuss: When you feel overwhelmed by what's happening on the news or when facing your own struggles, what helps you remember that Jesus is your hope? Is there a practice or habit you could start to remind yourself of this truth?

Invite the group to break into pairs and pray. Ask God to anchor your hearts in the hope of Christ today.

For Further Study

- **Genesis 12:1–3** – God's promise to Abraham
- **Exodus 19:3–6** – God's covenant at Sinai
- **Jeremiah 31:31–34** – Promise of the new covenant
- **Matthew 5:17–20** – Jesus fulfils the law and prophets
- **Hebrews 8:6–13** – The old covenant made obsolete
- **Romans 8:1–4** – Life in the Spirit under the new covenant

Suggested Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, we stand in awe of your perfect plan of redemption. Thank you that when all of humanity was trapped in sin and death, you provided the solution in Jesus. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for your perfect life, and for taking our sin and death to the cross. Thank you that when you said 'It is finished,' it truly was finished. Teach us to live in the freedom of this new covenant and give us opportunities to share the hope that we have found. We pray this in the name of Jesus, our perfect Saviour and King. Amen.



Week 9: The Great Commission - A People Called by God to Reach the Nations

Simon Longden

28 September 2025

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

Before ascending to heaven, Jesus gave His disciples the Great Commission. It wasn't just a nice farewell or a comforting blessing, it was a charge—for them and for us—one that combines belief, obedience and trust in Jesus' ongoing presence.

This week we hear from guest speaker, Simon Longden, National Director of Pioneers Australia, as we explore what it really means to be a disciple, and how ordinary people, with doubts and all, can live out the mission of Jesus in the world.

Read Matthew 28:16-20

Verse 18: Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."

To call Jesus "Lord" is to recognise His authority, stretching from the beginning of creation (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1-3 & 14) to the end of time (Revelation 22:12-13). When Jesus commands us to make disciples, He does so as the One with the right to direct our lives.

Submitting to Christ's authority means letting His purposes shape our agendas, our priorities, and even our daily routines. We can easily fill our lives with important activities and good things, but we must be careful not to neglect the call to make disciples as we walk in step with Christ and share His hope with others.

1. What does it look like practically to submit your plans and desires to the One who holds all authority in heaven and on earth?
2. In what areas of your life do you find it hardest to do this?

Verse 19 & 20a: Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.



In the original Greek, the word “go” carries the sense of “*as you go*.” It’s not about waiting for the perfect moment or for someone to come to us. It’s about a lifestyle of disciple-making wherever we are. “Go” means stepping out—from the places where people already know Jesus to the places where He isn’t known yet. Sometimes that’s across an office, classroom or across the fence to a neighbour. Sometimes it’s across an ocean.

The heart of it is this: disciple-making happens in the everyday. At work, at school, in the mechanic’s shop, at home, on holidays, as you travel. Wherever you go, you carry Jesus with you. And, the most loving thing we can do for others is to introduce them to Him.

1. Think about your current relationships and circumstances. Where is God already positioning you to make disciples “as you go”?
2. In the church we’ve sometimes seen evangelism (winning people to Christ) and discipleship (helping believers grow) as two separate tasks. But Jesus’ command to “go and make disciples” doesn’t separate one from the other. It’s about journeying together towards faith *and* maturity in Christ. How does seeing evangelism and discipleship as one process shift your perspective?

Verse 17: When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.

Matthew’s gospel tells us that when the disciples saw the risen Jesus, they worshipped Him—*but some doubted*. Even in that moment of glory, standing face to face with the resurrected Lord, doubt was still present.

What’s striking is Jesus’ response. He doesn’t divide the confident from the doubters and send only the strong ones out. He calls all of them to the mission, even those with doubts. Obedience in the face of doubt is where faith grows deepest. God delights to use ordinary people who are willing to trust Him enough to act, even when they feel unqualified. If you feel inadequate or unsure, remember that you are in good company, and that God’s call is for you.

