

# 1. The beginning of hope

Mental health, science and the Bible

Read Psalm 139

1. Did you have any reflections on the sermon?
2. What part of this Psalm most connects with you?
3. What hope does this Psalm offer to those who suffer?
4. Read the following quote:

“Many people have been taught that worry is a sin; and so their first reaction to any anxiety is to beat themselves up. But looking closely at the Bible reveals that this isn’t a fair way to treat yourself. Anxiety is not an automatically sinful response – it is a sometimes helpful human response that, like anything, can be twisted by sin to deceitful and unhealthy ends.”

Paul Grimmond

*When the Noise Won't Stop* (Sydney: Matthias, 2022), 47.

How could the Bible be misused to harm people? How can we tell when this is happening?

5. In caring for people, we should be quick to listen and slow to speak.  
What makes this difficult at times? How are you more likely to respond?

*Pray for those who feel alone, isolated or misunderstood because of illness.*

## 2. Hope for Humanity

The body, mind, heart and spirit

Read Hebrews 2:5-18

1. Did you have any reflections on the sermon?
2. What part of this passage most connects with you?
3. Why is Jesus becoming *human* such good news for us?
4. Read the following quote:

“We are strange creatures, made up of body, mind, and spirit; these are interrelated and react upon one another. Many of our troubles in life are due to this fact, and to our failure to realise the place, function, and sphere of each one of these realms. [...] Many Christian people, in fact, are in utter ignorance concerning this realm where the borderlines between the physical, psychological and spiritual meet. Frequently I have found that such leaders had treated those whose trouble was obviously mainly physical or psychological, in a purely spiritual manner; and if you do so, you not only don't help. You aggravate the problem.”

D. Martyn Lloyd Jones  
The Christian Warfare, 206-208.

Why might cause Christians to care *only* for the spiritual needs of a person?  
How might this have negative consequences?

5. How could we begin to care wholistically for people in need – body, mind, heart and spirit?  
What makes this difficult at times?

*Pray for those in our health system who provide professional care for those with mental illness.*

## 3. Hope for the hopeless

Engaging with difficult emotions

Read Psalm 88

1. Did you have any reflections on the sermon?
2. How does this Psalm make you feel?
3. Read the following quote:

“How often have well-intentioned ministers or friends tried to explain away a particular death, disease, or worse by an uninformed appeal to God's purposes? Do any of us really know why a particular event happens? Claims to provide the reason for a specific experience of suffering abound: divine discipline, for the purpose of church renewal, to bring a watching nurse or neighbor to salvation, or to foster personal humility. Unfortunately, all these claims are made without true knowledge of exactly why something is happening. Even if these suggestions contain an element of truth, we are not in a position to unpack the mind of God regarding such mysteries. What happens if the nurse who professes faith later abandons that faith or the apparent church renewal quickly fades away? Resting our faith on such connections can actually prove to be far more hazardous than most people realize. Such explanations assume that some good outcome can nullify or justify the pain, but this is not so. A tragedy is still a tragedy; pain is still pain, even if some insight is gained in the process. We may hope that God has reasons for allowing suffering in his world, but that is very different from thinking we have access to those reasons or can understand why a particular experience of suffering is taking place.”

Kelly M. Kapic

*Embodied Hope* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2017), 22-23.

Why might Christians be tempted to provide quick answers to those who are suffering?  
What are the dangers of this?

4. Our emotions are designed to draw us nearer to God.  
What can makes it challenging to bring difficult emotions to God? What could help us?

*Pray for those who suffer in body, mind or circumstance. Pray for those who care for them.*

## 4. Hope in community

Living well in a broken world

Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-11

1. Did you have any reflections on the sermon?
2. What part of this passage most connects with you?
3. How can the people of God be a source of hope for others?
4. Read the following quote:

“We don't need to be scared of mental illness, as if it requires a kind of care that is entirely beyond us. [...] We know how creating a plan helps in the face of anxiety. By recognising, in our own experience, the value of the healthy habits of eating, sleeping and exercise, we can apply the same things to the lives of others. We also know how much we appreciate people taking time to listen to us and understand the problems we are facing. Knowing this, we can offer that same gift of time and attention to others.”

Helen Thorne & Dr Steve Midgley

*Mental Health and Your Church* (The Good Book Company: Great Britain, 2023), 28-29.

What fears might people have in supporting someone with a mental illness?  
How does the Bible help us respond to those fears?

5. Caring for someone is often a long-term commitment.  
What makes this difficult at times? How could our church community grow our ability to support those who need long-term care?

*Pray for our church to grow in our ability to be a place of refuge for all.  
(Please let us know your answers to question 5)*

## 5. Hope for eternity

The end of suffering, illness and death

Read John 11

1. Did you have any reflections on the sermon?
2. What part of this passage most surprises you?
3. How might hope in a resurrection impact how we live now?
4. Read the following quote:

This promise of a physical resurrection life after death often surprises Christians. Many of us have an image in our minds of simply “going to heaven” when we die. So what does happen to us? The Bible doesn’t necessarily answer every question we might have about death or provide every detail, but it does provide clear teaching on what happens when we die. [...] For all this splendor, being with Christ in heaven is not our final destination. Disembodied existence in heaven is not God’s ultimate plan for us; it is physical, resurrection life in the new create we await. Those who have already died in Christ are not yet in their final condition. Going to heaven is a temporary glory before the final and greater glory of the new heavens and the new earth is realized.”

Sam Allberry

*What God Has to Say about Our Bodies* (Crossway: Illinois, 2021), 178-179.

What can make it difficult to hope in a future resurrection? What can give us confidence?

5. Christians are able to grieve with hope. What makes this difficult at times?  
How does it differ from those who grieve without hope?

*Pray for a growing conviction in, and desire for, our resurrection.*