

Hope in the Lord

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[0:00] In Psalm 31 verse 24, it says, Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.

! Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord. Just this second week of October, Julie and I had the great joy of visiting the Holy Land, walking through the ancient streets of Jerusalem. And we were in such awe, as we walked those cobbled streets, we were in such great awe of the significance of the place, of the history of the place, and of who was there in time gone by. And Julie and I were so moved, Julie was so moved that each time she prayed, she couldn't help but weep with joy to think of what our Lord has done for us, our precious Lord, as it was mindful, especially in that place. As much as we don't need to go to some particular place to feel that way, or to sense that. And on a glorious sunny Tuesday, a week or so ago, Julie and I visited a place where the Lord spent a large part of his ministry time, Nazareth in the Sea of Galilee. And we walked along the beach of the Sea of Galilee, and it was beautiful and peaceful there. As the glistening waters lapped the shore, it was a peaceful place. And I was able to dive in and swim in the Sea of Galilee. And what a joy that was, to dive into those clear waters and just as I laid back in the waters floating, I just wondered at the One who had walked those waters. The One who had moved in wonder. Who had come to see them. And I thought of that day when He, the One who made it all, and in whom all things consist, overcame the laws of nature. How so? How do you explain it? Because He is God. He is God. That's why. And there He walked on the water to join the fearful disciples on that water, to ultimately calm the storm. And there was a great calm. A great calm. And that same day when Julie and I were there, we heard later that just 10km away, people were in fact staring death in the face. An Israeli soldier was wounded in an attack from opposing forces. Deepening tensions in the Golan Heights were flaring up just 10km away or so. Even while we were right nearby, people were at risk of their lives. How Israel and our world needs to know Him still. Our world needs to know Him still. The source of hope in an otherwise hopeless world. And it strikes me how people in many countries all across the globe, even today, face potential danger. Every day. It's an uncertain world. For some people it can be a dark and gloomy place. And it's easy to feel a sense of hopelessness.

Yet, in such places and such circumstances, believers across the globe can take heart in God's exceeding great and precious promises. Including the promise of the One who walked the water. The One who cannot lie. When He says in Psalm 31 verse 24, Being of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that love the Lord.

The Lord. Some people turn in despair, yet in vain, to the bottle. It was sad to see in England.

[4:20] In England now, there are rows and rows of supermarket shelves packed with alcoholic drinks of every kind. In the regular supermarket shelves. So it would become a routine purchase decision for the shoppers there.

To just take and imbibe of alcohol of every flavour. A hopeless state. And in England, people's faces are marked by misery. And they are as grey as the weather. Streets of shops are boarded up where I used to live.

Because of the recession that has hit the UK. And yet businesses associated with gambling still seem to be making a killing.

As people line up in vain as they hope they'll get the winning ticket in the sweet state. They'll get the lucky numbers. That will change their luck. A society that is hopeless. Hopeless.

And on the church front too, there is a certain despair. Julie and I sat in the lounge room of a dear lady who talked about celebrating the centenary of her church.

[5:37] Of the founding of her church. 100 years old. But that same church is at risk of closure as it only has 6 people attending.

And the HQ, the decision makers are checking the numbers. It's not viable. It's at risk of closure. What was once a thriving witness to the gospel. A thriving witness with circuits of churches across the district.

And the lady told me of a faithful preacher who would preach 5 times a day in the circuit of these churches. 5 times a day. Even as he achieved his 90th year. A 90 year old preacher preaching 5 times a Sunday.

Yet he's passed away. And today there's a woman preacher there. I suppose doing the best you can.

[6:44] And it's dwindled away to near extinction. We're sad to see the church now has NIV pew bibles. And it's major events are now such things as flower shows.

And harvest displays at certain times on the church calendar. The gospel witness and the true hope in Christ has been eroded away by compromise and neglect.

In Psalm 119.81 it says, My soul fainteth for thy salvation, but I hope in thy word. We neglect the word of God at our peril.

In Psalm 119.114 it says, Thou art my hiding place and my shield. I hope in thy word. I hope in thy word.

Psalm 130.5 it says, I wait for the Lord. My soul doth wait. And in his word do I hope. Exceeding great and precious promises. The word of God.

