The Absolute Necessity of Hope

Assorted

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**Introduction:** When times are hard and our future well-being is in doubt people are quickly overcome by anxiety. “What will happen to our economy? What about my ability to earn a living? Will inflation take away my retirement when I won’t have time to earn it again? Will I be able to see a doctor if I am sick?” There is a lot of anxiety these days and it can lead to paralyzing distress and that distress produces hopelessness. Jeremiah testified about his own fears as he watched his beloved Israel become totally godless and replaced God’s righteous laws with gross wickedness;

**Lamentations 3:17-18**  17 My soul has been rejected from peace; I have forgotten happiness. 18 So I say, "My strength has perished, And *so has* my hope from the LORD."

Men today need HOPE! But hope is in short supply in a godless world. What little is offered turns out to be false hope because authentic hope is always and only “in God” Hope in God is not anything like how the world understands hope. For the godless hope means wishful thinking or pie in the sky. For God it is anything but that! The New Testament word “hope” means “confident expectation.” It sounds like this when expressed; “I am absolutely certain that God rules creation and that He will care for me.”

**Hebrews 11:1** Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. 2 For by it the men of old gained approval.

An unbeliever and perhaps many believers will say, “How do you know that is true? How can you be so certain?” The answer is always the same in every place and age. “God promised me! God told me He is Sovereign over, and engaged with, His creation. I trust Him! He would never lie to me!” Hope comes from having faith in God. AND not just that God exists! Satan encourages faith like that because he knows it is totally unable to save you or give you hope. Even demons believes God exists.

**James 2:19**  19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

Bible Faith…True life changing faith… believes what God says. (I.e.) “God told me His intentions for me are good and He is absolutely able to carry them out.”

**Jeremiah 29:11**  11 'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.

Because I belong to Him He has assured me that I am of great value to Him. So much so that He gave His own Son to rescue me from hell and make me His eternal child. He cares about my temporal as well as my eternal life.

**Matthew 6:26**  26 "Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and *yet* your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?

**Matthew 6:30**  30 "But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is *alive* today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, *will He* not much more *clothe* you? You of little faith!

Hope comes from Faith. Faith believes God’s promises for the future…for your future and all His other children as well. So…why do we struggle with hope when things go so dark in our world? How important is Hope? The answer to the first question is that we either do not know or have forgotten God’s promises to us and His people. You cannot trust in what you do not know or have forgotten.

**Romans 10:17**  17 So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

The answer to the second question (How important is Hope?) is IT IS ABSOLUTELY VITAL!

**Isaiah 40:28-31**  28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. 29 He gives strength to the weary, And to *him who* lacks might He increases power. 30 Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly, 31 Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up *with* wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.

Not only does faith driven hope make you strong to live it makes you so strong that you can use your God given hope to strengthen and serve others. Your spouse! Your children! Your brothers and sisters in this world.

“Hope is the birthplace of Christian self-sacrificing love. That’s because we just let God take care of us and we are not preoccupied with having to work to take care of ourselves. We say, “Lord, I just want to be there for other people tomorrow, because you are going to be there for me.” ***John Piper***

**How to Increase your HOPE! (How to become more hopeful and less anxious)**

This almost does not need answering at this point. You increase your hope by exposing yourself to God’s promises. By hearing Christ and His Word preached. And here is where a lot of believers stumble. We think we have heard enough preaching and gone to enough Bible Studies. Surely we already know the promises of God…right? Maybe we did know them, but we did not know them all. And every one of them is important. Even more likely is that we have forgotten them. Have you ever heard a familiar passage preached that seemed as refreshing to your soul as if it were the first time? Yes! We humans forget. Jesus know we would even forget Him.

**Luke 22:19**  19 And when He had taken *some* bread *and* given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; **do this in remembrance** of Me."

If we can forget Christ and just go through the motions of being Christian how likely is it that you will forget God’s promises about His plans for you, for your future and for the world He rules. When Israel forgot God fear took over.

**Isaiah 51:13**  13 That you have forgotten the LORD your Maker, Who stretched out the heavens And laid the foundations of the earth, That you fear continually all day long because of the fury of the oppressor, As he makes ready to destroy? But where is the fury of the oppressor?

**Judges 8:33-34**  33 Then it came about, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the sons of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-berith their god. 34 Thus the sons of Israel did not remember the LORD their God, who had delivered them from the hands of all their enemies on every side;

Christians also forget what God has done in the past and what He promises to do in the future.

**Revelation 2:4-5**  4 'But I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love. 5 'Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place-- unless you repent.

Not knowing God’s promises or convincing yourself that you already do is a guaranteed formula for anxiety, fear and even despair. Do not let this happen. This is why we have The Bible! It is why we have The Holy Spirit and it is why God gave preachers to His Church. We may forget God but He never forgets us. You may feel forsake but you are absolutely not.

**Isaiah 49:15-16**  15 "Can a woman forget her nursing child And have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. 16 "Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms *of My hands*; Your walls are continually before Me.

