

# Hope

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[0:00] Hope. Hope. It's essential for survival. It's essential. When people face situations of danger or! Misfortune or despair, it's hope that sees them through. Many people today have lost hope. They've lost hope. Bitterness is eating them up. Disappointment and depression is overwhelming them. And Psalm 42 tells of a man crying out in a time of need. In Psalm 42 verse 11 he says, Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God! For I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God. He tells himself, Hope. Keep on hoping. Hope in God. You could write a book about this verse and someone did. A Puritan writer wrote a 175 page book just on this same verse and allied verses that we are to put our hope in God. And we can win through. We can defeat discouragement.

And there is hope for a hopeless world. And yet we know of some that their lives are lived in hopelessness and without any real hope. And you hear of some who commit suicide and you see the sadness of that, the shame of that, the great loss and tragedy of that. And a Psalm has said that on their tombstones are words like this, grim and sad words, like, I was not, I became, I am not, I cannot.

For some that's their life. It's like there's nothing, nothing to it, nothing left to remember them. And it's like that those spoken in Ephesians 2 verse 12, it said of them that they are without Christ, having no hope and without God in the world. That's Ephesians 2 verse 12. Without Christ, no hope without God in the world. And as the saying goes, no God, N-O, God, no hope, N-O, hope. But to know God, K-N-O-W, God, is to know hope. K-N-O-W, hope. If you know Him, you'll know hope.

If you do not have Him, you will have no hope. And Chuck Swindoll said this, he said, Hope is something as important to us as water is to a fish, as vital as electricity is to a light bulb, as essential as air to a jumbo jet. Hope is basic to life. Without that needed spark of hope, we're often doomed to a dark, grim existence. And how often the word hopeless appears in suicide notes.

[3:21] It's commonly there. If it's not actually written, it's implied between the lines. And take away your hope and your world is reduced to something that's between depression and despair.

Hope. Hope. And when we talk about hope, it's more than wishful thinking, as the world would use the word hope. The hope that we're talking about is a hope that's confident expectation.

That's the sense of the word underlying the English word in our Bibles that we translate as hope. And our true hope is not found in worldly philosophy or positive thinking or human reasoning.

The hope that we have is in the one who is called the God of hope. If you'd like to turn to Romans 15, verse 13. The hope that you have as a Christian man, as a Christian woman, is in the one who is called the God of hope.

You could translate that the God of expectation. The God of assurance. The God of hope. Romans 15, verse 13. Paul prayed, Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.

[4:42] We can abound in hope through the Spirit of God. Through that one who is the God of hope. The God of expectation. The God of certain hope.

Our God. He will fill you, it says, with all joy. With all joy and peace in believing. And this word, as we say, it's more than just an optimism or a wishful thinking.

It's a confident, certain hope. Now the world that we live in, there's a saying, as I'm told, it's an old Roman saying, that where there's life, there's hope.

But our hope is much, much more than that. It's a hope that's a strong and confident expectation. It's to trust, it's to have assurance. It's like that song that we sing, blessed, assurance. Assurance. Assurance. It's a certain thing. It's a certain trust. It's a certain hope. It's biblical hope. It's hope that keeps us going day by day by day.

[5:40] Day after day. A hope that is beyond the circumstances that we see. A hope that's founded in faith.

That exceeds all of our uncertainty and our worry about the future or the past. Our hope, our trust is certain. It's sure. It's founded in the Word. And as a Christian, we have a hope that's within us. As 1 Peter 3.15 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 within you with meekness and fear.

Be ready to give an answer. Always ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

You've got a hope. A certain trust. A certain confidence. A certain assurance that heaven is your home. That Christ is your saviour. That your sins are under the blood. That he saved and ransomed your soul from death and hell.

[6:46] And you have a hope that is something this world cries out for and needs so desperately. The hope that is within you. And Peter refers to elsewhere a living hope.

