

Hope

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[0:00] All around us we see much disappointment and despair, depression. ! I know Adam and I have been doing a little bit of visitation and we've met a few people despairing. Now we read the headlines we see sad times, sad people everywhere, hurting people, hopelessness. Let us open our eyes and see them. They're all around us, all around us. People who lack hope and some Christians among them too. It's sad to see when people become despondent and despairing. We see people like that. People disappointed. They're disappointed maybe with churches. Disappointed with pastors. Disappointed, confused. Confused about doctrine. About direction. Lacking victory, lacking stability in their lives. In their faith, in their walk. Desperation. Feeling let down. Feeling like this struggling with life. With whatever it be. With challenges of health or life in general. People lacking hope. And my question to you today is, where in the world can real hope be found? Where in this world, in these despairing times, in this hopeless world, at times hopeless, where can hope be found? Where is true hope found? Where can we find this hope? Real hope? We're living in a world today where mockers laugh at the Bible and scorn the Bible and prayer.

[2:03] They laugh at it. They scorn biblical truths and teachings. And these are the people who make the movies that we watch. These are the people who govern us. They don't regard the Bible. The people we end up voting into power. The people who educate our children. By and large.

It just promotes more and more hopelessness. Because they don't have the real hope. Where can real hope be found in these times we live? I've yet to see anyone sit by the bedside of a dying man and read to him the works of Charles Darwin.

Darwin. Or the works of Richard Dawkins. Hope is not found in these things. It is not there. It is not there at all.

No wonder the world has lost hope. No wonder people are in depression and despair and hopelessness. No wonder that people walk around under this cloud of spiritual blindness. And in a daze of depression, as if they're doped by depression. No wonder we have lost hope as a nation, as a people.

[3:24] And such a people. And such a people were they that Ezekiel saw in his vision of the valley of dry bones. Ezekiel in 37, chapter 37. He saw this people as it were a nation. As it were as dead bones in a dry, deathly valley.

What a hopeless picture it was. As Ezekiel looked out in verse 11 of Ezekiel 37. The Lord said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel.

Behold, they say, our bones are dried and our hope is lost. Our hope is lost. Sounds like Australia today. It sounds like many in our nation today.

All seems hopeless. Yet when God spoke the word through the prophet, the life returned. As we see in verse 10 of Ezekiel 37. So I prophesied as though he commanded me.

And the breath came into them. And they lived and stood up upon their feet an exceeding great army. What a transformation. These dry, dead bones became an exceeding great army.

[4:42] In verse 4, the prophet cried out, Oh, you dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Hope may be lost, but it can be regained.

That's my message to you today. Hope may be lost, may seem lost, but it can be regained. Even in that valley of dry bones where it seemed all hope was lost, it became a living, breathing army.

Maybe you're feeling in such a state where hope seems lost. God speaks hope to the hopeless. He speaks life to the lifeless. Thank God he still does that today. Dry bones can become a living, breathing army. And consider that God can even touch our land.

That this God forsaking land, this godless culture that is Australia today. God can reach us still with a message of hope.

[5:49] A message that is an eternal message. Jeremiah sounds a bit like he's talking to some Aussies here in Jeremiah 18, verse 12. And they said, there is no hope.

But we will walk after our own devices and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart. They said, there is no hope. That's Australia today.

A hopeless culture. Like many in Australia today. Hope is lost. When people walk after their own devices. And walk after the ways of their own selfish, evil hearts.

The people who are without God are without hope. As Ephesians 2 verse 12 tells us. At that time ye were without Christ, having no hope without God in the world.

Without Christ having no hope without God in the world. Truly Christless people are hopeless people. If you are without Christ, you are without hope.

[6:53] If you are without hope, you are truly hopeless. What a dread condition to find yourself. What a sad, sad way to live a life. Having no hope without God in the world.

But God is still in the business of breathing life into dry bones. He brings life to that which is dead. He brings hope to that which is hopeless. And friends today, it's common to man.

These times of despair are common to man. Christians can sometimes dwell in that deathly valley. The valley of the shadow of death. The valley of the dry dead bones.

Christians can sometimes spend time in that place. You might have heard of the story of Pilgrim's Progress. Written by John Bunyan in a prison cell.

John Bunyan wrote knowing himself what it meant to have times of depression. And he wrote of giant despair.

[7:58] Giant despair. During the journey, Christian was walking with a man called Hopeful.

And Christian in this allegory was walking with this man Hopeful. And they grew weary in that journey. And they wished for an easier way. They noticed a little meadow by the side there.