We conquer fear and despair by knowing and remembering what God has already done and said. We increase hope by, hungering for, learning and trusting more and more of God’s Word throughout our lives. Be in and also under the word of God with the intention of trusting and embracing everything you learn there.

**Romans 15:4**  4 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Remember the crushed spirit of Jeremiah that we read earlier.

**Lamentations 3:17-18**  17 My soul has been rejected from peace; I have forgotten happiness. 18 So I say, "My strength has perished, And *so has* my hope from the LORD."

Then suddenly God helped him to remember. I never worry about telling you something you already know, because God and His ways and His promises need to be remembered not just read, filed away and left behind. Even Prophets and Preachers forget.

**Lamentations 3:21-25**  21 This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. 22 The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. 23 *They* are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. 24 "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I have hope in Him." 25 The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, To the person who seeks Him.

It is good to remember what God has done for us.

He wanted you personally since eternity past. He created you to be like Himself.

**Ephesians 1:3-4**  3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, 4 just as **He chose us in Him** before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.

He acted to resurrect you spiritually and then make you His own child. He even wrote you into the will with His Eternal Son Jesus.

**Ephesians 2:4-5**  4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, **made us alive** together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

**1 Peter 1:3-4**  3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has **caused us to be born again to a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

He made you a citizen of heaven and a member of His immediate family.

**Ephesians 2:19**  19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

He sent the Holy Spirit to live in your very body and soul to help you overcome weakness and sin.

**John 14:16-17**  16 "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 17 *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

The Spirit enables you be a witness for Him and then also witnesses to us that we are His.

**Acts 1:8**  8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

**Romans 8:16-17**  6 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*.

I could go on and on with this but I hope I have made this point. As America turns her back on The One True God and spiritual darkness, corruption and godlessness become the order of the day, how are we to feel and think? We are to live in faith generated hope. We are going to need one another to do this! We cannot be isolated! We cannot neglect hearing and applying the Word of God! Hope is absolutely essential to your Christian Life…Absolutely Vital!

We need to commit ourselves to knowing more about what God has done for us and remembering what we already once learned. The other side of this precious gold coin we call hope is the future. What will God do going forward…

**How is God going to care for us as our future unfolds? (Does He tell us anything?)**

He promises to know and care for our physical needs on earth.

**Matthew 6:31-34**  31 "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' 32 "For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34 "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

He promises to transform us into the image of Christ. It is your destiny not just something you hope you can pull off on your own.

**Romans 8:29**  29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

He promises that nothing in creation can separate us from Him. Nothing…not even our own weakness and sin.

**Romans 8:35-39** 35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED." 37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

He promises to come back to get us. Even if we die before He returns He will get us…Resurrect us and take us home to our eternal mansion with Him.

**John 14:1-3**  "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also.

**1 Thessalonians 4:16-18**  16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

He has already confirmed our citizenship. There will be no immigration checks at heaven’s gate. We will be instantly recognizable as legal citizens because we will be clothed in the righteous beauty of Christ. We will enter as if we have belonged there since the foundation of the world…because we have!

**Philippians 3:20-21**  20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; 21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

He has already betrothed us (The Church) to Himself. As a Galilean bridegroom came at night for His bride, Jesus will come for us.

**2 Corinthians 11:2**  2 For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you *as* a pure virgin.

**Matthew 25:13**  13 "Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.

He is going to throw the wedding feast of the ages.

**Revelation 19:6-9**  6 Then I heard *something* like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. 7 "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." 8 It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. 9 Then he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God."

He promises to right all wrongs and bring perfect justice to creation.

**Revelation 20:11-12**  11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

He promises a perfect world for you to enjoy for all eternity.

**Revelation 21:1** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea.

**Revelation 21:5-6**  5 And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." 6 Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost.

The future is bright for us. Hope in God is the eternal symphony of heaven. All of God’s chosen have conquered fear and anxiety by hope that springs from faith. Believers of old have Hoped in God in their darkest hours. We are so close to the consummation of the ages that I sometimes lay awake at night listening for trumpet blasts. I’ll give David the final word…

**Psalm 62:1-2** …. My soul *waits* in silence for God only; From Him is my salvation. 2 He only is my rock and my salvation, My stronghold; I shall not be greatly shaken.

**Psalm 62:5-12**  5 My soul, wait in silence for God only, For my hope is from Him. 6 He only is my rock and my salvation, My stronghold; I shall not be shaken. 7 On God my salvation and my glory *rest*; The rock of my strength, my refuge is in God. 8 Trust in Him at all times, O people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah. 9 Men of low degree are only vanity and men of rank are a lie; In the balances they go up; They are together lighter than breath. 10 Do not trust in oppression And do not vainly hope in robbery; If riches increase, do not set *your* heart *upon them*. 11 Once God has spoken; Twice I have heard this: That power belongs to God; 12 And lovingkindness is Yours, O Lord, For You recompense a man according to his work.