

“‘Tis the Season”

“Make the most of every chance you get. These are desperate times!” Ephesians 5:16 *The Message*

“To Be Hopeful!”

“And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it.” 1 Peter 3:15

A. Biblical hope is...

1. Hope is not just a kind of optimism.
2. Hope is not a wish for something better without a certainty of fulfillment.
3. Hope is not just a great desire with no real assurance of getting your desire.

“Hope means hoping when things are hopeless, or it is not virtue at all...As long as matters are really hopeful, hope is mere flattery or platitude; it is only when everything is hopeless that hope begins to be a strength.” G.K. Chesterton

4. Hope is a strong and confident expectation dealing with future and what we can’t see or haven’t received, or both!

“We were given this hope when we were saved. (If we already have something, we don’t need to hope for it. But if we look forward to something we don’t yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently.)” Romans 8:24-25 NLT

B. Biblical hope is generated by ...

1. Past promises that God has given us.

“Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means ‘God is with us.’” Matthew 1:23 NLT

2. Present help that He is demonstrating.

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.” Psalm 46:1 NIV

3. Future glory that we believe is coming.

“Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.”

1 Corinthians 13:12 NLT

“Dear friends, we are already God’s children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is.”

1 John 3:2 NLT

C. God has provided us with hope...

“But if we (hope) look forward to something we don’t yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently.” Romans 8:25 NLT

1. With Christ in us, we no longer have to be without hope.

“In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope.”

Ephesians 2:12 NLT

2. Hope is built in us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

“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.”

Romans 15:13 NLT

3. Hope changes our focus and builds Christ-likeness in us!

“Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God’s glory. We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.” Romans 5:2-5 NLT

4. His hope in us continues to renew us.

“He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us,” 2 Corinthians 1:10 NIV

5. Hope is a choice that we put on, to protect our mind.

“But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.”

1 Thessalonians 5:8 NIV

6. Hope is an anchor to our faith.

“This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God’s inner sanctuary.”

Hebrews 6:19 NLT

7. God is always faithful, so hold on to the hope promised!

“Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise.” Hebrews 10:23 NLT

D. When all seems hopeless*...

“So prepare your minds for action and exercise self-control. Put all your hope in the gracious salvation that will come to you when Jesus Christ is revealed to the world.” 1 Peter 1:13 NLT

1. Hope moves us forward.
2. Hope energizes the present.
3. Hope lightens our darkness.
4. Hope increases faith.
5. Hope is infectious.
6. Hope is healing.
7. Hope is practical.
8. Hope purifies.
9. Hope stabilizes in the storm.
10. Hope defends.

*David Murray

E. When you are feeling hopeless...remember...

“There are no hopeless situations; there are only people who have grown hopeless about them.” Clare Boothe Luce

1. The pain won’t last forever.

“He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.” Revelation 21:4 NLT

2. Praise God, even when it’s hard.

“Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again—my Savior and my God!”

Psalms 43:5 NLT

3. Give your burdens to God.

“Then Jesus said, ‘Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.’” Matthew 11:28 NLT

4. When you are weak, God is strong.

“Each time he said, ‘My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.’ So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.”

2 Corinthians 12:9 NLT

5. Keep your eyes on Jesus.

“I prayed to the LORD, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears. Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces.” Psalm 34:4-5 NLT

6. God will strengthen you.

“But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.” Isaiah 40:31 NLT

7. Don’t stop praying.

“Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.” Romans 12:12

“‘Tis the Season to be Hopeful!”

10 Reasons to Hope (When All Seems Hopeless)

By David Murray

When discouraging and depressing news threatens to flood the nation, the church, and the soul, we need God's help to lift up our heads, hearts, and hands. Posts like this encourage us not to fear. But once fear is cast out, we then have to build positive Christian hope in its place, a beautiful virtue and life-transforming grace that yields multiple benefits:

1. Hope moves us forward: Christian hope is a realistic expectation of and joyful longing for future good and glory based upon the reliable Word of God. The more we long for the future, the less we will yearn for the past. Hope deletes regrets and underlines expectation. It diminishes drag and increases momentum.

2. Hope energizes the present: It is worth living today because the eternal tomorrow is so much brighter. What's doomsday for most, is coronation day for us. What most dread, we desire.

3. Hope lightens our darkness: Hope does not deny nor remove the reality of dark and painful providences. However; it does shine a bright light into these valleys and points to the sunrise at the end of them.

4. Hope increases faith: Faith fuels hope, but hope also fuels faith. As Hebrews 11 makes very clear, hope, and faith are very closely tied together, the one enlivening the other. Without faith, we cannot soar in hope, but without hope faith will limp home. The greatest believers are the greatest hoppers...and vice versa.

5. Hope is infectious: Just as we can drag others down by our recriminations and moping, so we can inspire and motivate through our inspiring hoping. It not only encourages other sagging Christians but it also impacts depressed unbelievers who cannot but ask a reason for the hope they see in us (1 Pet. 3:15).

6. Hope is healing: When I counsel depressed people, one of the first things I do is try to give them hope. By definition, depression is a sense of hopelessness. Things cannot and will not get better. That's why I want to give them the hope that in the vast majority of cases, they will get better, there is a way out, and there are things that they can do to help themselves in their felt helplessness. That hope itself is a huge step towards healing.

7. Hope is practical: Hope does not mean we just sit and wait for Utopia to appear. Not at all! Hope motivates action. When we hope for better days for the church, we serve the church. When we hope for the conversion of our children, we are motivated to share the Gospel with them. When we hope for God's blessing on His Word, we listen to it much more avidly. Hope produces action.

8. Hope purifies: Whatever persecution we experience in this world, the day is coming when we will not be just called sons of God, we will be like the Son of God. This is what inspires and motivates the apostle to persevere to the end and to persevere in holiness. *"And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure" (1 John 3:1-3).*

9. Hope stabilizes in the storm: There are sixty-six drawings of anchors in the catacombs, the caves and tunnels that persecuted Christians hid in during the Roman persecutions. Hope was their anchor during those dark and stormy days (Heb. 6:19; 10:34). Like the anchor, hope grabs what is out of sight. As one puritan put it: *"The cable of faith casts out the anchor of hope and lays hold of the steadfast rock of God's promises."*

10. Hope defends: Paul also depicts hope as a defensive helmet (Eph. 6:17; 1 Thess. 5:8) that must not be taken off and laid aside until the battle is over. The helmet also points us to the area of greatest vulnerability and danger – our mind or thoughts. That's where Satan usually works to present reasons to doubt and despair. And that's why we need our minds daily renewed by the power of hope.