

HOPE

Part 5

54 - Ephesians: Rise Up & Walk
Church on the Park Live | Sunday, 3 May 2020

Text: Ephesians 5:15-21; Romans 15:13

Theme: The nature of hope is to overflow, causing the Kingdom to expand through you.

Intro: For the last few weeks, we've been focusing on hope. I've been especially emphasising how you can personally walk in hope by hearing, obeying and prospering. But now it's time to take new territory by stressing how you can overflow with hope. Hope's very nature is to overflow. In other words, if you have hope, you share it. Hope expands—it causes God's Kingdom to grow within you and through you. In our opening verses, we see that being filled with God's Spirit moves us to speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. The Spirit overflows through us with singing, making music and giving thanks. The 'E' in our hope acronym stands for expand.

EXPAND

1) Excavate the dirt of the discouragement, intimidation, rejection and temptation (Gen. 26:15-19).

- Let's go back to **Isaac** in **Gerar** (Gen. 26:15-19)
 - Isaac **sowed** in a place of **famine** and **reaped** a hundredfold.
 - Now, he has become **very great** and the Philistines around him are **intimidated**.
 - And since they **are intimidated**, they try **to intimidate Isaac**.
 - So Isaac **moves**—but he doesn't just move, he takes back his father's inheritance—he **re-digs the wells** his father, Abraham, has dug.
- This **prophetically** speaks to us because each one of us is **called to be a well, a deep well**.
 - As a deep well, Jesus wants the **Spirit of God flowing** through our lives.
 - Wherever this water flows, **there is life—genuine, God-life**.
 - In Genesis 26:19, it says “Isaac's servants dug **in the valley** and found there a well of flowing water.”
 - First, if you find yourself in a **valley, start digging**.
 - Don't stop digging until the Spirit of God is **profusely flowing** through your life.
 - Second, take note that they dug **'a well of flowing water.'**
 - Literally, in the Hebrew it is מַיִם חַיִּים (**ma'yim chay'yim**).
 - What's *ma'yim chay'yim*?
 - It's **LIVING WATERS**
- This is what we are **digging for: the LIVING WATERS OF GOD'S SPIRIT**.
 - Jesus said, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his **innermost being will flow rivers of living water**’” (John 7:37-38).
 - Then, John goes on to say that the waters speak of the **Spirit** (v. 39).
 - The **Holy Spirit** is your **inheritance**.
 - He is **God's peace/shalom, joy, hope, faith and love** inside you.
 - However, the **enemy** is so **jealous** of you, he will try to **stop up** your well with **dirt**.
 - He will block your well with things like **discouragement, intimidation, rejection and temptation**.
 - Notice how **God charges Joshua** when he is calling him to expand God's Kingdom.
 - Joshua 1 - he says **'Be strong and courageous** and obedient...and don't let discouragement, intimidation and temptation get to you.
 - Be like Isaac: dig out the dirt and **remove the soil of sin, offence, insecurities and lust**.

2) X-out every motivation except love (1 Cor. 13:13).

- We are called to **expand** God's Kingdom, but there are **two motivations** with regards to expanding:
 - 1) **Greed** - Yes, churches can be **greedy with growing** bigger
 - 2) **Love** - This is **God's love**. The reason you want to **prosper and expand is because you long** to see people **set free** and living in the **joy and power** of the Kingdom.
- Luke 12:16-21- **The Parable of the Rich Productive Man**
 - We can be like the **rich man operating** out of **greed** and be like **Paul**, who longed to see **God's Kingdom expand** out of love (***2 Cor. 10:15**)
 - **Faith, Hope and Love** are a **three strand cord** (1 Cor. 13:13).
 - **Remove one strand** and the **others** lose their **strength**.
 - Faith, hope and love **belong together**—and **love** its the **goal of authentic faith and hope**.

3) Pray like Jabez (1 Chron. 4:9-10).

- On 27 Feb 2020, before the Coronavirus broke out in Australia, the Holy Spirit said to me, **"Have you forgotten the prayer of Jabez?"**
- In Hebrew **Jabez's name** is **YaBETZ** יַבֵּץ
 - It means **pain, agony, grief and sorrow**. His mother named him pain because she bore him in pain. Or we can say his name is '**agony**.' *Imagine having that name?*
- *So what did he do?*
 - He didn't allow his **past identity** to affect his **future destiny**.
 - "And Ya'betz cried to the God of Israel saying, "O that you would **completely and totally bless me**, and **increase my territory**; cause your hand to be with me and keep evil from painning me. And God brought him that which he asked." (1 Chron. 4:10, my translation)
 - Jabez's prayer may sound **selfish**, but it **wasn't**.
 - If you listen carefully it **sounds like the Lord's prayer**.
 - "...Your Kingdom come; your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our sin as we forgive those who sin against us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one" (Matt. 6:9-13).
 - The other thing I want to draw out is that the **same word in Hebrew** is used in **Jeremiah 29:11** and **1 Chronicles 4:10** for evil/bad/misfortune/hurt.
 - Yes, we may go through **bad things**, but that is not what the **Father has planned** for us.

4) Ask Jesus for living water (John 4:10, 13-14)

- "So Jesus, being **wearied** from His journey, was sitting thus by the **well**..." (John 4:6).
- **Jesus well is never stopped up with dirt**.
 - It is **always available** to those who **ask**.
- When you drink from his well, you are **truly satisfied and life** comes into **every area** of your **mind, will and emotions**.
 - You also then become **a well of living water springing up** and **giving people eternal life**.
- You **expand God's Kingdom** by **leading people to Jesus** and **making disciples**.
 - Notice, though, that the woman is not instantly converted—it took some **time** and **conversation**.
 - But as **she drank in Jesus' words**, she **led** others to **his well**.

5) Never put God or people in a box (Gen. 26:26-33)

- "When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, He makes **even his enemies** to be at peace with him" (Proverbs 16:7).
- Take away **limitations** from God.
- In the beginning of Isaac's story **Abimelech and the people fight**, and seem to **hate** Isaac, because of God's blessing on his life.
 - But that's **not the whole story**.
 - God turns Abimelech's heart around.
- Abimelech makes peace with Isaac.
 - But their past was **troubled**—Abimelech kicked Isaac out of his territory.
- **Forgive, forgive, forgive.**

- People who have **hurt you in the past** may become some of **your closest allies**.
- Isaac and Abimelech make a **covenant** together.
- **Unforgiveness** is like **dirt** that blocks up the well inside you.

6) Dig your own well but also value the wells of others (Gen. 26:18-25).

- In the beginning of our salvation we **rely** on the **wells** of others.
- But then, as you mature, you become **strong enough to dig your own well**.
- This is what **discipleship** is: you are teaching someone to dig their own well.
- This is why I've been teaching you about **journaling** recently.
 - I'm trying to get you to dig your own well.
- **Dig** your own well, but also **value** the well of others.
 - The **church** is called to be a **community of wells**.
 - When we all bring our wells together, and draw out of them for others, it turns into a **mighty river**.
- Right now, we cannot **miss this opportunity** to dig our own wells in your **lives** and our **homes**.
 - Then, when we **come together again**, there will be a **great bursting forth of revival**.

Conclusion: All of these points, spell EXPAND. Excavate, X-out, Pray, Ask, Never and Dig. As we do them, living waters will flow from our lives.