



THE HOPE CHALLENGE: Sharing Your Story of Hope

#myhopestory

1 Peter 3:15 ► *but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.*

If the coronavirus time has shown us anything, it has revealed how much we all need hope. Some are struggling with health-related fears, others are anxious about finances, and all of us feel degrees of uncertainty about the future.

In the midst of this, we want to participate together in ***The Hope Challenge***, to encourage one another and share with nonbelieving friends the hope we find in Jesus Christ.

Pastor Chris has challenged each of us to share a story of hope by making a 2- or 3-minute video sharing how the hope of Jesus has transformed your life, using the hashtag **#myhopestory**.

It could be as simple as a promise from God's Word that is especially hope-giving to you during this time, or something He has done in your life that gives you hope. For many of us, it will be the story of how He gave us hope in Christ for the first time and how He has begun the work of transformation in us!

The Hope Challenge

To participate in *The Hope Challenge*, make a short video and post it to Facebook, Instagram, or any social networking apps you use. If you're not active on social media, think of a group of friends you could email it to, or text it to someone as a personal encouragement. Think of any avenue you have to share the living hope you have in Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:3)!

The guide below is geared toward sharing how you came to faith in Christ and how He has changed you, but there are lots of "hope stories" we can share. If you've never thought through your own story or how to communicate these things in a concise way, use this guide as a tool to help you do that. If you're ready to make your own video, just go for it!

As we move through the letter of 1 Peter together, let's share our personal stories of "Hope in Exile" to glorify God, encourage one another, and share with the world the reason for the hope we have!

Sharing Your Story of Hope

If you've never thought about how to share your story of coming to faith in Jesus, this guide is meant to help you think through that and communicate it in a concise way that keeps the Gospel central.

This is just a resource, and it certainly isn't the only way to do it. The main idea is to share personally how God has given you hope. That may be sharing your ultimate story of hope (how you came to faith in Jesus), or another story of God's faithfulness to His promises or how He has been your anchor in times of distress or uncertainty.

For a biblical example, read Paul's testimony before King Agrippa in Acts 26. He shares in under 3 minutes!

What exactly do I say?

If you need some help, the guide below will walk you through sharing your story of coming to faith in Christ and how God has been transforming you. This isn't the only way to do it, but it will help you share briefly and in a way that keeps the Gospel central.

Here is an outline of how you could go about a video to post on social media. (Again, this is one way of many; feel free to be creative and do it in a way that feels most natural for you.)

1. Quick Intro: Just say something like, *This is such a strange time with lots of uncertainty about what life will be like after all this, so I wanted to share my story of where I find hope.*
(If you want to, blame Pastor Chris! You could simply say something like, *I'm taking part in the Hope Challenge - the pastor at my church challenged us to share our stories of where we find hope. So here's my story of how I find hope even in the midst of a pandemic like the coronavirus.*)
2. Share your story (see below), doing your best to keep it under 3 minutes if possible. If you need to go longer, go for it, just keep in mind fewer people may be inclined to watch a longer video.
3. End: *That's my story of hope, why I can find hope even in a crazy time like this.*
4. Pass it on: Challenge a few friends! *I'd love to hear your story [Name1] [Name2] [Name3] [Name4]*
(and/or tag people in the post)

Step by Step: Sharing Your Story (in 2-3 minutes)

Anchor your story in the good news of what Jesus has done, how God has changed you and how He gives you hope. This is your story, but it should make God's story clear as well.

If it's helpful, use the outline below. Adapt it, make it personal, but keep in mind that more people will watch a 3-minute video than a 5- to 6-minute video:

1. Share about your life before Christ:

Share (in one or two sentences) what your life was like before coming to faith in Jesus. For example:

- *My life was _____ before I came to know Jesus personally.*
- Or, *Before I started following Jesus, I was...*

Share 1-2 characteristics of what your life was like. Were you a totally different person? Did you have unsatisfied, deep inner needs before you came to know Jesus? Examples:

a lack of peace; fear of death; something was just missing; no sense of security; lack of meaning/purpose/significance; no real friends; had a need for control; loneliness, etc.

This can be a point of contact with a non-Christian, as all of us look for ways to satisfy our deepest needs. You can share your sin and brokenness without sharing lots of details.

2. Think of a brief transition to move toward the Gospel:

Examples:

- *Then [my friend, grandma, etc.] told me that...*
- *I first sensed my need for Jesus when...*
- *What made me most interested in Jesus was...*
- *I finally decided to trust Jesus and follow him when I realized that...*
- *I tried _____ to fill the void / satisfy those desires, etc.*

What made you realize your need for Jesus? Did you have a friend who shared the good news? Did a certain experience drive you to search for the truth? Did you try any unsatisfactory solutions to attempt to meet those deep inner needs? These could be positive or negative things, such as: relationships, work/career, addictions, sports/hobbies, money, etc.

3. Share the Gospel integrated into your story:

Share the good news and how you responded. Use biblical truth but personalize it in your own words.

- *I came to understand that I wasn't really good ... I had done many things that God calls evil ... My life was really messed up / broken ... (Romans 3:23)*
- *The consequence of that is death/separation from God, but God's free gift is eternal life, and that is found in Jesus... (Romans 6:23)*
- *I turned away from my way of doing life and turned toward Jesus, trusting that He could forgive me and give me life ... (Acts 3:19)*
- *I believed in Him as the one who could save me from the consequences of who I was and what I had done... (Romans 10:9-10)*

There isn't one set of verses for everyone. Use John 3:16 or 2 Corinthians 5:21 or Romans 6:23 – anything that communicates the truth of the Gospel that you can personally and naturally share in the context of your story. You don't need to say "Romans says," but try to make the Gospel clear, not just your personal experience.

4. Share about your life after coming to know Christ

Wrap up your story by briefly sharing how God gives you hope through Christ. Connect to what you shared in the beginning about your life before coming to faith in Jesus.

- *Since coming to know Jesus personally, my life has been _____*
- Or, *After following Jesus, He has started changing me to be more _____*

How are you different? In what ways has Jesus changed you? How does He give you hope? How does God help you in daily life? Share how you are in process, but how you experience hope or peace or joy or _____ as you follow Jesus.

You may want to end with a simple question, such as:

- *What about you? Do you have a story of ways you've experienced change?*
- Or, *What about you? Where do you find hope or peace or just the strength to keep going?*
- Or, *What about you? Have you ever considered learning about following Jesus?*

Thank you for being willing to share what God has done in your life! This will be an encouragement to others and glorifying to God! If you need any help, reach out to your Community Group leader or any New Life staff member. We'd love to listen to your story and help you process what Christ has done in your life!