And a little by-path. With a star leaning over the fence. A little detour on the way. And as night overtook them, they found themselves lost in a terrible storm.

And at last, weary and worried, they fell asleep under a tree. And they were captured by giant despair. Giant despair. This big giant representing despair in the Christian's life.

And this giant despair came and cruelly beat them. And threw them into a dungeon. The dungeon of Doubting Castle. And Bunyan wrote, It was a very dark dungeon.

[9:00] Nasty and stinking to the spirit. And here these two men lay in their misery. From Wednesday morning till Saturday night. With not one bit of water or bread or light.

And finally having reduced them into this miserable depression. Giant despair gave them a knife, a rope and poison into their prison cell. And the two men were sorely tempted to end their lives.

But remembering the commandment, Thou shalt not kill. They resigned themselves to continued tortures of giant despair. And then early Sunday morning, Christian suddenly sat up and half amazed says, Why a fool thus to lie in a stinking dungeon.

When I may as well walk at liberty. I have a key in my bosom. A key called promise that we'll unlock that gate. That lock.

And Hopeful said, that is good news good brother. Pluck it out of thy bosom and try. Then Christian pulled out of his bosom the key to that dungeon door. And as he turned the key, the door flew open with ease.

[10:13] And Christian and Hopeful both came out. What a picture of the Christian in that doubting castle. In those times when they'd gone on a detour from the Christian walk. And ended up in a despairing place.

In a stinking dungeon. The dungeon of depression. Yet that key of promise. That release from that prison. Is the promise of God. That he will save.

He will rescue. Friends there is hope. Even in the doubting castle. Even in the stinking dungeon of our times of hopelessness. Even in those despairing times.

You can have hope. You can have hope. You can have hope today. It is not hopeless. I want to point to you a way to find hope. To regain hope. It is found in Psalm 33.

Psalm 33 it is a song of praise. It tells of God's creating power. The power of his word. It tells of a nation that is blessed.

[11:11] His God is the Lord. And of how he looks down on the children of men. From heaven and he sees what we are about. And Psalm 33 kicking up from verse 18 it says.

Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them. That fear him. Upon them that hope in his mercy. To deliver their soul from death. And to keep them alive in famine.

Our soul waiteth for the Lord. He is our help and our shield. For our hearts shall rejoice in him. Because we have trusted in his holy name.

Let thy mercy O Lord be upon us. According as we hope in thee. These verses are jam packed with hope. With helpfulness.

There is some helpfulness found here. In God's word for you. In this song of praise for you. In Psalm 33. I pray that it will speak hope to your life today. The immediate context here in Psalm 33.

[12:11] Is a battle zone. Life can be like that sometimes. A battle zone. Maybe you are feeling battle weary. It is a bit of a battle for you. Life is like that.

Off times. Some of you are there in that battle zone. Even today. It speaks to you. Psalm 33 speaks to you. It speaks to you. It speaks to you of vain hope. Of false hope.

In the earlier context. As it speaks of nations trusting in their own power. Trusting in their own might. And their own strength. It tells of the might of horses. Of the strength of horses.

That is vain. Many have a vain hope today. A vain hope. Whether it be in a government. Whether it be in a philosophy. Or an ideology. Vain hope.

False hope. Many trust in false hope today. Yet it will fall as a house of cards. When the trouble comes. The psalm tells us the source of genuine hope.

[13:07] Of true victory and power. Of the one who watches over those. Who fear and honour him. We see firstly here the source of true hope. Verse 20.

Our help is heaven sent. Heaven sent hope. Verse 20. Our soul waiteth upon the Lord. He is our help. And our shield. When things seem hopeless.

Where do you look? You look to the one who is your help. You look to the one who is your shield. When things seem hopeless. To whom do we turn? We turn to the one who has won the battle.

Whose battle it is. And whose victory it is. The battle is the Lord's. To whom do we turn? When battles come our way. We don't look to the strength of horses.

Or military might. We look to the one who governs the nations. Who rules the world. By his power. When battles come your way. You can know and sing like the psalmist saying.

[14:04] Our soul waiteth for the Lord. Our help and our shield. God is your help. And God is your shield today. This can be your testimony. This can be your witness today.

God is your help. And God is your shield. Wait on the Lord. He is our help and our shield. There's a story told of a man.

Who drove his car into. The harbour. Wolf River Harbour. It was Monday.

And attempted suicide. And there was a lady. Hope Phillips 38. Was sitting in her car. As her husband and son were driving.

And they saw this man drive. Down riverside drive. Into Wolf River Harbour. And Phillips said. As he saw the man climb on top of the sinking car.

