



*Wesleyan Ways: Exploring our Methodist Roots*  
Episode 9: Deliriously Hopeful  
Discussion Guide

**Discussion Questions**

1. Dr. Kenda Creasy Dean describes hope as “the desire for God” rather than simply optimism or happiness. How does that definition challenge the way we usually think about hope?
2. The episode emphasizes that Christian hope can exist in the midst of anguish, suffering, and uncertainty. Where have you seen hope survive in difficult seasons of life?
3. Bishop Sue reflects on John Wesley’s final words: “Best of all, God is with us.” Why is God’s presence at the center of hope?
4. The conversation distinguishes between *hope* and *denial*. Why is it important that Christian hope tells the truth about suffering rather than pretending everything is fine?
5. Dr. Dean references *Night* and the witness of Elie Wiesel. How does bearing witness to pain become part of faithful hope?
6. The Parkland story reminds us that “if the church is going to matter, it has to matter right now.” How can the church embody hope during moments of crisis rather than only talking about it later?
7. The episode speaks about imagination as the ability to live *as if* God is active and the world can be different. Where do you see that kind of holy imagination needed most today?
8. How does resurrection hope move us beyond simply enduring hardship toward actively participating in God’s renewal of the world?
9. The conversation uses the image of staying in the tomb versus stepping into the garden. What “tombs” do churches sometimes choose to remain in?
10. Dr. Dean references Harriet Tubman and the “as if” hope of people waiting for liberation. How does remembering stories of deliverance strengthen present faith?



11. The speakers note that formation is weak when people no longer know the biblical story. Why is knowing the story essential to sustaining hope?
12. What practices help individuals and churches remember that Good Friday is never the end of the story?
13. If your congregation truly lived with resurrection hope, what would be different in worship, mission, leadership, or community life?

### **Leaving the Tomb**

Invite participants to reflect silently or journal on these questions:

- Where in my life have I been living as if I am still in the tomb?
- What fear, grief, or disappointment keeps me there?
- What would it look like to step toward resurrection hope this week?

Close together with this prayer:

God of resurrection,  
when we are tempted to stop at Good Friday,  
remind us that the story is not over.  
When fear keeps us in the tomb,  
call us into the garden of new life.  
Give us courage to hope,  
strength to bear witness,  
and faith to live as if your kingdom is already breaking through.  
Through Christ our risen Lord. Amen.

### **Next Steps**

Choose one intentional practice this month:

- Share a personal story of how God brought life out of loss.
- Encourage someone walking through grief or discouragement.
- Revisit a biblical story of liberation and reflect on how it shapes your own story.
- Identify one place where your church can be a visible sign of hope in your community.



At your next gathering, share where you noticed resurrection hope becoming real.

### **Terms to Know:**

#### **Eschatological Hope**

Hope rooted in God's final promises—the trust that God will ultimately make all things new.

#### **Prevenient Grace**

God's grace already at work before we recognize it, planting hope and drawing us toward God.

#### **Resurrection Hope**

The Christian conviction that suffering, death, and despair do not have the final word because Christ is risen.

#### **Formation**

The lifelong shaping of disciples through Scripture, worship, community, and spiritual practices so that faith becomes lived reality.

#### **Holy Imagination**

The ability to see the world *as if* God is active and redemption is possible.

#### **The Garden**

A resurrection image pointing to new creation, renewal, and life beyond the tomb.

### **Additional Resources:**

- *Innovating for Love: Joining God's Expedition through Christian Social Innovation* by Kenda Creasy Dean (Market Square Books, 2022)
- *Night* by Elie Wiesel