

Discussion Guide

"Things are not what they seem."

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:13

Read and reflect on the two statements, one from scripture and one from the poem, connecting the two together.

As a reminder. Do not try and cover all the questions in the guide. Pick out the ones that you feel will generate the most helpful discussion for your group. If you can cover all of them in 1.5 hours, go ahead. Once you hit 1.5 hours, wrap it up or take one last question asking the group which one do they need to discuss the most.

1. Early in the message Pastor Richard made this statement: "Some people wait for their circumstances to bring them hope; other people bring hope to their circumstances." Of the two types of people, which are you more like? Have you always been that way or have you changed over time?
2. Share a time when you crashed due to one of the three hope killers: Fatigue, isolation, and fear/worry. Of the three which one tends to kill your hope more frequently?
3. Share a time when things did not look hopeful but later you discovered that things are not always the way they seem.
4. What hope does the life of Elijah give you?
5. Have you ever noticed that during the entire ministry of Elijah he largely carried out his ministry alone until after his meltdown. After that he ministered with Elijah and his band of prophets. What do you make of that? What role does isolation play in destroying people's hope or outlook on life? How have you seen it played out during the pandemic? How have you seen it played out in your life?
6. Comment on the following statement: "The Good news is, hope can exist right alongside of fear. The bad news is hope only exists alongside of fear." Share a time when hope and fear coexisted. Does the above statement offer you any comfort?
7. What are the benefits of being in a small group or having a group of friends in your life?
Consider sharing your story of the benefits you've experienced from being in a small group or having a small group of friends in your life on a Sunday in order to encourage others to get into a small group or at least surround themselves with friends so they don't experience a crisis of hope like Elijah did.

8. Pastor Richard shared several ways he has seen God redeeming the pandemic. Share ways you have seen God use the pandemic to bring about something good.
9. What actions can we take to rebuild hope in our lives in those times when hope is lacking and no reason for hope presents itself.