[15:07] His face was like. I'm so desperate. Please help me. All I could do was run into the water. She said. Phillip swam into the water. Into the river. Towards the man.

And swam some 25 feet. To the car. And reached out a tree branch to the man. To pull him to safety. And her husband helped drag him out of the water.

And the man was a student. At the University of Tennessee. And she said. He kept telling me. He wasn't worth anything. I'm not worth anything. And I said.

You are worth something. You are worth something. You're here. Aren't you? Then he asked my name. And I said. Hope. And he said.

What's your name? He repeated it twice. He had a smile on his face. You knew he didn't want to die. And the police took him to the hospital. Friends. Hope rescues us. Hope rescues us. God's hope is our source of help. He is the help.

[16:05] He is the help. And the police took him to the hospital. Friends, hope rescues us. Hope rescues us. God's hope is our source of help.

He is the help and our shield. He is the help that we need. And we see also that this help, this hope, is found in the heart.

Our heart. Can know a heart deep hope. Verse 21, Psalm 33. It says, For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.

In the same book we talked about the dry bones, tells of hearts. Tells of hearts made new. Tells of hearts removed and replaced with new hearts. Ezekiel said, as God said, A new heart also will I give you.

Ezekiel 36, 26. We can have a new heart. A heart filled with hope. A heart that knows God's promises. A heart that finds liberty in God's power.

[17:17] A heart that finds God's rescue and help. A heart filled with everlasting hope. A heart that's got a faith that can sing. Even in the most trying of times.

And where the heart is refreshed. We can sing and rejoice. As Paul and Silas did in that familiar account in Acts 16. As they lay bruised and beaten in prison bars.

Paul and Silas still could sing. They still could sing in Acts 16. As the multitude rose up together against them. The magistrates rent off their clothes.

And they commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them. They cast them into the prison. Charging the jailer to keep them safely. Who having received such a charge. Thrust them into the inner prison. And made their feet fast into the stocks. And at midnight. At midnight. Paul and Silas grumbled.

[18:16] Paul and Silas complained. Paul and Silas said woe is me. Paul and Silas had their pity party. Paul and Silas gave up hope. No.

Paul and Silas prayed. And sang praises unto God. And the prisoners heard them. What a weakness. And as we see. The jailer was saved.

Not long after. Friends. Our hope is beyond our circumstances. Our rejoicing is in him. It is in him. Our heart is fixed. We will sing praise.

There's many psalms that speak of hope. Of praises. Psalm 31 24. It says. Be of good courage. And he shall strengthen your heart.

All ye that hope in the Lord. He shall strengthen your heart. Brother. Sister. He shall strengthen your heart. Sing praises. The hope that we have is heart deep.

[19:16] It's heart deep. It's within us. It's in a heart changed. Made view. Made alive. Filled with a song of praise. No matter what. God. And this heart deep hope.

It's a witness for us. 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. The hope that is in you. With meekness and fear. There's a heart deep hope. For the believer today. And when things seem hopeless. Check your heart.

Check your heart. How is your heart? Where is your rejoicing? Romans 12.12 says. Rejoicing in hope. Rejoicing in hope.

Patient in tribulation. We've heard about patience already. Long suffering. In tribulation. Continuing instant. In prayer. That's a good one to take heart in. Isn't it?

[20:12] Romans 12.12. Rejoicing in hope. Patient in tribulation. Continuing instant. In prayer. In other words. Always pray.

Psalm 42. Tells of a soul. Poured out. Tells of crying. Night and day. Psalm 42. The psalmist yet. Could praise.

Verse 4. I went with them. To the house of God. With the voice of joy. And praise. With the multitude. That kept. Holy day. People don't always.

Keep holy day. They like holidays. But they don't keep holy day. But friends. We can keep holy day. We can rejoice. And be glad. With the voice of joy and praise.

In Psalm 42. The psalmist went on. He knew what hardship was all about. He spoke to his soul. He said. Why art thou. Why art thou cast down. O my soul. And why art thou disquieted within me.

[21:11] Hope thou in God. For I shall yet praise him. Who is the health of my countenance and my God. Why art thou cast down.

O my soul. Why art thou disquieted within me. Hope thou in God. He was telling himself that. My soul. Find hope.

In God. Psalm 71. The psalmist tells. Of people dealing harshly with him. Of cruel and wicked people. Yet he rejoices in God. As his rock and fortress.

In verse 5 of Psalm 71. He says. Thou art my hope. O Lord God. Thou art my hope. O Lord God. I will hope continually.

And will yet praise thee. More and more. Verse 14. I will hope continually. And will yet praise thee. More and more. The rejoicing of the heart.