A living hope that's within. It's alive. It's alive. It's living. It's vibrant. It's in every believer. This hope that you have, it's not a hope so salvation.

It's a confident assurance of the salvation that he has secured for you. And he has confirmed and guaranteed and sealed for you.

This assurance, this certain hope that's through faith and trust in him. And this hope, it brings life. It brings the very breath of God's life, God's spirit.

And isn't it wonderful to think that this hope that you have, this hope that others might ask you, a reason of that hope, a reason why you've got hope that is within you, this hope, this ever-living hope is a hope that you can be an agent of.

[7:51] You know, some, they're agents of life insurance or agents of a shop or a store representing a trade or an occupation, a product.

You are an agent of God's life. You're an agent of God's salvation. An agent to bring hope to people around you.

A means of his communicating eternal life through. There's a story of a man one day. He was in the frozen wastelands of the Arctic region.

And he was there one day. And it was desperate. They were caught in a snowstorm. And they were there in some deep snow. A couple of fellas. And this fella, he was nearly chilled to death.

He was about to give up and struggling for life when he saw his friend there. He looked in a worse state than he was, getting blue and dangerously ill in the cold.

[8:56] His fellow traveller was moaning and groaning there in these snow drifts. And the man, at first impulse, his first impulse was to rescue that man, the other man.

When he found him, he reached down and he rubbed the man's legs and arms, his frozen limbs. He finally got him to his feet and he carried him through the drifts to safety. And then the truth flashed home to him that in saving his neighbour, he had saved himself.

Because as he quickened the blood flowing in the bloodstream of this man who was freezing to death, he had quickened his own veins and helped himself. And likewise too, we want to impart this hope to others.

The living hope that we have. It's too good to keep to ourselves. We want to see others saved. And as a church, that's why we want to be a soul-winning church. We want to be an evangelistic church. That puts our energies and our devotion into outreach, into caring for the lost, those without Christ, those without hope, to give them the hope that we have.

[10:01] 1 Peter 1, 3-8, what Peter writes about, the lively hope or the living hope. This hope that's alive, it's lively. He says, 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.

This is that assurance. This is that lively hope. It's like, we know, we love to talk about the Lord's death and at communion time we remember that.

But even more so, he's alive. He's risen. He's not here. He is risen. And we have that living hope, that lively hope, that our saviour, he is alive.

And he's ready, he's waiting, he's looking, he's longing for your faith and for that homecoming time when you will see him. And it's God's true life. It's alive.

It's living. It's lively. Living hope. We've got a hope that's beyond anything, that any religious system or philosophy or belief of our world today, as much as there might be many wonderful philosophies of men that might have some element, some skerrick of truth to them, this is so much more exceeding, isn't it?

[11:39] God's grace, his salvation through faith and his grace and mercy. This living hope that we have is a hope that the Christless ones know not.

They haven't not. And this life that we have, it drives us, it motivates us with that energising force and power of faith, that strong confidence in God, in our Master, to affect our daily conduct.

It's been said that right thinking comes from right doctrine. Right doctrine leads to right thinking, and then the right thinking works itself out into right conduct.

And that's what this living hope does. It comes out of us from the inside out, from that faith, from that trust. It affects our thinking. It affects our philosophy. It affects our reasoning.

It affects our decisions that we make. Our will. It affects our decisions. It affects our walk. It affects our daily conduct. And this living hope is something we want others to know too.

[12:41] And this hope that you have, if you're a believer, if you're a Christian, boy or girl, man or woman today, this hope that you have is a hope that comes from Christ himself. As it says in 1 Timothy 1 verse 1, Paul writes, he says, he says, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Saviour, and the Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope.

Paul says, Jesus Christ is our hope. He is our hope. Our hope is a person, a personal relationship. And Titus 2, Paul writes to Titus in 2.13, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

He says this is a blessed hope. It's an assurance. It's a joyful hope. It's a happy hope. A blessed hope. This hope that we have, it's absolute. It's guaranteed without doubt.