[7:46] In another place Julie and I enjoyed visiting a very historic ancient cathedral. It was a staggering sight. A massive sight to see.

And we admired the beauty of its stone work. Of its fine architecture. The ancient stone still standing. After hundreds of years. Hundreds of years. And it made us consider and reflect how in this place many Christians, thousands of Christians over the years would have worshipped there. And sermons would have been preached there. God glorifying sermons. And this whole experience was spoilt at the end when I saw one of the flyers that this church was using.

And I was shocked to read that this great and awesome cathedral promotes its dedicated male choir. Established specifically for homosexual members of their church.

I thought, how far has such a church come? Over the centuries. How far has the church come? And the facts speak for themselves brothers and sisters.

[8:53] At least 10,000 churches have been closed in Britain since 1960. This is shocking. England itself now has over 1,500 mosques.

That's just England. 1,500 mosques. And numbers of these used to be church buildings. People in our society are horribly lost and impoverished of true hope.

You can check on the internet. Read. Just search for churches turned into mosques. And it's a common theme in Great Britain. What was Great Britain.

They desperately lack the hope they need in these nations. There are whole nations without hope. They suffer from a poverty of hope.

And I think this is apparently where we live today. In this place. In this town of Elizabeth II. And in our travels in Greece we witnessed a number of protests. As the recession bites hard there in Greece. And as many have lost their jobs.

[9:56] On one day we saw a large and vocal protest march. There was a particular political cause. People were chanting and waving banners against some particular extremist political party.

And then a couple of hours later another group. A country marched against another cause. They were protesting that the government had laid off nearly 1,000 administration staff from the country's universities. The marches were met by police.

Armed warlock soldiers. Heavy submachine guns. Armed, helmeted, decked out in full riot gear. Carrying plastic shields.

People walked the streets of some countries in some cities around our world today. Where it's common place to see troops and police. Armed with machine guns.

This was the case in Israel today. A city and a people torn. Divided by walls. And checkpoints. And cultures.

[11:01] Bloodshed and tragedy dominate the headlines. A lack of hope becomes normal. A lack of hope. And surveys tell us today that a majority

of people think that a nuclear war is a real possibility within our lifetime.

That's what people think. The majority think that. And lately we've seen, as we've read and seen, the spectre of the US defaulting on its debt.

It's looming as a real possibility that one day it will happen. And what uncertainty that would bring. What chaos. In our travels Julie and I have seen many people living in abject poverty.

Sleeping on the streets. And this is in western nations. Western nations. Western cities. A lack of hope. A lack of hope. A lack of hope. As people struggle just to get by. Just to cope.

Despair is the norm. In our travels we've seen some great mansions of millionaires. We didn't get to go inside them. But it was astounding just to see them from the outside.

[12:12] Yet Job writes in 31 verse 24 of the book of Job, Of the vanity of those who make gold their hope. Truly some hope is vain. Vain hope.

Where can people turn? Where do people turn? In the search for hope. In the search for hope. For some, they follow the false gods of sports.

It becomes like another god kind of substitute. That grips people's lives. Holds them captivated. It's where they pour their energy, their devotion, their love, their money into some vain game.

Where opposing sides are all hinted up about kicking a round object from one side of the field to the other. It doesn't make sense. Kicking an oval ball makes even less sense.

For some, it is their religion, their obsession. We met a lady and she was clearly a fanatic for the chorus, for her football club.

[13:20] To which it seemed like she devoted every waking minute of her life, even choosing to attend her match. And then her post as a distributor of the program guide to the attendees of the match.

Even though her husband was having a major hospital treatment at that time. It was more of a priority. I thought of her. I thought of her. I thought of her. I thought of her devotion. I thought of her sacrifice. I thought of her zeal.

Of that sense of belonging, of that commitment that she showed. More than many Christians I know. In their devotion to attending church. Yet what a great waste! What a great waste! How empty of real hope she was! How sad!

It is apparent that such an interest does not bring real hope. In Job 8, 13-14, it tells of the paths of those who forget God.

The hypocrite's hope shall perish. Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be as a spider's web. Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be as a spider's web.

[14:38] Job 8, verse 14. People are in a hopeless state. What they rest their lives upon is as flimsy as a spider's web.

