
Words of Truth

A Lively Hope

By: Brian A. Yeager

In September Calvin preached a sermon on hope. He established that in this world there is no hope. In fact, as he pointed out, the world is full of tribulation (John 16:33). He discussed the difference between the way carnally minded individuals approach hope from how we approach the subject matter of hope. I enjoyed listening to that sermon, as I did all of the classes and sermons I heard here while recovering from surgery.

While listening to that sermon I was overjoyed in considering our hope. I was hanging onto every word in every Scripture that was used during that lesson. One Scripture that I did not catch in the sermon is what we are going to base this lesson upon. Calvin rightly made the points that whatever hope you have in this world is temporary (II Peter 3:10-12). George, in the class before that sermon, rightly taught about how limited and fragile our time in this life is. The Scriptures clearly show us those things (II Samuel 14:14, Psalms 90:10, Psalms 102:11, Psalms 103:15-16, Psalms 144:4, James 4:13-16, and I Peter 1:24).

Therefore, when you think about hope, you realize how dead hope is if it is a worldly hope. Solomon pointed this out throughout, the book of Ecclesiastes, repeatedly (Ecclesiastes 1:2, Ecclesiastes 1:14, Ecclesiastes 2:1, Ecclesiastes 2:11, Ecclesiastes 2:15, Ecclesiastes 2:17, Ecclesiastes 2:19, Ecclesiastes 2:21, Ecclesiastes 2:23, Ecclesiastes 2:26, Ecclesiastes 3:19, Ecclesiastes 4:4, Ecclesiastes 4:7-8, Ecclesiastes 4:16, Ecclesiastes 5:7, Ecclesiastes 5:10, Ecclesiastes 6:2, Ecclesiastes 6:4, Ecclesiastes 6:9, Ecclesiastes 6:11, Ecclesiastes 7:6, Ecclesiastes 7:15, Ecclesiastes 8:10, Ecclesiastes 8:14, Ecclesiastes 9:9, Ecclesiastes 11:8, and Ecclesiastes 11:10). If all you have in life is physical things then you most certainly are hopeless (Luke 12:13-21 and I Corinthians 15:19). So, we should focus on a living hope.

Our Real Hope Of Life

Notice: *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto **a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls"* (I Peter 1:3-9).

Don't just read past the Scriptures quoted above. Reread them. Think about them. Hope is a significant benefit of being a faithful disciple of the Lord. Hope is most certainly a

huge part of God's plan of salvation. Consider this: *"For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it"* (Romans 8:24-25).

Our real hope separates us significantly from people of the world. Consider this Scriptural point: *"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words"* (I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

As Paul noted to the Thessalonians, in the quote above, people who do not have Christ have no hope in death. We do! The righteous have hope in death (Psalms 37:37 and Proverbs 14:32). Our hope is not temporary. We don't labor for things that will perish. Doesn't that make you thankful that you have found and obeyed the Gospel of Christ? Doesn't that make you thankful that you can have salvation? Let's all remember, the hope we all have in Christ now hasn't always been presented to humanity.

The Hope We Now Have Hasn't Always Been

Notice this: *"Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, **having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ"*** (Ephesians 2:11-13).

Our hope for life, as you just read, wasn't always presented to mankind. The Old Testament had promises (i.e. Joshua 1:6), but not as we have in Christ. Those promises of old were temporary or at best presented in a mysterious way (Ephesians 3:1-11). Now consider this great hope we have, that hasn't always been, and ask yourself what that should motivate you to do.

Our Hope As A Motivator

"And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (I John 3:3). If we want to see God, it'll be through being pure (Matthew 5:8). Therefore, let the hope of eternal life motivate you to live the right life now so that you gain eternity (John 5:28-29).

Conclusion

We have a living hope. That is, something to live for and look forward to (Colossians 1:5). There is only one hope (Ephesians 4:4). Be thankful that we whom are faithful in Christ have that hope. Let that hope move you forward to the fulfillment of the promise of life.