And as believers, we're guaranteed. It's guaranteed, Ralph, that he's going to be coming. And he's coming for you. For me, that believe either he's going to come with you if you head off before the event, or you're going to be taken up when he comes.

And you're going to go for a, I was going to say self-propelled, but it'll be a spirit-propelled rocket ride, won't it? Into glory.

[14:01] That will be in the twinkling of an eye. It'll be caught up. You know, we won't need any mod cons or scientific inventions of men to, to, we're not to put a rocket on our back to get up there, but it's just going to go, whoosh, at his voice.

We're going to be taken. And it's a confident expectation that that day is coming. And it's closer today than it was yesterday. And, amen, it could be closer than we even think that it could be.

And it's going to be a joyful hope. It's a blessed hope. A blessed assurance. And Christian faith and hope is a lifestyle. It's a joy for us. It's an attitude that's based on relationship.

It's a joyful expectation and a confidence that we have. As the psalmist said in Psalm 146 from verse 5, Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is the Lord, his God.

That's a joyful expectation, isn't it? That's a happy people whose God is the Lord, whose hope is in the Lord, our God, which made heaven and earth the sea and all that is therein, which keepeth truth forever, which executes judgment for the oppressed, which giveth food to the hungry, the Lord looseth the prisoners, the Lord openeth the eyes of the blind, the Lord raiseth them that are bowed

down, the Lord loveth the righteous, the Lord preserveth the strangers, he relieveth the fatherless and widowed, but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down, the Lord shall reign forever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations.

[15:37] Praise ye the Lord. You know, the Psalms just jam-packed full of promises that you can put your trust and hope in. Psalm 146, 5, Happy is he who hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord, his God.

You should be happy today. Amen? You should be happy today because your God is the Lord and your hope is God. It's not a happy that's a happening stance or a happenstance, a circumstance. Our happiness is a joy that Christ gives that is beyond the circumstances of life. And there is one in whom we can place our full confidence in 1 Thessalonians 1, verse 3, Paul writes, Remembering without ceasing your work of faith and your labour of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of God and our Father.

This is a hope that's got a patience, it's got a perseverance, it's got to get up and go and keep on going. And Matthew Henry said, the ground of our hope is Christ in the world but the evidence of our hope is Christ in the heart.

It's when you experience Christ in the heart that you have a hope in the world. And the Christian hope gives us the strength to carry on. When tough times happen, He is your hope.

[17:05] He is your confident expectation. He is your assurance. And you can have that motivation every new day. There's a story about a preacher told, Campbell Morgan, a preacher of old set, told a story of a man who had an awful catastrophe.

His shop was burnt to the ground. It was just a pile of cinders, a pile of embers and soot and dust. His shop, his livelihood. And it was the great Chicago fire. And he arrived at the ruins the next morning carrying a table which he set up in the charred remains of his store and upon which he placed the sign, everything lost.

Except wife, children and hope. Business will be resumed as usual tomorrow morning. You know, that's hope, isn't it?

That's faith. And that's the kind of faith you can have. That maybe the circumstances of life may not always be as you would like them to be. And the past might have unpleasant memories and the present might have many concerns.

[18:19] There might be an uncertainty there. Yet, there is that certain hope. There is that certain hope that Christ can give to you.

And whatever else happens, He is with you. He is with you. No matter what. It's been said that most of the important things that have been done by anyone that really counts it, are by those who've kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all.

And we hear that in the secular side of life too. That it's the people who just press through. As you could say, you know, positive thinking and all that. There's a sense where it's pressing through, but we don't have just a philosophy to hang on to.

We've got a saviour to hang on to. To hold us. And to hold us fast. And to help us through whatever life throws at us. But here's your hope. Here's your hope.

You've got something much more than the most motivated lost person could ever have. The hope that you have is a blessed hope. It's a hope that's an eternal hope.

