

# The Connection

## Messages of Hope



**HOPE**  
CHURCH | RALEIGH  
WORSHIP . GROW . SERVE .

A Weekly Online Newsletter: Edition 775

March 20, 2024

## “He Wants to Hear From Us!”

Pastor and author Lee Strobel told the story of “The Day Bart Simpson Prayed”. It goes like this:

Bart wasn’t doing well in the fourth grade. When he flunked his book report on *Treasure Island* because he only knew what was on the cover, that was the last straw. His teacher called a meeting with Bart’s parents and the school psychiatrist, whose conclusion was that Bart should repeat the fourth grade.

Bart was horrified! “Look at my eyes,” he said. “See the sincerity? See the conviction? See the fear? I swear I’ll do better!” After all, nothing’s worse to a ten-year-old than being held back in school.

But Bart hatched a plan. He made a deal with a brainy student named Martin. He’d teach Martin how to be cool if Martin would help him pass his next American History exam. That final test was monumentally important because if he passed it, Bart would be allowed to graduate 4th grade.

Bart did teach Martin the fine points of being cool - how to burp on command, how to spray-paint graffiti on garage doors, how to shoot a slingshot at unsuspecting girls. And, sure enough, Martin became the most popular kid in school - so popular, in fact, that he didn’t have time to help Bart study.

Now picture this: It was the night before the big test. Bart was sitting at the desk in his room, staring at an open book, trying to study, when he came to the chilling realization that it was too late. He couldn’t cram enough into his head in one night to be able to pass the test. Finally, his mom peeked into the room and said, “It’s past your bedtime, Bart.”

Slowly, Bart closed his book. With the exams just hours away, it seemed like all of his options had evaporated. That’s when he got down on his knees next to his bed and prayed to God.

*“This is hopeless!” he said. “Well, Old Timer, I guess this is the end of the road. I know I haven’t been a good kid, but if I have to go to school tomorrow, I’ll fail the test and be held back. I just need one more day to study, Lord. I need your help! A teacher strike, a power failure, a blizzard - anything that will cancel school tomorrow. I know it’s asking a lot, but if anyone can do it, you can. Thanking you in advance, your pal, Bart Simpson.”*

The scene switched to an outside view of Bart’s house. The lights in his room went out. It was cold and dark. A few moments passed, and then a single snowflake gently fell to the ground. Then another. And another. Suddenly, there was a virtual avalanche of

snow; in fact, it was the biggest blizzard in the city’s history! The “Hallelujah Chorus” swelled in the background.

The next day, school was cancelled. Bart fought the temptation to go sledding with his friends, and instead studied hard. Then the following day, when the time finally came for the test, he gave it his best shot, but he came up on point short. It looked like he had failed - until at the last possible moment, he miraculously scored one more point and squeaked by with a D minus.

Bart was so happy that he kissed his teacher as he scampered out the door. Homer was so overwhelmed that he posted Bart’s paper on the refrigerator and said, “I’m proud of you, boy!” To which Bart replied, “Thanks, Dad. But part of this D minus belongs to God.”  
*(From: WHAT JESUS WOULD SAY, 1994, Zondervan Publishing House)*

Now I doubt that any of us would broadcast our D minus to anyone or even attribute it to God. But the story reminds me so much of many Christians and even non-Christians. Prayer, instead of being a daily part of our lives, comes at a time when there seems to be no other option. When we have done all that we can in our power and now decide, “Well, I guess I’ll call on God’s help”. Why do we do that?

**1 Thessalonians 5:16 - 17: “Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”** We know this verse. We recite it often, but somehow think it is a suggestion by God. No! This is a command to pray without ceasing. Our relationship with Him is that important to HIM!!! Don’t wait until all else fails. Talk to Him when on the mountain tops and in the valleys and everywhere in between. He wants to hear from us.

And, NO, it doesn’t mean we get our wish list of every thing we want. What it does mean, when we pray without ceasing, is that we will be at peace with whatever answer God gives when we petition Him in need. Yes, No, or Not now, will be okay, because our peace and hope are always found in Him.

He wants to hear from us. Today! Right Now, in fact! Will you stop and pray right now? He wants to hear from us!

By the way, if you get a D minus and attribute that to God, let’s have a talk.

Blessings my friends,  
Pastor Marty - HOPE Church Raleigh  
Worship . Grow . Serve

# HOPE Calendar

## Wednesday, March 20

Wednesday Night Supper, Study,  
& Prayer @ 6:15 p.m.

## Saturday, March 23

Women of HOPE @ 1:00 p.m.

## Sunday, March 24

### Palm Sunday

Worship Team Rehearsal @ 8:15 a.m.

