

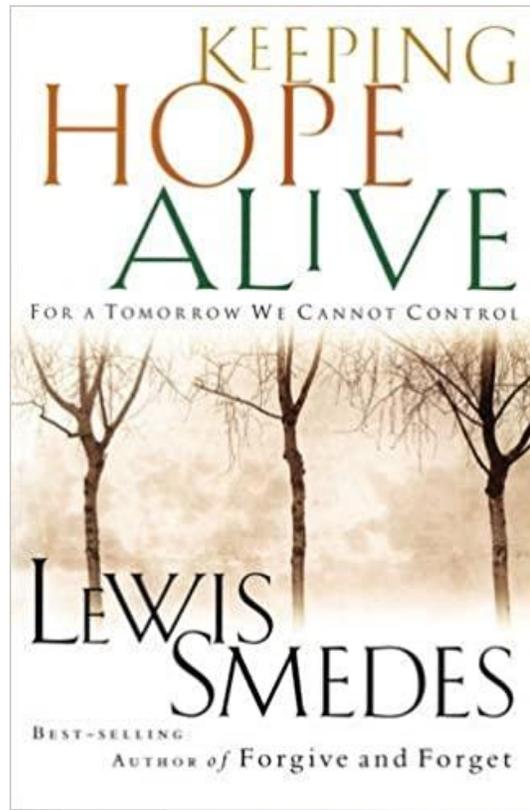
# Keeping Hope Alive

When God Gets Into Hoping

# Genesis 12:1-5

- ▶ Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup> I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”<sup>[a]</sup><sup>4</sup> So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. <sup>5</sup> Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother’s son Lot, and all the possessions that they had gathered, and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan.

# Keeping Hope Alive: For a Tomorrow We Can't Control



Available on Amazon Kindle. Also available on Scrbd



# Hopeful People... Let Others Do Their Hoping for Them

Key Idea: Hope survives best in a community of hope. Sometimes we need people to hope for us, which is another way of saying to trust us, and give us hope. Just so, we need to hope for others too and trust them.

Who is a person in your past (or maybe present) who hoped for you, and gave you hope? Who is someone you are hoping for? Do they know it?

# Hopeful People... Know How to Forgive

- ▶ Key Idea: Memory is a key resource of hope, but sometimes memory needs to be healed of hate. Forgiveness, of others and ourselves, is how we let go of the past and open ourselves up to a hopeful future. All forgiveness moves along these three steps:
  1. We begin to see the offender as a flawed person, not a devil, but someone like ourselves.
  2. We surrender our right to get even and choose to live with unbalanced scales.
  3. We gradually, very gradually, find the will to wish the person well.

# Hopeful People... Know How to Forgive

- ▶ Forgiving others is one thing. How do you forgive yourself? We forgive ourselves for the things we do; we accept ourselves for the persons we are. When we are able to accept ourselves for who we are, and to accept that God accepts us for who we are, we will find the grace to forgive ourselves too.
- ▶ Take a couple of minutes to reflect. Is there someone you need to forgive? Is there something you need to forgive yourself for?

# Hoping God Will Be There

- ▶ Key Idea: The most important thing we ever hope for from God is God. God promised Abram he would simply “show him.” God told Moses God’s name is “I am” or “I am the one who will be there.” Our hope is not that God will take away our trouble, but that God will be there: underneath to hold us up, ahead to lead the way, above to guard and protect, behind to keep us going, and within to give us hope.
- ▶ When you are in a dark place - a place that feels far from God or God forsaken - how do you feel the presence of God? Is there a practice, or a habit, or maybe a person, that helps you to feel that God is there with you?

# Hopeful People... Look for Signs and Make Signs

- ▶ Key Idea: How do we recognize that God has been among us? We have to learn to see the signs. These signs are traces of God's presence, and usually they are in ordinary places, and very often in the ones we knew for sure were godforsaken. Of course, hopeful people also learn to make signs, to follow the prompting of the Spirit and erect a sign of God's presence as a marker of hope for others on the journey.
- ▶ Breakout group: What signs of hope - what traces of God's presence -- do you see around you? Are you doing anything to erect a sign of hope for others?

# What is the Hope of the World?

- ▶ Key Idea: Some hope the world will just keep getting better - the hope of endless progress. Some hope the world will keep bumping along - the hope of mucking through. Some hope to escape a cataclysmic and fiery end to the world - the hope of rapture.
- ▶ Christian is hope that God will remake the world, that God will put things right at last, and will redeem and restore creation.
- ▶ Our calling, our work as hopeful people, is to join God in that work. Not that we're going to pull it off ourselves - we can't. That's God's work. But can we "put up a signpost," a stake in the ground that says, "This is how it's supposed to be, and this is how --- one day --- God is going to make it new."

# Summing Up

## ▶ Keeping Hope Alive - A Very Worldly Hope

1. I Can Wish for It - What Do You Desire?
2. I Can Imagine It - Can You Envision What it Would Look Like?
3. I Believe It is Possible - Do You Have Faith that It Can Be?
4. I Will Work for It - What Can You Do to Point to Your Hope?