[19:25] It's a heavenly hope. And it's guaranteed by the one, the maker of heaven and earth is guaranteed it in writing for you by the word of God. And Paul talks about our hope of eternal life.

It says, Titus 1 verses 2 onwards, in hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the world began, but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour.

I'd like to impart hope to you today through the preaching of God's word. Impart hope because this word guarantees it. And guess what? Our God cannot lie.

So, wow, that's good, isn't it? You know, we can, you can read the newspapers and whatever source of media that you might listen to or watch or hear and you've always got to question, was that true?

You know, when the story came out about Michael Jackson, they said there's reports. And when I first saw that, because it was from a gossip magazine or, you know, one of these tabloid press newspapers and you've got to think, oh, probably a rumour that's false and, you know, he's not really dead.

[20:38] But, the good news that you hold in your hands is written by an author who cannot lie. Isn't that good news? This is absolute guaranteed truth and there's no question to it.

It's absolute guarantee and you can have a hope in it that's assured and confident. And John MacArthur said of hope, the hope of eternal life, is the believer's deepest longing for that which is affirmed and unalterably guaranteed by God's own word.

It's hope of eternal life that should impact on our day by day in the here and now. Does it? Does that hope that you have, does it show through?

Does it last the distance? When we face the tests that come our way, it should show through, shouldn't it?

A little poem says this, tell me what you are. Don't tell me what you will do when you have time to spare. Tell me what you did today to ease a load of care.

[21:55] Don't tell me what you will give when your ship comes in from sea. Tell me what you gave today a fetid soul to free. Don't tell me the dream you have of conquest still afar.

Don't say what you hope to be but tell me what you are. It's in the now. That hope is now. Christ in you, the hope of glory. He is with you.

He wants to use you. The only time you have is the now. Let the now be used for His glory. Don't have the thinking that later on I'll do this or that.

You may not see the later on. Use the now. Use the present. Use the day you have. It's a command that we should trust Him.

In Psalm 31, 24, there's a command here. It's not optional. It's not something we can put off or excuse ourselves not doing.

[23:00] There's a command and a promise in this verse from the one who cannot lie to you. Psalm 31, 24, be, that's present sense, be of good courage and He shall strengthen your heart all ye that hope in the Lord.

That's a good verse to memorize, isn't it? Psalm 31, 24, be of good courage and He shall strengthen your heart all ye that hope in the Lord.

It's guaranteed. It's in writing. It's in black and white in the book. And there is hope for you no matter what. Be, be, be, present sense of good courage.

You know, often I get people contact me and they're in despair for whatever reason it may be and there's been some very troubled souls contact me.

If only they would take this verse and let it be theirs. Be of good courage and He shall strengthen your heart all ye that hope in the Lord.

[24:14] If only they would take the word of God and let it be in them. There is hope for you no matter what your circumstance that confronts. There is hope in the Lord.

There was a heart doctor, a cardiologist who said in his autobiography, hope is the best medicine. I use more than any other.

Hope can cure nearly everything. It's true isn't it? And of course we know there's times we get sick and ultimately we'll be sick unto death.

It will happen. But yet there is hope. There is a hope that can help us to lift our spirit, to lift our heart and whilst we might still have frailties and physical limitations, there is a hope that is within you.

Hope that is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Another doctor said if you lead a person to believe there's no hope, you drive another nail in his coffin.

[25:21] You know, if someone doesn't have hope, you drive another nail in his coffin. People today, you can have hope, you can have a hope that is an eternal hope, an ever living hope, a living hope, a hope that is within you, an eternal hope.

Don't give up hope, keep on. And when it gets on top of you, you know, maybe you're feeling like, oh, there's this great big sack of all my worries and woes and troubles and, you know, what's in your

sack?

You have to show you what's in mine. You know, all the heaviness, the weighed downness, that irksomeness of day-by-day tests and trials and worries for the future.

