



# **FIRM FOUNDATIONS. FRESH FAITH.**

## **Sermon Study Guide**

### **Week 1: Vision Sunday**

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NewHope is a church built on firm foundations and filled with fresh faith.

Our stories matter. Our foundations matter. And on Vision Sunday, we paused to remember the story we belong to and the firm foundation of Jesus Christ that we build upon.

God has been faithfully at work through His Spirit for centuries, and He continues to be at work today. As the church steps into a new season, it does so with fresh faith—grounded in the past, responsive to the present, and filled with confidence for what's ahead.

**Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-11 and Acts 2:42-47**

Jesus Christ is our firm foundation. Anything not built on Him will ultimately fail, and the early church gives us a clear picture of what that foundation looks like in action. In Acts, Luke describes the DNA of the first Christian community: devotion to teaching, fellowship, prayer, generosity, worship and mission. These were not temporary practices or optional activities; they are the rhythms and disciplines that have shaped and sustained the church for 2,000 years, and these same practices have shaped NewHope.

Our church has been built by committed people who gave their lives to seeing the gospel proclaimed in Blackburn North and beyond—people whose faithfulness laid firm foundations for future generations. NewHope's history is marked by courage, creativity and a deep desire to see people come to know Jesus.



Yet history, as valuable as it is, cannot become a resting place. To quote our very own Max Myers, *“We dare not ride into tomorrow on yesterday’s wheels.”*

God is always doing a new work—not by abandoning the past, but by building on it.

1. What stories—personal or communal—have shaped your faith journey? And why do you think remembering our story is so important?
2. Looking at Acts 2:42-47, which practices of the early church do you find most life-giving? Which feel most challenging?

### Read Joshua 1:6-9 and Judges 2:10-11

The message of the gospel never changes, but the context in which it is shared does. Just as bikes have changed dramatically over the decades, so too must the church continue to adapt its methods while remaining anchored in timeless truth.

Fresh faith is not only about methods, it is also about the condition of our hearts. Faith can leak over time. Distraction, discouragement and fear can quietly erode joy, confidence and boldness. Scripture reminds us how easily this can happen. In Judges 2, a new generation grew up who neither knew the Lord nor remembered what He had done. Distraction led to forgetfulness, and forgetfulness led to disobedience.

Discouragement can be just as damaging. Fear is the opposite of faith, and it can stop people from stepping into what God is calling them to. Yet God’s words to Joshua still echo today: *“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go”* (Joshua 1:9).

Importantly, doubt is not the enemy of faith. Often, the path to a deeper, more resilient faith leads straight through doubt, and wrestling with questions can strengthen belief.

1. Have distraction or discouragement caused your faith to leak? What might help restore joy and confidence?
2. Does thinking about doubt and wrestling as a path to deeper faith encourage or challenge you? Why?



## A Vision for the Year Ahead

Firm Foundations. Fresh Faith. NewHope's vision for the year focuses on being a church that is firmly grounded and continually renewed—rooted in history, yet alive with expectancy.

Through prayer, discernment and listening to God together, three clear priorities emerged for the coming year.

### **1. Seeking God's Presence in Prayer and Worship**

Read Matthew 7:7-8

Prayer has always undergirded the life of the church. From the early believers to today, renewal and revival have always begun with people seeking God's presence.

To foster fresh faith, NewHope will intentionally deepen its culture of prayer and worship through several key initiatives:

- A churchwide 21-day season of prayer and fasting.
- Four all-in prayer and worship gatherings across the year.
- A renewed emphasis on praying for one another, both in services and throughout midweek ministries—because prayer is not reserved for experts. Everyone gets to play.

### **2. Sharing the Good News of Jesus with Everyone Everywhere**

Read Matthew 9:35-38

There is a growing spiritual hunger in today's world as many search for something deeper. This presents an extraordinary opportunity for the church to speak with confidence, humility and love.

The gospel is good news—for everyone, everywhere. To support this, NewHope will focus on:

- Invitational Sundays, encouraging people to invite friends, family and colleagues to church.
- A focus on Alpha, including the exciting development of *"Alpha in the wild"* courses hosted in homes, cafes, workplaces and community spaces.
- A future teaching series on Encounters with Jesus, sharing stories of lives transformed by Christ.



### 3. Serving the Next Generation While Celebrating the Past

Read Psalm 145:4

NewHope is deeply committed to raising and resourcing the next generation, while also honouring the faithfulness of those who came before. This focus will be expressed through:

- Leadership development gatherings, strengthening pathways for people of all ages to grow as leaders.
- Celebrating 20 years of the Chinese congregation, partnering together as generations and cultures shape the future of the church.
- A significant 75th anniversary celebration, marking God's faithfulness and telling stories that inspire the next generation to step forward in faith.

### Prayer & Response

The invitation is clear: it is time to get on the bike and move forward.

Invite group members to share one area where they are asking God for fresh faith. You may choose to:

- Pray for one another in pairs or as a whole group
- Sit in a short moment of silence, inviting God to speak
- Use this simple prayer together:

*God, thank You for the firm foundation we have in Jesus.  
Where our faith has leaked, restore us.  
Where we feel afraid or discouraged, give us courage.  
Fill us with fresh faith for this season.  
Set us apart and help us to live out the good news of Jesus.  
Amen.*