They give scant thought for their lives for what really matters. The true hope for Israel, and for our planet, is the salvation found in Christ.

In Psalm 131, verse 3, it says, Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and forever. Here's some stats I read lately. It says that every year, 171,000 Christians are martyred for their faith. Every year.

I don't know how many get martyred in Australia for their faith. 171,000 Christians are martyred for their faith every year.

Ignorance abounds in Christendom today as a prevalent apathy and neglect of Bible truth. A recent book I read cited some alarming statistics.

[15:57] It says, 41% of self-proclaimed Christians believe that the Bible, the Koran, and the Book of Mormon are all different expressions of the same spiritual truths.

What? 41%? They think the Koran, and the Holy Bible, and the Book of Mormon, for goodness sake, are different expressions of the same spiritual Bible truth.

Spiritual truth. Despite the contradictory teachings on truth, on salvation, on the nature of God. And only 46% of born-again adults believe in the existence of absolute moral truth.

46% of born-again adults believe in the existence of absolute moral truth. I don't know those who claim it to be born again. Maybe the survey didn't get that right.

Even for some who claim to be Christians, they lack the reality of true faith in Christ. Tozer says, it's my opinion that tens of thousands of people, if not millions, have been brought into some kind of

religious experience by accepting Christ, and they have not been saved.

[17:24] It's a token expression of faith. But they haven't been saved. We must not miss the true hope.

The general condition of our world today is hopeless. It's sad to see when people have lost hope.

No wonder mental health drug taking is escalating.

No wonder depression grips people and imprisons them. What about our fair nation of Australians?

Every day, the stats tell us at least six Australians die from suicide.

Six per day, every day. And a further thirteen attempt to take their own life. Every day in Australian, hopeless.

The scriptures tell us of a people without hope. And we were once in their number, we that are saved, once we were also without hope. In Ephesians 2 verse 12 it says that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the Covenants of Promise, having no hope and without God in this world.

[18:37] Without Christ, having no hope, without God in this world. When we were without Christ, we were without hope, without God. It's truly been said that even in the bleakest of times, Christians have the brightest hope.

Sad to see in Israel today, the very religious people who live there. You know, from the moment we set foot in the places, people with these prayer beads. I don't know whether they're saying Hail Mary's or some Buddhist or some Islamic prayer, but religious people live in this nation of Israel.

Jew and Muslim alike. Everywhere they wear their distinctive garbs and headdresses and they carry these prayer beads. People with much religious zeal.

They look to the coming of the Messiah. Paul tells of the hope of Israel in Acts 28 verse 20 he says, Because for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.

Yet for all their misplaced zeal and enthusiasm, these religious ones in Israel, many of them have missed the first time the Messiah came. They missed it.

[19:47] When he came as the Lamb of God, they missed it. They are without Christ, without God, without hope in this world. In contrast for us we read Jeremiah 17 verse 7 it says, Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose hope the Lord is.

Where will you set your hope? What about you today? Where will you place your hope? Where will you set your hope? Some will place their hope in some change of political leader.

You know we have had a change of government in Australia. Some might think that is going to make some difference. They might set their hope in that. Some might think, well some man made scheme to save the planet.

Hey if we turn off a few globes we might save the planet. Maybe it is saving the whales. That might bring a bit of hope into our world. Maybe some new wonder drug that will be found. Some new age philosophy will bring some hope.

Some even think the eradication of religion and replacement with some new godless secular order will bring hope to planet earth. Where will you set your hope? The psalmist in Psalm 78 verse 7 says that they might set their hope in God.

[20:59] That they might set their hope in God. The real source of our hope, the real source of hope for this planet, for every one of us here today is a person.

A man from Cravenmore sent me an email which I read just this morning. He wrote in part how a great need for the church today is for each one of us to truly, quote, fall in love with Jesus, end quote.

That is true. The great need is that we fall in love with Jesus. To be urged to a greater love. A greater love of Him.

That Christ's church will, quote, want Him to be the head. To, quote, preach about Him. His beauty and majesty. His love for us. This man says, quote, I think the reason that Christianity, in inverted commas, is so lukewarm here in our world here.

