

INTRO

Have you ever had an experience where you've confidently said "I got this" only to be quickly followed by a panicked "I don't got this"? If you are willing, share with your group.

IDEA 1

Brian explained that hope is not an emotion, it's not wishing on a star—it is the confident expectation that God has the strength to do what He has promised to do. **How would you define hope? What does hope mean to you?**

What hope is there when we experience so much uncertainty and so much of life seems to be out of our control?

IDEA 2

2 Thessalonians 2 continues the conversation on the second coming of Jesus. Brian pointed out that this passage is one of the most difficult passages in all of Paul's writings because Paul is referencing teachings that we have no access to. Much of the interpretive confusion with this passage comes from trying to figure it out from an earthly perspective rather than a spiritual one.

In explaining the Man of Lawlessness, Brian had us look at it through end-time philosophies of lawlessness and egocentrism.

The mantra of lawlessness is "Who gets to say what is right and wrong" or more personally "You can't decide what my right and wrong is." And on the surface this seems like the path to freedom—the less absolutes the more freedom. Where do you see this philosophy in our world? Where does this path lead?

How can true freedom be found in Jesus?

Brian shared that the solution for lawlessness is keeping a strong grip on truthful teaching. **How can we cultivate hearts that pursue true wisdom?**

IDEA 2 CONT.

Egocentrism is the philosophy that it's all about me at the expense of others. But, we are not the hero of the story—Jesus is, and when we try to be we tend to minimize others and we're always on shaky footing because we don't know if we measure up. **How have you seen this to be true in your life? How can we help each other continue to keep Jesus as the main character?**

Brian shared that the solution to egocentrism is standing firm. **How would you answer the question: "What is your foundation"?**

While this passage might not bring the clarity we want on the second coming (exact dates & times), it does provide the clarity we need— God is sovereign! **How can or does this bring certainty in the unknown for you?**

EXPERIENCING GOD TOGETHER

Spend some time in listening prayer together, asking God to help you stand firm in the truth, to give you hope in the face of uncertainty, and to comfort those who need encouragement.

Take time to sit together in silence and listen for what God is saying to each of you. Have a time where people can share what they are hearing.

End your time with this closing prayer:

Gracious God, grant us the courage to stand firm in our faith, unwavering in the face of uncertainty and the allure of deception. May Your truth be our anchor and guide as we navigate the complexities and difficulties of life. Teach and empower us to encourage and support one another, helping each other remain steadfast in the knowledge of your eternal comfort and hope. Amen.

PRACTICE THIS WEEK

Who in your life could use encouragement to stand firm in their faith? How could you encourage them this week?