[22:08] Brother. Sister. Sing psalms. Find hope. Find praise. Heart deep hope. Heart deep.

It's not affected. So much by the circumstances. Because it's deep. Deep within you. It's a continual hope. A lasting hope. A rejoicing hope.

Psalm 146. 5. It says. Happy is he. That hath the God of Jacob. For his help. Whose hope is in. The Lord his God. Happy is he. God is his help.

His hope is in. The Lord his God. This is the cause of rejoicing. And gladness. There's so many scriptures. I'm just covering. A minority of them.

Just scratching the surface today. My exhortation to you. Brother. Sister. Today. When you're going through that valley. And we've all been there. Maybe you're still in it.

[23:06] Know that your hope is in God. Your hope is in God. Don't be fazed. This too shall pass. Proverbs 10. 28.

It says. The hope of the righteous. Shall be gladness. But the expectation of the wicked. Shall perish. Our hope. Is heart deep. No matter what. You know. There's a book. That's called.

The band played on. The band that played on. And this book. Answers the question. Why did the Titanic's band. Keep playing. While the ship went down.

And this band. It was contracted. By a talent agency. It was not employed.

By the Titanic's owners. And so even the doomed ship's captain. Couldn't order them to play. To calm troubled hearts. They didn't have to do that. They didn't have to play.

[24:00] So why did they keep playing? Why didn't they try to save their lives? And the author of this book. Looked into this question.

And he concluded. That the band played heroically. Because of the Christian character. Of the band's leader. Wallace Hartley. Wallace Hartley.

The band's leader. Was a faithful. Church attendee. We presume Christian. He. He loved the songs of the faith.

And he was engaged to a Christian girl. And they were to be married. After he made. Some crossings on. The Titanic. And sometime.

Before this tragedy. One of his friends. Asked Wallace. They said. What would you do. If you were ever on a ship. Which was sinking. And Mr Hartley replied.

[24:56] I don't think I would do better. Than to play. Oh God. Our help. In ages past. Or nearer my God. To thee. Amen. In all likelihood. Mr Hartley.

As he found the ship. Was going down. He called together. His fellow musicians. And encouraged them. To begin their concert. And as that ship. Slowly.

Tipped into the ocean. To its destiny. At the ocean floor. Christian songs were played. Into that cold. Dark night. Christian songs were played.

To bring peace. And. Hope. To bring peace. To the dying. And hope. To those who survive. As we know.

Nearer my God to thee. Was one of the songs. That was played. As the Titanic. Slipped. Into the ocean. How would you act.

[25:52] In such a testing time. Would you have been like Wallace. And played a song. Of praise. Of trust. Of hope. Of faith. What would your faith.

Have been like. Would it have been. The power of the Holy Spirit. That would have helped you. To face. That difficult time.

And still. To be a witness. To others around about. Have you. This heaven sent. Heart deep hope. That goes on. No matter what. Verse 21.

For our heart. Shall rejoice in him. Because we have trusted in. His holy name. Friends. This hope. Is gospel hope. It's gospel hope. Verse 18. Behold.

The eye of the Lord. Is upon them. That fear him. Upon them. That hope. In his mercy. Friends. Our hope. Must be in. His mercy. In his mercy.

[26:49] A great source of hope. For us. In these. Desperate times. Must be the mercy of God. It's our only hope.

Is his mercy. A great source of hope. Is that message of mercy. God's message for us. Is a message of mercy. It's mercy from Genesis. Through revelation.

It's the mercy of God. God's great mercy. His loving kindness. Romans 15. It says. For whatsoever things were written. A fortune were written. For our learning.

That we through. Patience. And comfort. Of the scriptures. Might have hope. Things were written. A fortune. For our patience. And learning.

That we may. Have patience. And hope. Comfort. And hope. Psalm 119. The psalmist cried. Remember the word. Unto thy servant.

[27:44] Upon which thou hast caused me. To hope. This is my comfort. In my affliction. For thy word. Hath quickened me. Thy word hath quickened me. Made me alive.

You've caused me to hope. Because of your word. Psalm 119. 81. My soul fainted. For thy salvation. But I hope in thy word. I hope in thy word. Psalm 119.

114. Thou art my hiding place. And my shield. I hope in thy word. Psalm 130. Verse 5. I wait. For the Lord. My soul doth wait. And in his word.

Do I hope. Through patience. And comfort. Of the scriptures. We might have hope. Do you hope in his mercy. There's a message of mercy today.

There's a message extended. It's the gospel hope. It's our only hope. It's that we will be amongst them. That fear him. The Lord taketh pleasure in them. That fear him. In those that hope in his mercy.