Because it is about lining up with a program in the church, not organically loving Jesus with an emphasis on a relationship with Him. And in turn a relationship with all those who have His Spirit.

[22:10] There is much truth there. The neglect of the church. To neglect the hope. For Bible believers, our hope must be set upon Him. Upon knowing Him. Upon loving Him.

That heart relationship. How desperately our world needs the Prince of Peace to reign over us. The early Christians had a phrase, Maranatha.

Maranatha, we read it in 1 Corinthians 16, verse 22. It means, the Lord cometh. Maranatha, the Lord cometh. It was a declaration of hope for the early believers.

Like a secret password they used in this time of persecution as they greeted one another.

Maranatha, our Lord is coming. Jesus is coming. Jesus is coming. Our expectation, our hope of the return of Christ brings hope for us.

Every time we meet, we can say, Maranatha. When we farewell one another, we can say, Maranatha. Our hope is grounded in Christ. Titus 2, verse 11, it says, For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

[23:46] The grace of God has come that we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour.

Notice here there's two things. There's a looking for the blessed hope. There's a new way of living, soberly, righteously and godly. The looking and the living go hand in hand.

The word hope here has that sense of a confident expectation. It's not hope as in a hope so maybe. It's a confident assurance of his coming. As we look to the future, the Lord Jesus is just, could be days away.

We don't know how many days, but it is days away. We don't know how many days. It could be a day away. It could be days and days away, but it's a blessed hope yet still.

It's a blessed hope. Perhaps today, you know, Julie and I, we, again, we were blessed to be on the Mount of Olives, that place where our Lord ascended into heaven just two weeks ago.

[25:04] And Julie was saying we should email Brother Don, if we could email Don, and say, it's not going to be today, Don, because it's a clear sky. It's going to come back with the clouds.

So, you know, some might think, if it's a cloud-free day, we could sin a bit, because he's not coming today. No, not so. We need to be ready, watching every day.

Every day, any day. As we look to the future, especially we look forward to his returning. Julie and I, we were pleased to stand on the hairy mounds. And it was just a humble little chapel there.

In fact, sacred to the Muslims also, because they also believe that Jesus ascended from this place. In Acts 1, our Lord gave his final instructions to his disciples.

And it says a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked up steadfastly towards heaven as he went up, two men stood by, who said, Ye men of Galilee, we stand gazing up into heaven.

[26:05] This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. And in the Gospel of Luke's account it says, He lifted up his hands and he blessed them.

And it came to pass when he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. Now they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they were continually in the temple praising and blessing God.

Amen. A blessed hope is that Christ is coming. It's a blessed hope. It's a hope that gives us joy and expectation.

A blessed hope. Jeremiah 17, blessed is the man that trusted in the Lord and whose hope the Lord is.

Psalms 31 it says, verse 24, Be of good courage and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord. Our hope is in the Lord. It's not in the circumstances.

[27:04] It's not in the situation that we may face. It's not in the present tense. Our hope is in him. And the word says that truly joy and

peace can be found in believing.

Romans 15, 13 it says, Now the God of hope, it's one of his names, The God of hope, the God of hope, fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope.

That you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. God brings hope. The God of hope will fill you with joy and peace in believing. It's interesting, it says, abound in hope.

This hope that we have is extravagant. God's hope in us is extravagant. It's overflowing. It's bubbling over. It's abounding. God wants us to abound in hope.

It speaks of that exceeding of quality, of quantity. It's like, you know, who knows when, I can recall, when my dear mum gave me too much to eat.

[28:06] You know? It's like when your mum puts too much on your plate. God's hope is like that. Abounding. More than we expect, certainly more than we deserve.

The hope. The hope that is in us. And God is generous in his lavishing of his love upon us. Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us. He's lavished upon us.

And we should be called the sons of God. He doesn't hold it back. He pours it out. All joy and peace. Notice that. In believing. All, without exception.

All, in the Greek, means all. That's simple, isn't it? All joy and peace in believing. We don't need to go to the Greek to get that. It's all. All.

All. All joy and peace in believing. Our part is the believing. Do we believe God? Do we have that hope? That eternal hope? It's not dependent on circumstance, on situation.