1. Do you ever feel like doubt holds you back in following Jesus? What would it look like to step forward in obedience anyway?
2. Simon spoke of three dimensions of belief as we read the Bible and follow Jesus’ call: cognitive (what we know), emotional (how it moves us), and evaluative (how we respond). Which of these three dimensions comes most naturally to you—head, heart or hands? Which one do you find most challenging, and why?

Verse 20b: And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.



The task of making disciples can feel overwhelming, especially in a world that is often resistant or indifferent to the gospel. Yet Jesus promises, “I am with you always.” This is not just a comforting thought, but the very foundation of our mission. We do not go alone; Christ Himself goes with us, empowering, comforting, and sustaining us every step of the way.

His presence is what enables us to persevere when we feel weak, to speak when we feel afraid, and to love when it is difficult. No matter how dark or uncertain the path may seem, Jesus’ face is turned toward us. As you step out in obedience this week, rest in the assurance that you are never alone—His abiding presence is your strength.

1. What specific fears or obstacles prevent you from being more intentional about making disciples? How might Jesus’ promise “I am with you always” speak to those fears?
2. Simon used the story of the little boy asking if his father’s face was turned toward him in the dark. How does knowing that Jesus’ “face is turned your way” change your perspective on the challenges of discipleship?

Closing Activity

Take a few minutes for silent reflection, then share one specific way you sense God calling you to respond to this message. This might be:

- Praying for opportunities to share Christ in your current contexts
- Taking a step of faith to “go” where Jesus is not yet known
- Committing to more consistent Bible reading with your head, heart and hands (cognitive, emotional and evaluative response)

Consider together:

- How can your small group become more intentional about making disciples?
- How can you encourage and support each other in this calling?

Pray for:

- **Submission** - That you would live more fully under Christ’s lordship
- **Nations** - Specific unreached people groups and cross-cultural workers. (Your group might like to sign up to receive the monthly Global Email with prayer requests from our NewHope Partners ministering around the world. See newhope.net.au/global to find out more.)
- **Obedience** - Courage to act on what God has shown you through His word
- **Presence** - Awareness of Jesus’ constant companionship in the mission



- **Opportunities** - Open doors and receptive hearts in your spheres of influence

Suggested Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you for the call to go and make disciples, and for the promise that you are always with us. Give us courage to trust you, wisdom to walk with others, and faithfulness to live under your authority and call. May we see your Kingdom grow. In your precious name we pray, Amen.



Week 10: Jesus - Our High Priest & Perfect Atonement

Sally Agostino

5 October 2025

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

When we think about the story of salvation, it's easy to centre our focus on the cross. The image of Jesus as the Lamb who was slain is deeply familiar and moving. But the process of atonement is much bigger and more beautiful than we often imagine. It's not just about sacrifice or death—it's about restoration, relationship, and a God who takes on every part of the process to bring His people back to Himself.

This week we reflect on Jesus' role in the story of atonement—from sacrifice to intercession—and consider the fullness of what Christ accomplished for us.

Read Leviticus 16:1-19 and 17:11

Once a year, on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), the high priest would enter the Most Holy Place and offer the blood of an animal for the sins of the people. The Old Testament sacrificial system was a way of acknowledging guilt and seeking forgiveness, but at its heart, it was a profound picture of God's deep desire to restore relationship with His people.

Each offering was a tangible sign that the barrier between God and humanity could be mended. The sacrificial system allowed God's people to come close to Him despite their brokenness, but it was never meant to be the final word. The ritual points forward to a greater time to come, when the perfect and final atonement would be made.

1. What comes to mind when you think of the word *atonement*?
2. What stands out to you as you read about the Old Testament sacrificial system in Leviticus?

Read Hebrews 9:11-14 and 9:24-28

In the old covenant, the process of atonement involved many different parts—the animal, the blood, the priest, and the holy place. Each element played a role in



repairing what was broken between humanity and God. But in Jesus, *all of these are brought together*.