[28:44] Psalm 147. Verse 11. The year 1899. Marked a date. A year of two men's deaths. Mr. Moody. And a man called Robert Ingersoll.

Dwight L. Moody. The acclaimed evangelist. And Robert Ingersoll. A famous lawyer. Orator. And political leader. Two men. Faced their eternal destiny. Two men.

Many similarities between these two men. Both were raised in Christian homes. Both were skilled orators. Both travelled extensively around the world.

Widely respected. By their hearers. Both drew immense crowds. When they spoke. They attracted loyal followings. But here was one striking difference.

Was their view of God. Was their view of God. Ingersoll was an agnostic. A follower of naturalism. He had no belief in the eternal. But he stressed the importance of living only.

[29:46] In the here and now. Ingersoll made light of the Bible. He called the Bible a fable. An obscenity. A humbug. A sham. And a lie.

He was a bold spokesman. Against the Christian faith. Ingersoll's contemporary Dwight L. Moody. Had different convictions. Moody dedicated his life.

To presenting Christ. As the resurrected King and Saviour. To a dying people. He embraced the Bible. As the hope for humanity. And the cross as the turning point.

Of history. And he left behind a legacy. Of writing. Of spoken words. Of institutions. Of education. Of churches. And have changed lives. Two men.

Two men. Both powerful speakers. Influential leaders. One rejected God. The other embraced him. The impact to their decisions.

[30:42] Is seen most clearly. In the way they died. Here's how one biographer described. How they died. How these two deaths compare.

Ingersoll died suddenly.

The news of his death. Stunned his family. His body was kept at home. For several days. His wife was reluctant. To part with it. It was eventually removed. For the sake of the family's health. Ingersoll's remains. Were cremated. And the public response. To his passing. Was altogether dismal. For a man who put. All his hopes on this world. Death was tragic.

Death was tragic. For Ingersoll. And it came. Without the consolation of hope. Moody's death.

Moody's legacy was different. On December the 22nd.

1899. Moody awoke. To his last winter dawn. Having grown increasingly weak. Through the night. He began to speak. In slow measured words. Earth recedes.

[31:42] Heaven opens before me. His son Will. Was by his bedside. And hurried there. To his father's side. And said. Father you are dreaming. Then he said.

No. This is no dream. Will. It is beautiful. It is like a trance. If this is death. It is sweet.

God is calling me. And I must go. Don't call me back. And at that moment. The family gathered around. And moments later.

The great evangelist died. It was his coronation day. A day. A day that he looked for. For many years. He was with his Lord. And the funeral service of Moody.

Reflected the same confidence. There was no despair there. Loved ones gathered to sing. Praises to God. At this triumphant. Homegoing service.

[32:37] And many remembered. The words the evangelist had. Spoken earlier. That same year. In New York City. Some day you will read. In the papers. That Moody is dead.

Don't you believe. A word of it. At that moment. I shall be more alive. Than I am now. I was born of the flesh.

In 1837. I was born of the spirit. In 1855. That which is born of the flesh. May die. That which is born.

Of the spirit. The spirit. Shall live forever. Where is true hope found? In the Lord.

In the Lord. It's gospel hope. It's the good news. It's the hope. That there is yet mercy. To those who do not deserve it.

[33:34] There is yet mercy. To those. Who. Are unworthy of it. There is yet mercy. Hope. In.

His. Mercy. Hope. In his mercy. Jeremiah 17. 7. It says. Blessed. Is the man. That trusted. In the Lord.

And whose hope. The Lord is. You can have hope. Everlasting hope. Living hope. Lively hope. Everlasting hope. Endless hope.

I hope. I hope. That his heaven sent. Where can we go? We must go to him. He is our help. And our shield. The psalmist cried in Psalm 38.

15. For in thee. O Lord. Do I hope. Thou wilt hear. O Lord. My God. You might feel like God. Is far. Far away.

[34:30] Sometimes. But cry out. In faith. As the psalmist did. In thee. O Lord. Do I hope. Thou wilt hear.

O Lord. My God. The one in whom you can hope. Has an open ear to you. If you will but cry out. From your heart today. Heart.

Deep. Hope. Heaven sent. Hope. Gospel. Hope. Romans 15. Concludes. With now. The God of hope. Fill you.

With all joy. Hope. And peace. In believing. That you may abound. In hope. Through the power. Of the Holy Ghost. Let's cry as the psalmist did.

Let thy mercy. O Lord. Be upon us. According as. We hope. In thee. Let us pray. Let us pray.