[29:08] Our joy is dependent on his grace. On his control. Our peace and joy is found in believing. In the God of hope. The object and source of hope.

We're not talking about happiness. You know, some... I was reading a really interesting book lately about... Now, you know, some make this claim that as a Christian you're going to have a wonderful situation in your life.

And everything's going to be fine for you. And yet, as a Christian, suffering and affliction could await you. Much tribulation.

And some of you may even be blessed with the privilege of martyrdom. That could be God's plan for you.

Yeah. It's not about having everything ritzy and glitzy. It could be God's pathway for you. It could be one of suffering. But there's a hope. There's a hope.

[30:09] There's a hope. A hope that strengthens us. That holds us. That sustains us. That fills us. That abounds.

Joy and peace in believing. And, friends, it's the Scriptures that are that source of hope.

We read of the Scriptures in Romans 15, 4. Whatsoever things were written aforetime, write Genesis through. From page 1, Genesis 1 verse 1.

For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning. That we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.

If you're feeling like you don't have hope this morning, this has been written for you. This is God's message for you. You don't need some Latter-day prophet to give you some extra-biblical revelation about it.

[31:11] You need it here. It's in your hands. It's in these covers. These things were written aforetime for your learning that you, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.

Hope is found here. Not in some pipe dream. Not in some self-help guru's advice. Not in some mindfulness or meditation technique. Not in some new drug or medical procedure.

This is the definition. The hope that is in Christ. Colossians 1 verse 27, it says, The hope that is in you. The hope of glory.

Christ in you. When hope seems lost. When hope seems missing. When you feel overwhelmed. This is written for you.

That you, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope. A hope beyond ourselves. Hope! There are so many Scriptures. I'm only really touching on a very small number today.

[32:18] Look up hope in your concordance and have a look at it. Hope has an abiding quality. What does it say? And now abideth faith, hope and charity.

These three. But the greatest of these is charity. Faith, hope, charity. These abide. Yet, if you die without Christ, you will be hopeless forever.

If you die outside of Christ today, you will be hopeless forever. It's a hope we want to share.

It's a hope that burdens our hearts. It's a hope we want to not keep to ourselves. In 1 Peter 3 it says, But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts. And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

Be ready to give an answer for the hope that is in you. I'd like in some future messages to bring some truth to answer the attacks of skeptics who want to undermine people's faith and overthrow their faith.

[33:43] That we can find that eternal hope that stands up to scrutiny and that can be assured of. My question for you, do you have this hope in you today?

There are many scriptures we could share. It says of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Colossians 1 verse 5. A hope laid up for you. It's reserved. There's a reservation being made.

A hope laid up for you in heaven. Colossians 1 verse 23 it says, Continue in the faith. Be not moved away from the hope of the gospel. The gospel brings hope in a hard, godless world.

There is hope. There is good news for you. Hebrews 6 verse 19 it says, Which hope, that hope that is faith, we have as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast.

1 Peter 3 writes of a living hope, of a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. I've been talking about a world that is hopeless.

[34:49] The very place we live as people without hope, without Christ, without God, without eternal life. We have a hope that is in us.

We have Christ in us, the hope of glory. We have the blessed hope, as we are assured of his coming again. Any day, it's our confident expectation. This hope transforms us.

It strengthens us. It lifts us. It purifies us. And every man that had this hope in him, purifies himself, even as he is pure. 1 John 3. 3.

In Isaiah 14, there is that familiar one. He giveth power to the faint. To them who have no might, he increaseth strength. Even the youth shall faint, and be weary. And the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord, they that wait upon the Lord, or in other words, hope in him. There is that waiting, there is that expectation, there is that assurance of our confidence in him.

[35:47] They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run, and not be weary. They shall walk, and not faint. Where is your hope today?

Psalms 31 verse 24, it says, Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.

Let me close quickly to seek to implore you today. If you don't know this hope, if you don't have that confident expectation, if you don't have that assurance of Christ as Lord and Saviour in your life today, then I urge you to consider the Scriptures, to consider the challenge today.

There is a hope that you can have within you. And he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord. Romans 15 verse 13, it says, Now the God of hope, fill ye, fill ye with all joy and peace in believing that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.