He is the Lamb who was slain, the High Priest who offers the sacrifice, and the One who enters God's presence on our behalf. He didn't just perform part of the process, He *is* the process start to finish. He is the whole atonement story. Our forgiveness and reconciliation with God are completely His work, not ours.

Charles Spurgeon famously said, "Human nature's way to salvation is *do, do, do*. But God's way of salvation is *done, done, it is all done*."

Human instinct often tells us we must do more, try harder, or prove ourselves to be accepted, but the message of atonement is that everything necessary for your salvation has already been accomplished. Instead of trying to add to Christ's finished work, you are invited to receive the gift of grace with gratitude and humility, and rest in the sufficiency of Jesus.

He has done it all—"once for all by His own blood." (Hebrews 9:12)

1. What strikes you about the idea that Jesus fulfils every role in the atonement story? What does this say about the completeness of what Christ has done for us?
2. Is there an area of your life where you are still trying to "earn" God's favor or acceptance? How can you surrender that striving and trust that Jesus has already fulfilled every requirement for you?

Read Hebrews 4:14-16 and 7:24-25

After His death and resurrection, Jesus ascended to heaven and now serves as our advocate—continually interceding for us before the Father.

Christ's role didn't end at the cross or the empty tomb. He continues His priestly work, bringing our prayers, needs, and weaknesses before God with the compassion and understanding of one who knows what it is to face temptation and the pains of this world.

Our Saviour doesn't just forgive us once and move on; He walks with us every day, advocating, strengthening, and reminding us that grace still flows freely. Jesus is always at work on our behalf.

1. What does it mean to you that Jesus "interceded" on your behalf?



2. When you feel unworthy or anxious about your standing with God, how might remembering Jesus' ongoing intercession change the way you approach Him in prayer today?

Closing Activity - Communion Together

Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

"For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."

These words hold an amazing promise. The story of atonement isn't over. It began in Eden, it was fulfilled at the cross, and it will reach its completion when Jesus returns to make all things new.

So as we live in this in-between time—between *"it is finished"* and *"until He comes"*—we do so with true purpose and deep hope, proclaiming: come, Lord Jesus, come!

1. How does living "until He comes" give purpose to your faith and discipleship today? How can this truth help us live with peace and confidence in a troubled world?

If your group setting allows, you may like to close the session by sharing communion together.

Suggested Closing Prayer

You might like to close with this prayer (adapted from the sermon's conclusion):

Lord Jesus,
Your death we commemorate,
Your resurrection we confess,
Your presentation to the Father fills us with deep thanks.
Your final coming we await.
Glory be to You, O Christ —
our sacrifice, our high priest, our advocate, our King.
Amen.



Week 11: The Holy Spirit – Knowing and Experiencing God

Adam Southwood

12 October 2025

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

Who is the Holy Spirit to you? Do you know Him as the living, active presence of God at work in you, or is He more like a familiar stranger?

This week we reflect on the third person of the Trinity and the call to move beyond simply knowing about the Spirit, to living in daily relationship with Him and making space for a fresh outpouring of His presence in our lives and community.

Read John 14:16-17 and 16:7

Before His crucifixion, Jesus promised to send “another Advocate” to be with His followers forever. The word “another” here means “just like the first.” Those who have said yes to Jesus are given the gift of another who is just like him—the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit is not an optional extra or a spiritual add-on. He's the ongoing presence of Jesus in our lives. Many people grow up hearing about the Spirit, yet struggle to see Him as more than a mysterious force or a theological concept. But The Holy Spirit is a real person who desires relationship with us—an advocate, a helper, a comforter, a counsellor. A friend to be known.

1. Who is the Holy Spirit to you? A familiar stranger; a fragile heirloom meant to be admired but untouched; a complex theological concept; or a close friend?
2. How would you have answered this true/false statement before today's sermon: “*The Holy Spirit is a force, not a person*”? Have there been times when you've related to the Holy Spirit more as an idea than as a person?
3. Have you ever wished you were around when Jesus was on earth and feel like you've missed out? How does understanding the Spirit as “just like the first” change your perspective?

