**Series Road Map**

**Series Overview:** This series will focus on soul care using the story of the birth of Jesus. We will be breaking down the verse Romans 15:13 to better understand why it is important to take care of our soul. Going through the topics of seeing emotions as a gift and knowing how to process them, dealing with anxiety, and seeing the need for hope in Jesus in what feels like a hopeless world.

**Week Overview:** The world that we live in today feels pretty hopeless. This week we are talking about what it is like to live in a fallen world but remembering the real reason to celebrate Christmas is because hope came in the flesh and His name is Jesus.

***Outline:***

**Grab the Room (Intro):** Asking students to put themselves in the shows of the Home Alone story

**Tension (what’s the struggle):** The need of Jesus birth because the world is hopeless without a savior

Using Luke 2 to help students see the only true hope is in Jesus.

**Text:** Romans 15:13,Luke 2:4-20, John 3:17, John 14:6, Mark 16:15-16

**THP**: Jesus is our living hope.

**Application (call to action)**: Salvation moment and a challenge to those who have accepted Christ already to be bold in their faith and share about their hope in Christ by sharing their testimony

*Red – Scripture*

*Blue – Personal Story*

*Green – Prop/illustration*

***THP/Main Points – Bold***

**Intro**

Imagine your family is planning a massive trip for Christmas. Heading to the airport everyone is scrambling around trying to get everything together in order to get there on time. In all of the panic, your family forgets you at home. Not only that but they don’t even notice until they are mid-flight. You think it is all fun and games at first overjoyed to be by yourself. But when robbers threaten to break into your family home you have to come up with a plan to keep them from doing so. Though all of this ends up being successful… Christmas Day comes, and you realize how much you miss your family and the feeling of hopelessness sinks in that was there all along. While yes this is the plot for the movie home alone, I am sure some of us can relate to this. That feeling of hopelessness that we continue to try to distract ourselves from.

A Harvard survey said that 51% of youth in America have stated that in the previous two weeks they had felt hopeless. Hopelessness happens when you find yourself in a situation where there is no confident expectation for a positive outcome. Feeling as though there is no end to the pain that you are experiencing.  It is being at the end of your rope.  When is the last time you recall being in what felt like a hopeless situation?

Lots of things can bring us to a point of hopelessness.  The death of a parent or sibling, feelings of inadequacy because of your grades, an illness, your parents getting a divorce, your relationship feeling as though it is falling apart, you feel like the weight of the world is on your shoulders.  Some of you here tonight are in that place.  You have lost all confidence in the future; you have no confidence that things are going to work out.  You have tried everything; you have looked everywhere, and things remain bleak.

We feel desperate looking for false hope in a world that seems to only offer temporary relief and we find ourselves searching time and time again for something else to cling to. We feel lost and confused just looking for something to anchor us down and trust in.

Throughout this series of Soul Care, we have been breaking down Romans 15:13 “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.”

You might be thinking to yourself well Alyssa I am not feeling very full of hope right now this is an incredibly sad way to start out tonight when it is supposed to be about Christmas and it’s the happiest time of year. But you see I tell you all of this to share that the story of Christmas is that of the only true hope that you and I *should* trust in, in a world that feels hopeless.

**Truth**

Tonight we are going to dive into Luke 2 which shows the birth of hope in a world that is desperate for it.

**Luke 2:4-20. (Could have 3-5 students read this or have them act it out)**

*So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.*

*And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”*

*Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,*

*“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
 and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”*

*When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”*

*So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.*

**Tension**

Adam and Eve were beautiful and pure first of humanity. They experienced no shame or need to cover up with clothes. They were complete in this place because God provided for all of their needs, and they were able to walk with him. He gave them only one rule: they were not to eat from the tree in the middle of the garden. They had only ever known good but eating from this tree would give them the knowledge of good AND EVIL. Only God could understand good and evil. If people ate from this tree, they would experience something that had never happened before in the garden. They would die. But temptation came and they gave in and ate, and sin entered the world.

For a people born in sin (meaning you and I) and for a world damaged by sin there simply could not be any other source of hope. Good education would not solve the problem. More and better laws couldn’t fix the source of the issue. People couldn’t help one another, and they surely couldn’t help themselves.

You see, the condition of sin infects every single human being and has scared every aspect of the life we live here on earth. Sin affects all of us. Sin is what makes us feel hopeless in this world. Just turn on the news and you’ll see how our world is a mess. Terrorism, murder, lying, cheating. It’s not only the world around us, but it’s you and I too.

We’re not terrorists or murderers, but in our own way we’re all messed up. None of us are perfect, we all have our weaknesses. We all struggle with sin. It looks different for us all.

You might struggle with lust, pride, anger, or greed. Those are just a few of the countless ways sin shows up in our lives and makes us feel hopeless. Sin is the underlying problem all of humanity faces. There was perfection in the garden before Adam and Eve ate the fruit. But once they did everything became different, everyone would suffer.

Sin is what brings chaos to the world around us. When we watch the news, it’s easy to feel hopeless. When we look at the crazy things that happen in our own schools, it can seem pretty hopeless too.

But here is the truth – hope is NOT lost. The Bible tells us that

***Jesus is our living hope***

Humanity needed a divine intervention we could not fix this problem of sin on our own.

The only solution was a Savior, and the only Savior with the wisdom, power, and righteousness to accomplish the task would be God himself. The One denied would come to rescue his deniers. The One rejected would move to save his rejecters. The One who had been rebelled against countless times would come to redeem the rebels. The One who had been replaced in people’s hearts with an endless number of idols would invade the world he had made and rescue people from themselves.

