**Table Talk**

**Sermon Series: Alive—Dawn of a New Day**

**New Hope** **4-4-2021**

**Introduction (5 minutes):**

Table Talk Groups (45-minute study) begin by watching the video and sharing the story below, then open up the discussion with the questions provided.

Southside Home (35-minute study) can skip to “Starting the Discussion” as a follow up to the worship experience.

**Table Talk Video: Alive – New Hope:**

I’m sorry. Sometimes, those are two of the hardest words to say. Other times, they just aren’t enough. Has there been a time when your failure was so great you thought there is no way to make it right? Have you ever felt the weight of your failure so much so that you began to lose hope things could ever change?

I wonder if that’s how Judas felt as Jesus was dragged away by the guards, taken to Pilate and condemned to death. He had sold out the Son of man for 30 pieces of silver. Judas. The pious one who spoke out against extravagant waste. He had delivered Jesus into the hands of haters so that they could kill him. He knew he had sinned. He knew he had betrayed innocent blood. I’m certain Judas felt the weight of his failure so much so it broke him. Judas failed Jesus; Jesus knew Judas failed.

I also wonder if that’s how Peter felt as Jesus laid in the tomb. Peter had denied knowing Jesus. He even cursed about it to the young girl who recognized him as he stood by the fire. Peter. The one with the fight-or-die attitude and the bold proclamations of an undying allegiance. I’m certain Peter felt the weight of his failure so much so it broke him. Peter failed Jesus; Jesus knew Peter failed.

I’ve often wondered what made the difference between these two. We learn from Scripture Judas commits suicide over his failure, but Peter is restored and goes on to commit his life to serving God and others. I admit I don’t have all the answers as to why these men had different outcomes, but I would like to present this question for us to consider: Could it be the difference rests in where they placed their hope?

I’ve experienced times of great failure. I’ve failed as a wife, a mother, an employee, a volunteer. I’ve failed in my relationships. I’ve failed Jesus. In spite of all my failures, there is one thing that gets me out of bed every morning, and that is hope. Please don’t misunderstand me. My hope is not a virtue of positive thinking, it is a living hope found in the grace of Jesus, who died in my place, was buried for my sin, and who rose again so that I could be forgiven and placed in a good relationship with God.

I have new life in Jesus and he gives me hope which transcends any circumstance. This hope is bigger than any problem, or failure I may face. This hope is even bigger than death. My hope rests in Jesus, who forgives every sin and gives eternal life.

I can face my failures, say I’m sorry, and ask for forgiveness because my hope is not a ‘hope so’ hope. My hope is the anticipation and assurance of a future reality.

Judas didn’t have this hope. He doubted Jesus was Messiah. He didn’t trust in God’s grace. He didn’t believe Jesus could or even would forgive. On the other hand, Peter had this living hope. Peter believed. “You are the Christ, the son of the living God.” Peter trusted in the mercy and grace of God. He had faith in some sort of reconciliation with Jesus, even if he didn’t quite know how it would come about. The difference between Judas and Peter is the same difference we see in lives today. The difference is whether or not you have hope in Jesus, or hopelessness without him. --Carla Pollard

**Prayer (1 minute)**

Dear Father, as we look deeper into this matter of hope, and we learn about your power and promises of grace and mercy, help us to know hope in a way that always brings us to Jesus when we fail and helps us to cling to your promises no matter what the circumstances may look like. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

**Starting the Discussion (2-5 minutes)**

1. How do you think biblical faith and hope are alike?

**Unfolding the Biblical Story (28 minutes)**

**Invite someone to read Luke 22:31-34, 22:56-62 and 1 Peter 1:3.**

2. Why do you think Jesus chose to pray for Peter the way he did?

3. What do you think Jesus wanted Peter to have faith about?

4. Describe some spiritual truths we can take away from Peter’s greatest failure?

**Read Lamentations 3:22-23, Matthew 12:31-32, 27:3-5, Hebrews 11:1 and Romans 15:13.**

5. What can we learn about God’s mercy and forgiveness from these passages?

6. Do you think Judas could have had a different outcome? Why? Why not?

7. From these passages can you describe how faith and hope are tied together in the believer’s experience?

**Prayer (2 minutes)**

Dear Father, impart to us your grace and mercy so that we may experience this living hope which leads us to forgiveness, freedom, transformation, and a committed life of service to you and others. In Jesus’ name, amen.

**Wrapping Up (2 minutes)**

See if anyone has any other questions or insights. Then summarize the group discussion as a reminder of what you learned together.

**Scripture Challenge (1-2 minutes)**

This week try to memorize 1 Peter 1:3. Take a few minutes to practice/repeat these together as a group. Find a way to make it matter! Keep the words of Jesus before you this week as you share His message with others.