Read Acts 2:1-4 and 4:18-31

Sometimes it's easy to think that the Holy Spirit works most powerfully through the “spiritually elite” who seem to have it all together. But Jesus poured out His Spirit on



all who believe. There's no bench in God's kingdom—everyone is on the field. You're already part of God's mission team and invited to participate in the Spirit's work in your family, in your neighbourhood, in your everyday life.

The Spirit moves powerfully among believers who are willing to pray bold prayers. The disciples in Acts 4 weren't asking for safety or comfort, or even for the threats to stop. They prayed for a deeper courage to follow Jesus no matter what came their way. And God's response was a fresh outpouring of His Spirit.

That's where the simple prayer "Come, Holy Spirit" takes on deep meaning. It's not a plea for the Spirit to arrive from somewhere distant—because if you've placed your faith in Jesus, the Spirit already lives in you. Instead, it's a way of saying, "I'm here. I'm open. Do what you want to do." Being filled with the Spirit is a rhythm we live in as we walk in His presence each day.

1. Do you ever feel like you're sitting on the sidelines spiritually? How might God be inviting you to recognise that you're already "in the game"?
2. What would it look like to pray for a fresh move of the Holy Spirit in our homes, neighbourhoods, church and lives? How might God be calling you to step out in faith and boldness as part of that?
3. How might your life look different if you made space each day to pray, "Come, Holy Spirit"?

Getting to know the Holy Spirit

John 14:16-17: The Holy Spirit is our *Paraclete*. Often translated as Advocate, but this word could also be translated as Comforter or Helper.

Romans 8:26-27: The Holy Spirit intercedes for us and helps to align our prayers to God's will.

John 14:26: The Holy Spirit reminds and teaches us, coming alongside us to bring to mind what Jesus has said.

John 16:7-8: The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, righteousness and judgment, leading us into truth and alignment with God's will.

Acts 1:8: The Holy Spirit empowers and equips us with spiritual gifts for the building up of the church.



Galatians 5:16-25: The Holy Spirit produces the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control as we remain in step with Him.

And all of this is only possible because the Holy Spirit lives in us. The Spirit is the mark of belonging to Christ—an incredible gift that we freely receive when we confess Him as our Lord and Saviour.

1. In what areas of your life might you need to be reminded of the Spirit's presence and help right now?
2. What is one practical step you could take this week to grow in your relationship with the Holy Spirit? (For example, starting a simple conversation with Him in prayer, or slowly reading through Acts 2-4 or other passages about the Spirit's work throughout Scripture.)

Closing Activity (Optional)

You might like to close in a time of worship by singing or quietly reflecting on a chosen song such as:

- *Holy Spirit (You Are Welcome Here)* – Francesca Battistelli
- *Spirit Break Out* – Kim Walker-Smith
- *Fresh Wind* – Hillsong Worship

Suggested Closing Prayer

God's invitation is the same for all of us: *open the gift again*. Pray for boldness. Seek a fresh outpouring. Whether it's your first time consciously speaking to the Holy Spirit, or you've been walking with Him for decades, there's always more of God to experience. There's always a deeper level of courage, love, and presence available.

Let's pray:

"Holy Spirit, we thank you that you are good. We thank you that you move among us. We thank you that if we have declared with our mouths that Jesus Christ is Lord, we have received the gift of the Spirit forever. Come, Holy Spirit. Move in this place. Fill us afresh. Empower us for your mission, in the name of Jesus. Amen."



Week 12: The Return of Christ – The Completion of God’s Plan Lance Blythe

19 October 2025

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

Today we come to the twelfth and final week of our series The Story with a full circle conclusion. Our journey has taken us from the garden of Eden to the city of God, from the first tree of life to its final, healing renewal. God’s redemptive pursuit of humanity culminates with a profound and transformative vision—a vision not just for the future, but for today. The ending of The Story is not a distant dream, but a living hope—one that gives meaning, direction, and purpose to how we live now.

