

Welcome to the final week of our Easter series, *Reflections*! We hope that your group has had meaningful conversations as we have wrestled with our past and present over the last two weeks. This week we will be talking about the hope that God gives us through the death and resurrection of Jesus. *Remember, the Sermon Companion questions have been crafted to suit a wide variety of groups. Please read through them in advance and choose the questions that will most support and challenge your group!*

WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO KNOW?

Cal referenced 1 Peter 1:3 in his message. Allowing your group to read the context of this passage (1 Peter 1:3-9) will help them to get a better understanding of what Peter means when he talks about the “living hope” we have in the resurrection of Jesus. Use the questions and passage in this section to help your group to understand one of Cal’s main ideas from the message: *“Hope is not positive thinking about what I can do; it is passionate faith in what God can do.”*

If your group has several seekers or new believers, you may want to focus on the question: *How is the hope we have in Jesus different than the typical understanding of “hope” in our culture? Seekers and new believers can provide a fresh perspective for your group when making this comparison.*

WHAT IS MY INITIAL REACTION?

If your group has many mature believers, it may be wise to discuss the first question in this section: *Is it easy for you to accept the hope that God offers through Jesus? Explain your answer.* Do the members of your group ever feel like they have to earn their relationship with God, rather than simply accepting it? When we have been in the faith for a long time, it can be easy to trust in our ability to “do the right things” rather than trusting in God’s love and saving power.

Colossians 2:13-14 can provide a nice way for you to help your group integrate the conversations from the last two weeks. **One of the reasons we have hope for the future is because we know that Jesus has cancelled the debts of our past failures and present shortcomings.** When we look to ourselves to feel justified and forgiven, we are often left with a sense of discouragement. When we look to Jesus, we are reminded that he really has taken care of all the things that stand in the way of our relationship with God.

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?

Ephesians 2:1-9 may feel like a reiteration of some of the previous passages, but read it as a group anyway. There are many elements to the passage that God may use to encourage members of your group. **So often we live our daily lives as if the resurrection didn’t happen.** Don’t let your group end without wrestling with this concept.

