Hope for a world that’s in a bad way – the challenge

The world is dark. Young people face pain, neglect and abuse. Hopelessness is everywhere: in families, communities, cities and entire nations.

Nevertheless, as followers of Jesus, we should be filled with his hope.

May the God of hope fill you … so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13, NIV).

David a life filled with HOPE

From shepherd boy to ageing king, David in the Bible has more adventures recorded of his life, than other Old Testament characters. Yet in all the trials and challenges he holds on; he never lets go of his hope in God’s care and love, “Sustain me, my God, … do not let my hopes be dashed.” (Ps 119:116).

Let us consider just one of the exciting exploits of David, the account of when he is being pursued by King Saul and 3,000 elite soldiers. Surely, covered by prayer and guided by God, David enters at night the camp of his enemy, Saul. Abishai had volunteered to go with David. They discover that Saul and his men are all asleep. They take Saul’s spear and water jug but David refuses to harm his enemy. Later, from the hilltop, David shouts and shows the spear. Saul realises his wronged David, he has sinned, he says sorry and goes home.

Read 1 Samuel 26:1-25 in a modern translation (less than 900 words). Then share the World Weekend of Prayer animation of this story.

Let’s now examine how this adventure of David helps us have more HOPE.

Hold. Hold on to the promises of God.

David had an intimate relationship with God. He understood how the LORD had already kept him through many difficult and testing times. David loved God and knew the promises He has made to us all. Do you know God’s promises? e.g. “I will not leave you nor forsake you,” Jos 1:5.

INTERACTION: MAKE A LIST OF GOD’S PROMISES ON A BIG PIECE OF PAPER OR BOARD.

Consider how David hesitates to take revenge. David has a glaringly obvious opportunity to take Saul’s life. His right hand man urges him to be allowed to do so. “Abishai said to David, “God has delivered
your enemy into your hand this day. Now therefore, please, let me strike him at once with the spear.” 1 Sam 26:8. David resists. He knows that God has promised to bring about justice. To God alone belongs revenge.

**INTERACTION: SHARE HOW HAVE YOU BEEN TEMPTED TO TAKE REVENGE**

**Open. Open up God’s word**

The best place to figure out what to do when you come under attack is to look up what God says in the Bible. Open up God’s word and read His assurance that He is working His purposes out in your life.

In this story **observe how God’s plan unfolds**. Having rejected the violent opportunity of revenge by his own means, David and Abishai make their escape. Nobody wakes up. Contrast this with what would have happened if Abishai had speared Saul. Surely, the 3,000 men would have stirred and struck down David and his assistant. “and they got away; and no man saw or knew it or awoke.” 1 Sam 26:12b. Break the increasing cycle of violence by opening God’s word and following His way of doing things. Jesus said, “But I say to you, love your enemies.” (Matt 5:44)

**INTERACTION: GET A CARDBOARD BOX ON EACH OF THE 6 SIDES WRITE DIFFERENT WAYS HOW THE BIBLE HELPS US TO LOVE INSTEAD OF HATE.**

**Pray. Pray to Jesus as Lord**

Jesus as Lord and Master loves you with more devotion and depth of concern than any other friend. Pray to Him!

**Praise the LORD for His deliverance.** As David speaks from the hilltop, he gives glory to God not only for His protection up to this moment, but also, assuredly, for the deliverance to come. “And let Him deliver me out of all tribulation,” 1 Sam 26:24b. Praise is an important part of our prayers to Jesus. Hope is born out of praising the LORD even when the world seems very much against us.

**INTERACTION: USE MOBILES TO SEARCH TWITTER FOR ‘HOPE IN GOD’, ‘HOPE IN JESUS,’ ‘PRAISE GOD,’ ‘WORSHIP JESUS’ AND SHARE WHAT GOOD THINGS YOU FIND**

**Experience. Experience peace**

Experience peace in your heart and let justice be in God’s hands. All round the world, across poor suburbs and in families at war with each other, Christians can confirm that hope in Jesus releases a deeper peace. My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Jn 14:27.

**Earn the right to be listened to.** David’s actions were completely in character with the man whose heart God saw and liked. They were not the actions expected by those who saw him as a rebel and enemy. Even more so, Jesus does not retaliate in front of extreme provocation. This was not what was expected by those who assumed that the Christ would rid them of Roman occupation. Our hope in Jesus and our attempts to follow his ways often earn us the right to be listened to, from kings, politicians and judges to thieves, gang leaders and corrupt police and judges. Saul listened to David and declared, “I have sinned. Return, my son David. For I will harm you no more.” 1 Sam 26:21.

**INTERACTION: USE FOOTBALL OR BASKET BALL. STAND IN GROUP CIRCLE. THROW BALL ACROSS CIRCLE. WHOEVER CATCHES SHARE AN EXPERIENCE OF FEAR TURNED TO PEACE AND HOPE.**

**Recover your HOPE**

There are at least 30 different true stories concerning the adventures of David in the Bible, from shepherd boy to elderly king over all Israel. He is anointed as king-in-waiting because God looks at his heart not his outward appearance. That heart is always full of HOPE, even in the depth of his own foolish sins. If you want to recover your HOPE copy the heart of David: Hold on to the promises of God; Open
up God’s word; Pray to Jesus as Lord; Experience peace, the ever deeper peace that comes from knowing Jesus better. As followers of Christ, we should be filled with his hope.

**INTERACTION:** Discuss with young people how this story of David shows us these dimensions of HOPE:

- A hope that brings strength.
- A hope in his wonders and miracles.
- A hope that will not be cut off.
- A hope that anchors us.
- A hope in his name.

“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him,” Col 2:6.