Read Revelation 21:22-27

In the final vision of Revelation, the new Jerusalem has no temple. God’s presence fills the entire city and there is no longer any need for walls, rituals, or intermediaries—God is fully with His people. This is a radical departure from the way people have related to God throughout history, where sacred spaces and systems mediated the divine. The promise is that one day, nothing will stand between us and God; we will know Him face-to-face, with no barriers of shame, fear, or distance. This image captures the ultimate purpose of God’s story: complete reconciliation.

Even now, our walk with God is a foretaste of that full and perfect unity. Every moment we live aware and engaged with God’s presence, every prayer, every act of love, every move of the Spirit in and through us, is a glimpse of that future city and the completeness that is to come.

1. How does knowing the end of God’s story give you hope for today? What might it look like to live each day in light of this vision of renewal?
2. The biblical picture of eternity is not one of floating on clouds in passive existence. Instead, the vision is of a city where there is vibrant, purposeful activity and joyful work. How does this reframe your understanding of heaven? Does this make you think differently about your work now?

Read Revelation 22:1-2

The Bible begins and ends with a tree. The tree of life that humanity was once barred from in Genesis now stands freely accessible again. It’s an image of



flourishing, but it is also a vision of fulfillment. Its leaves are for the healing of the nations, signaling a future where every wound—personal, communal, and global—is tended to by God’s grace. This is not just about healing from physical pain, but about the reconciliation of peoples, the mending of divisions, and the undoing of the curse that has fractured humanity since the beginning.

We live in a time marked by conflict, injustice, and division. But the vision of Revelation offers a counter-story: a future where every tribe and tongue are gathered together in unity and peace under the reign of Christ. This is the future toward which The Story of Scripture points. But it’s also a calling for the Church today. As followers of Jesus, we are invited to be people of healing who seek wholeness not just for ourselves, but for our communities, our neighbours, and even those we might consider enemies. We are called to participate in God’s work of reconciliation here and now.

1. Where in your life or community do you see a need for healing and reconciliation? How might you participate in God’s work of restoring what is broken?

Read 1 Peter 2:4-5

Too often, believers think of heaven as a faraway place we escape to after death. But in Scripture, heaven is not so much “up there” as it is *breaking in here*. Through Jesus, the kingdom of God has already begun to take root in the world, and the Spirit is at work now, bringing glimpses of that final renewal into our everyday lives.

We are called “living stones,” part of the spiritual house God is building. This means the Church is called to live as a preview of the new creation: loving God, loving others, and being agents of reconciliation in a divided world. But this kind of living isn’t always easy.

To live differently in a world filled with shifting ideas and cultural tides, we must have a fixed point of reference—Jesus. Everything else (opinions, fears, politics, arguments) moves with the current. But Jesus, crucified and risen, is unchanging truth and love. We must fix our eyes on Him through all seasons—the God who lived among us, suffered for us, and calls us to follow Him.

1. What does it mean to you to be a “living stone” in God’s story?
2. How can your group or our church community reflect this “preview of heaven” more deeply?



3. What are some “drifting tides” in your world that pull your attention away from Jesus? And how can you anchor your life more firmly in Him day by day?

Closing Activity (Optional)

Invite group members to share if comfortable:

“What part of this vision from Revelation most encourages or challenges you?”

“What’s one way you can live differently this week in light of that vision?”

Encourage the group to pray for one another—that each person would experience a deeper awareness of God’s presence and live as a sign of His coming kingdom.

Suggested Closing Prayer

Gracious God, Thank you for the hope of this vision—a world made whole, a city filled with light, a tree that heals every wound. Help us to anchor our hearts in Jesus, our true reference point, and live now as people shaped by heaven. Loving you, loving others, and bringing your peace wherever we go. May our lives be a glimpse of your eternal story. In Jesus’ name, Amen.