It says, 1 Peter 5 verse 7, casting all your cares on him, for he careth for you. Casting all your cares upon him, for he careth for you.

I saw someone who put it like this, just dump it on him. You know, when you get, it's a good way of thinking about it, isn't it? Just dump it on him. You know, sometimes we get people just dump on us, don't we?

[26:36] They dump on us, all of their problems. But the best person to dump it on people today, dump it on Jesus. Dump every care, every care, every little bit of it, all your cares upon him.

Why? Because he cares for you. All your troubles, all your frustration, all your anxieties, he is faithful, he understands, and he is ready and able to help you.

And when you say a situation or a person is hopeless, we say that sometimes, don't we? It's hopeless. When you say a situation or a person is hopeless, you're slamming the door in the face of God.

That's a good way of thinking about it, isn't it? Nothing is hopeless, you have his hope, he is your hope. And Bunyan said, hope is never ill when faith is well.

When your faith is strong, your hope will be strong. Just to close a little thought, think about it, the maker of heaven and earth, talking about him tonight, the creator, and what it means to be created, and why it should make a difference in how you live.

[27:49] But we'll save that for tonight. And the turn about creation, and the universe, the things that have been made about the world and the planets, someone said this, the stars and planets are round, they move in orbital circles and circuits, and life as a result moves in cycles, you think of the seasons through years and days in life.

And he goes on, every 100 years we have a new century, every 365 days we have a new year, every 24 hours we have a new day, every 60 minutes we have a new hour, every 60 seconds we have a new minute.

And it's all in cycles, isn't it? It's all in circuits and seasons, and God has created the potential for new beginnings into the very design of the universe.

New beginnings. And for good reason, he goes on, every hero of scripture needed new beginnings. Adam and Eve after they ate the forbidden fruit, Moses after he killed the Egyptian, David after his adulterous relationship, Elijah after his emotional breakdown in the desert, the disciples after Good Friday, and maybe you.

New beginnings. New beginnings. I heard a song of late and I was talking about born again. And when you think about that, just that very phrase of born again, it's a new beginning, isn't it?

[29:23] And, you know, Julie and I were blessed this week with a new grandchild, a new daughter, Olivia, and thought that beautiful little baby coming out of the mother's womb and the beautiful new life that has just been birthed into this world.

A new life, a new human being, a new human soul, a new ever-living immortal soul has been made flesh and has come out to breathe, to cry, to shout, to smell, to hear, to see for the first time.

New beginnings. And that's our God is the God of new beginnings. Maybe for you, if you're not a Christian, be born again. Oh, just come out again.

Have a fresh start, a fresh new life, alive again. It's a living hope. It's a new life. It's life in Christ. It's Christ in you, the hope of glory.

It's that living hope. It's that eternal hope. It's that eternal life. It's born again. You can be born again if you haven't already and find that endless hope.

[30:40] hope. It's been said, life without Christ is a hopeless end, but life in Christ is an endless hope. It's wonderful, isn't it?

That new beginning, that new life, that hope that is beyond the happenings. It is a hope that is founded in the word of one who cannot lie.

He cannot. God, every word is true. Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we praise you. We love you. We praise you.

Lord Jesus Christ, you are our hope, the hope of glory, the hope of eternal hopes. Lord, the hope that is ever living and is assured by your very word, that confidence we can have as believers to know it.

We thank you for it. Lord, for any who know it, not yet. They might know what it is to be born again. Oh, to have that new life, that ever living life, that wonderful hope, that assurance we know we have through that faith, that grace that you give to us.

[31:51] We praise you, Lord, for it. Help us, Lord, to walk in that life, to give that hope to others that know it not, that we can be agents of it, that we can share it to those who are not yet saved in this hopeless world, yet Lord, there is hope, and we can hang on to that.

We thank you for that promise. We praise you, Lord, we thank you, in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you.