



Hope

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Our Hope is in the Lord

Hope. Man alive does the world need some hope right now! Lockdowns, fires, viruses, riots, protests, division, fear, hate... we can all agree we need hope! But what does that really mean? Hope is one of those words that we have lost the meaning of.

It has turned more into a wish...I hope I get a promotion. I hope to be able to go on vacation. I hope my husband picks up dinner on his way home so I don't have to cook.

Or we have turned it into a person of trust. My hope is in my parents, my husband, my job, my president. I have placed my trust that things will go well for me in others.

Hope, true Biblical hope is different. The word "Hope" is mentioned in scripture nearly 200 times. Paul wrote in Romans 15:13, "I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit."

It doesn't say that God is the source of our fulfilled wishes or that our hope is placed into God by our choosing. **God is the source of hope!** Let that sink in for a moment. He is the source. It isn't a concept that we have control over. It is Him! His hope fills us with His joy and peace. If we are filled with His joy and peace, we have hope! We take joy (even in the crappy times) that His plan perfect! We have peace (even in the midst of chaos) that He is there, He loves us and walking right along with us!

Hope is what we have when we have received all of Him. If you have been forgiven, redeemed, filled with the Spirit and have the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control), you have hope!

We don't have to hope for something. We have Christ, so we have hope! And because we have hope, our faith grows!

Hebrews 11:1 says, "Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see."

Our faith (the daily walk with Christ that effects our actions, our words, our decisions, our lives!) is proof that we have hope. It is proof we have Christ and, therefore, it becomes evidence for all to see! We can't physically lay eyes on God. But our faith, because of our hope, becomes a way for all to see God!

Hope That Anchors

Tonight we are looking at a hope that anchors. Our verse is Hebrews 6:19 (ESV): We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain.

We have this! Have What? This hope! This hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain!

You may be settling in for the night. May be doing your end of day scroll and check in on FB. Maybe saying good bye to a stressful day or thanking God for a great one. For me typically it seems to be a time of checking off boxes to make sure I completed enough tasks to consider myself a productive human being. But somewhere in the midst of all my mental checkmarks is this uncertainty, this nagging feeling that I just haven't done enough! So my mind begins to churn and thoughts of how I can do more, accomplish more, and be more tomorrow start to over take the peaceful wind down to my day. If only it didn't have to be this way if only there was some way to stop the worry, uncertainty, and noises that pollute my thoughts. Oh! Wait there is this hope!

This hope that has torn the veil, this hope that has entered into the inner place, this hope that is a sure and steadfast anchor for my soul. This hope that if I stop and take my focus off of myself. Stop and take my focus off my accomplishments or lack thereof. Stop and take my focus off the checkboxes that fuel my identity. If I Stop and engage with the transforming power of this Hope This hope that is Jesus. Then I not only find rest for my mind but rest for my soul.

Rest well anchored in the hope of Your salvation!

Confidence in God's Perfection

Romans 8:24 says: Now that we are saved, we eagerly look forward to the freedom. For if you already have something, you don't need to hope for it. (NLT Study bible).

In the study section, it says this: it is natural for children to trust their parents, even though parents sometimes fail to keep their promises. Our heavenly father however, never makes promises he won't keep. Nevertheless his plans may take more time than we expect. Rather than acting like impatient children as we wait for God's will to unfold, we need to have confidence in God's perfect timing and wisdom.

I have a great example of this going on in my life right now. I have been on oxygen 24/7 since April 23rd, 2020. There has been 29 tests done on me and no one can find anything wrong. I was told to lose weight and you will feel better. Well, I have lost 42 lbs. now, off of 1/2 of all my meds and my oxygen still drops and I get shortness of breathe very easily. Am I an impatient child just throwing a fit because I am not off of oxygen? Yes, I am. Not proud of it but, yes. During this time, I have honestly drifted from my daily quiet times. Angry? Disappointed? Absolutely. I know that God has told me that he will heal me in his timing.

Lord, I ask you today for you to empty me of me and fill me with you to help me place my hope in you and you alone and in that I will stay sane during this waiting period. Help me Lord to surrender my will to yours. Help me to continue to pray, surrender and trust in your will for my life. It is in your son's MIGHTY and most HOLY NAME I pray JESUS CHRIST, AMEN

There's Hope in the Mess

Have you ever just had a junk week where everything that could go wrong did go wrong? Well that was my week a couple weeks ago! As we finish up this month long look at hope, I want to take a moment and share my raw self with you. Not to gain anything from you, but only to be transparent and practical application of what we've been talking to.