Worship @ 9:30 a.m.

Fellowship Time @ 10:50 a.m.

Sunday school @ 11:10 a.m.

HOPE4Kids Information Mtg.

@ 12:00 p.m.

## Wednesday, March 27

NO Wednesday Night Supper, Study,  
& Prayer Tonight

## Helping Hands Ministries

Fellowship - March 24

*Church is Providing*

ProPresenter - March 24

*Elizabeth Floyd*

Soundboard - March 24

*Benjamin Pierce*

Live Streaming - March 24

*Al Floyd*

Communion - March

*Kathy Jo Duckett, Lynn Joyner,  
& Donna Williams*

Greeter - March 24

*Joan Rollinson*

Nursery Volunteer - March 24

*Volunteer Needed*

## Scripture Text and Sermon

**This Sunday**

**Palm Sunday**

**John 12:12 - 16**

**"His Disciples Did Not Understand"**

### Daily Devotions

#### For This Coming Week

Mar	24	Matthew	24
Mar	25	Matthew	25
Mar	26	Matthew	26
Mar	27	Matthew	27
Mar	28	Matthew	28
Mar	29	Mark	1
Mar	30	Mark	2

## Outreach Ministries

### "Food of the Month"

for the Raleigh Dream Center  
Food Pantry

### Individual Pop-Top Canned Meat

We have a collection bin in the foyer

### HOPE Meal Ministry

Take a meal from the freezer if  
needed for you or someone else.

### TLC Devotion

4th Wednesday each Month  
@ 11:00 a.m.

## Spiritual Growth Ministries

### Women of HOPE

Saturday, March 23  
@ 1:00 p.m.

### Wednesday Night Supper, Study, & Prayer Tonight

6:15 p.m. - Supper

7:00 p.m. - Bible Study

7:45 p.m. - Prayer Time

Menu:

Pork Chops, Mashed Potatoes &  
Gravy, Field Peas, Bread, Dessert

### HOPE4Kids Ministry

### Informational Meeting

Sunday, March 24th  
@ 12 p.m.

Led by Terry Duffell

Anyone interested, please join in.

### Pray for an Opportunity

HOPE family - Start now praying that God would lead you to invite someone(s) to join you for Easter Worship. Pray specifically for Him to lay on your heart who to ask, when to ask, and then do it. I'm asking each one in our HOPE family to do this. Pray - asking and expecting God to act. ***Easter is March 31st***

### Prayer Requests:

Revill & Mary Lane Mallory, Jamie Baldwin, Ron Clifton, Donna Williams, Carol & Colin (Kathy Herriman's Sister & Brother-in-law), Loretta (Sandi Underwood's daughter), Joan Summers, Shelley, Diane Mack's Sister-in-law, Jordan & Cinnamon (son and daughter of Lynn Joyner's family members), Tommy and Billy Lanphere (Lynn Joyner's brothers), Gene & Becky Hale, Ellie Tappan, Dave & Dot Geil, Carlyle and Cynthia Franklin (Sandra Pierce's dad and stepmom), our Military, our Missionaries, our Nation, and the world. If you have those you would like added to our prayer concerns, please email me those names.

## HOPE - REBOOT NOW

**Everyday Prayer**

**For**

**The Vision Team**

**The Session**

**The Congregation**

## HOLY Week

**Sunday, Mar 24 -**

**Palm Sunday**

**Wednesday, Mar 27 -**

**NO WNSSP - Reflection**

**Thursday, Mar 28 -**

**Maundy Thursday Service  
@ 7 PM**

**Friday, Mar. 29 -**

**The Sanctuary is Open for Prayer 7  
a.m. to 1 p.m.**

**Sunday, Mar. 31 -**

**Easter Worship**

**NO Sunday school on Easter  
Extended Fellowship following  
Worship**

### BLOOMING CROSS

**Bring cut flowers on Easter to place  
in our cross in the Sanctuary  
Arrive early**

## Quotes of the Week

**"The Word of God is either  
absolute or obsolete."**

Vance Havner

**"All scripture must be received as if  
God, appearing in person,  
visibly and full of majesty,  
were Himself speaking."**

John Calvin

### HOPE Church Raleigh

**An Evangelical Presbyterian Church**

**4911 Green Rd**

**Raleigh, NC 27616**

**919-508-6827**

**Worship Time: 9:30 AM**

**www.HopeChurchRaleigh.org**

**www.facebook.com/HOPEChurchRaleigh**

**Twitter: @HopeChRaleigh**

**YouTube.com (type "HOPE Church Raleigh"  
in the search box)**