He would not come to set up an earthly kingdom and enforce his rule on the unwilling. He would not come to judge and condemn. No, he came to serve, to suffer, and to die for each and every one of us. He came to seek and to save. He came to suffer and forgive. He came to rescue and restore.

He came, and because he did, there is hope that sinners can be redeemed, and the world can be renewed. It really is true: hope is a person, and his name is Jesus.

***Jesus is our living hope!!***

Sin had created a horrible separation between God and the people he had created. God created people to dwell in loving and worshipful moment-by-moment fellowship with him. People were not designed to live independently. They were not made to figure life out on their own. People were meant to live according to God’s will and for his glory. The great question of human history was, “How will this separation between people and God ever be bridged?”

Jesus came as the only possible answer to this question. He could meet God’s moral requirement in every way by keeping his law without one instance of sin. Jesus the Son of God, God in flesh. Jesus lived a life without sin on our behalf. And then he died the humiliating, excruciating, and inhumane death our sins deserve. John 3:17 says, “God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.” By sacrificing himself for us on the cross, he took the punishment for all of our sins at once. In his perfect life and acceptable death, he became the only way to restore relationship with God. Hanging on the cross, Jesus demonstrated how God planned to deal with our sin. He sent a Savior to die in our place.

Before Jesus went to the cross to do what he came to do, he detailed for his followers why he is the only hope that could ever give hope to sinners. He made his identity and mission clear with these words: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” ([John 14:6](https://www.esv.org/verses/John%2014%3A6/)). In these brief words Jesus clearly explains why he is humanity’s one and only hope.

I want you to close your eyes for a second and put yourself in the story of Jesus birth that we read about in Luke 2.

Hope was what the angels sang about. Hope lay in the manger. Hope caused Mary to wonder in her heart. It was hope that the shepherds came to worship. Hope was presented with gifts from the Magi who had traveled so far. The birth of Jesus is the story of hope because it is the written account about the One who came to earth, who is hope, his name is Jesus.

You can open your eyes.

Jesus was born of an earthly mother; put on human flesh and lived 33 years on earth. When Jesus was born, it revealed His gentleness. You see, when He put on human flesh, He knew from that moment on what you and I would feel and go through. The feeling you have of anger, sorrow, exhaustion, grief, He felt. Things that you are facing, He faced.

This is the joy of Christmas the beginning of Jesus life here on earth – this is what we celebrate in this season that ***Jesus is our living hope.***

Hope in the here and now and hope in the great forever that is to come rests on one set of shoulders. It rests on the almighty shoulders of Jesus, who is for you today the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He offers you what you have no power to provide for yourself: restored relationship with God, a knowledge of what really is true, and life that will never end. How’s that for hope?

It’s very possible that Christmas reminds you of your problems and the things in life that aren’t the way you wish they were. And you may even feel like giving up.

The Jewish people at the time when Jesus was born had been hoping for and waiting for the Messiah for a very long time. Jesus brought the Jewish people hope. Hope for a better reality now, and for the future. However, it wasn’t quite as expected. Jesus didn’t bring them freedom from the Roman empire that had held them captive, like they thought he would. He brought them freedom from the power of sin, which is much bigger and better. This kind of freedom was not just for the Jewish people at the time – this freedom is available to EVERYONE who believes in his name.

Jesus brings us hope too. He brings us hope for a better experience of life right now. One filled with joy, peace and hope despite the circumstances we face. He brings us hope for the future, because we know that God will continue to work and move in our lives. He is always with us. Speaking to us. Guiding us. Comforting us. Loving us. We also have hope that we’ll spend eternity in heaven because of Jesus. We’ll be forever in God’s presence for eternity. It is not enough to just agree with this we have to repent of our sins and believe that Jesus is who he says he is.

He is our only hope, but we have to realize that if we choose to accept the gift of salvation that we have to walk in obedience with God and surrender our lives daily to him.

**Application/Inspiration**

So, is there really hope in the world? In short, yes! Hope invaded the world 2000 years ago at Bethlehem. Maybe tonight you are here, and you have been feeling hopeless for some time now. You have been trying to find hope in a world that continues to disappoint. I am here to tell you that Jesus wants to give you hope. Hope is available but only to those who will humble themselves and bow in faith before the Jesus Christ and accept his free gift of salvation.

Do you believe he is the Son of God from heaven? Do you confess that you are sinner? Do you admit you need a Savior? Do you believe that Jesus died for your sins? Are you willing to trust him as your Lord and Savior? Will you bow before him and crown him as your King?

Some people think about Jesus each year at Christmas time. Deeply touched, they decide in that moment to know him personally. Then the moment passes, and the pressures of a new year lead them away from the manger. There is great danger in coming near to Christ but never making a commitment. You can’t cram for heaven the way you cram for a chemistry exam. You can’t take a crash course to get into heaven. Sooner or later, you’ve got to make a personal commitment that Jesus Christ will be your Lord and Savior.

Students ***Jesus is our living hope*.** Where is your hope tonight?

Maybe you're here today and you've never taken the first step towards becoming a Christian.

Maybe you want to make that commitment today because you need Jesus to be your living hope. The Bible says, if you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from death, you will be saved. For it is by our faith that we are put right with God; it is by our confession that we are saved.

*\*\*\*salvation moment – celebrate those who made the decision\*\*\**

If you have already put your faith in Jesus and you know that He is your living hope, remember what Jesus told his Disciples after they saw him after the resurrection and committed to serving Him, he told them, *“*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned (Mark 16:15-16)
 So, in short, if you believe that Jesus is Lord, TELL PEOPLE.  My challenge to you is to share your testimony of your hope in the salvation of Christ for the sake of the lost. Not just at Christmas when it is easy to, but anytime the Lord opens the door for you too.