I have always been someone who has never really had a ton of people to rely on. I full on own that I have a personality that people don't just flock to. I have never been accused of being meek, soft spoken or timid. I struggle with pouring all of myself into whatever God calls me to (often to the point of complete exhaustion) and not seeing others doing the same. I am in a constant battle with my frustrations, my judgements and my mouth. ((If you are someone that isn't for everyone, take heart! God created you and knew every little sassy corner of you and chose to die for you anyway!))

Because of this, I have never had a large circle of people I could call "my people." You know, the people who will listen to you cry when you're struggling, laugh with you when you are hilarious but then also have the backbone enough to call you out and hold you accountable when you've crossed a line or need to let something go! Over the past few years, my circle seems to keep shrinking as I have experienced people manipulating situations for their own gain, sharing my private prayer requests with large groups and even flat out spreading lies about me to others. I can honestly say I have 2 people I can truly say are "my people" and I'm married to one of them so if he's the reason I'm struggling, I'm down to one! ((I pray that you have someone to be your rope of three strands (Ecc. 4) person. Even just one person. If not...don't worry. Jesus is enough!))

I don't share all of that so you can feel sorry for me. I share that so you can truly understand where God lead me...or perhaps a more appropriate word would be drug....where God drug me a couple weeks ago!

As I said before...one of those weeks where everything that could go wrong did go wrong and I was left alone. I felt overwhelmed, unappreciated, unheard, unseen and alone. Work, ministry and family all collided in a crap show of chaos. Even "my people" were given their own versions of chaos, so I felt as though they were struggling enough, they didn't need my mess on top of it. I was truly left alone to deal with myself and my frustrations. I could have sat down and had a little pitty party or looked at all the struggles as attacks.

Don't get me wrong. Yes, the enemy is very real. My point in all of this is to say that if you are living your life crying about being a victim in one circumstance after another, you're gonna miss God. God didn't give us verses like in Romans 8 when He says that He will work all things out for the good or in Jeremiah 29:11 when He promises to prosper us and not to harm us to tell us that because of Him our lives will be peachy and if they aren't it is the enemy. Those verses are there to remind us that life is messy and sometimes just flat out sucks. You can either be a victim or you can trust that God is allowing you to walk through the muck to teach you something! ((Muck sucks. Don't feel like if you're life isn't Pinterest perfect, #blessed that means you're not loved by God. This isn't the prosperity Gospel ladies. Life is messy and there is nothing wrong with acknowledging that something isn't how you hoped it would be! And sometime everything just hits the fan and it has absolutely nothing to do with how hard you're praying or how much "good" you're doing and everything to do with trusting God!))

Once I remembered the very first devotional of this month and that God is my hope and if I have Him, I have hope, I was ready to move forward. I reached a point where in my raw, sassy self, I was able to tell God "This sucks. I don't like this. But I will consider my own life nothing and I will complete the tasks you have laid out for me (Acts 20:24) and I'm gonna trust that you will show me something through this all. Help me reflect you, even though I really don't want to. Help me speak you, even when I really want to tell people what I really think. Help me serve you, even when I just want to go home and give up."

I pulled up my big girl panties, I persevered and I got through. I pushed aside those thoughts that I was exactly what those people I thought were my friends though I was. I trusted that He has called me to something greater and as long as I have breath in my lungs and a willing heart, He can use me! ((That's all it takes by the way. Are you alive and willing? He will use you. Don't let someone make you feel like you need to complete a checklist or reach some level of super Christianity to be used by God. If he can use a mouthy mess like me, He certainly has something in store for you!))

It took 9 days, but God revealed to me what He wanted me to learn through that awful week. Larry Wallace (an amazing biblical historical teacher) shared with us the story of Mary Magdalen in a teaching series he did at our church recently. When you think of Mary Magdalen, you think an evil, sinful woman who was spared by Jesus. Larry shared that if you look at scripture, no where does it actually say that she was evil. There's verses that she was possessed and it is believed she was a prostitute, but all the other pre-conceived notions were developed over the years by the telling and retelling of her story.

This gave me HOPE! Why? Because like her, before I met Jesus, I was controlled by my own sinful self. I too have had my story retold based off of others perception or agenda. But once I was set free, I have never looked back, just like Mary! She gave up her whole life to follow Jesus. God chose a possessive hot mess of a woman from a nothing town to first reveal the risen Christ to. God has chosen a mouthy hot mess of a woman from the middle of nowhere Wyoming to join Him in amazing things.

Why share all of this? Everyone's life is a mess. We all have bad weeks (heck...I'm sure we can all agree that most of 2020 has seemed like one big giant dumpster fire) but there is HOPE in it all. There is HOPE in the suck, in the poor choices, in the frustration and in the tears because GOD IS HOPE! God is there. In the good and in the bad, He is there. He is our HOPE!

