

How to face the Future: Hope for tomorrow

#findhope #findpurpose #newlife

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[0:00] Some thoughts about the future. What's next? What's coming up? And what lies ahead? Really, we don't know. There's some who would pretend to predict the future that might project certain things that are going to happen. For the world in general, we know that things are changing fast. There's a whole lot of technology, a whole lot of change. Seems like there's something new every few days. And for some, we can know that the future looks fantastic really, but also it looks frightening. And for some, it's fearful. They're fearful of the future. There's so much going on, the globalisation, the genetic engineering, hybrids now. They've got the possibility to have made-to-order, customised, genetically altered children. Place your order. You want attractive, intelligent, or athletic, or all of the above. It's got this kind of sense where they're playing God now with babies, aren't they? There's talk of producing babies in a host womb, not of the biological mother. There's lots of strange talk about bioethics, of euthanasia. It's being promoted more and more, isn't it? And we've got robots becoming more human. Virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and this sense of being able to hear or experience almost anything imaginable in cyberspace. You see these gadgets, they wear on their eyes, and they can see all of these manufactured things. And then you've got, as well as those fantastical things, there's some frightening things. We see the intensifying conflicts around the world, the situation holding up Israel, Taiwan, Ukraine. Many countries have got these dread weapons of mass destruction. We see there's some horrific things of what drones can do now. And it's quite shocking, the reality of the present. And then who knows what's next, whether there's potentially biological attacks. There's talks of a likelihood of that, that they could just simply drop something in the water supply or spray us with something. There's growing concern about international terrorism. What's next? What's next? There's much poverty, starvation, pollution, and malnutrition across the world. There's a lot that is going very badly. There's fears about the environment. Some scientists say we've got little time left to save the planet. And scientists are telling us that the quality of our air, soil, and water is at worrying levels in some regions.

Sorry to give you all this bad news today. No wonder people are concerned, though. People are worried about the future. What's going to happen next? Because we know the Bible tells us that there is a hope, and we'll get to that. We see these machinations of the elite running the world, a world ravaged by potential nefarious forces. And you see some of these visions creeping into modern movies of these terrorists and such things. Where is the world heading? Here's what some US inventor said, we should all be concerned about the future because we will have to spend the rest of our lives there.

You think of it, friends, I know I've had opportunity to tap into some worldly TV programming just to have a glance at it. Thankfully, we don't have it at home normally, but I have opportunity to have a look at some of what the world is watching now. And it's quite sick. It's quite sickening to me, the vanity of it, and how utterly devoid of hope it is, the hopelessness of it. You think of our children, our grandchildren growing up in a world where there's a prevailing hopelessness, truly.

There's a prevailing hopelessness. And what are we to make of all of this? We that are the saved, God's people, I trust you're saved, that you have a hope, you that believe here tonight. And that's what I want to really dwell on in contrast to all of that negativity that I started with. Because as Bible believers, as believers in Christ, as your saviour, you have hope. You have hope. And that's what I want to dwell on today as we come to the Word of God. And Psalm 42 verse 5. Psalm 42 verse 5, it reads, Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. The psalmist is talking to his soul, and he's saying, why are you cast down? Why are you feeling this disquiet? Why are you feeling so unsettled? Hope thou in God. Hope thou in God. He's talking to his soul. And we can do that too. Soul, hope thou in God.

I shall yet praise him. He's my helper. What does the future hold? Really, we don't know all of the ins and outs, the details of what entirely will come before us. But one thing's for sure. We can know the God who holds the future. Amen. We can know him. We can know him who is our hope. And we can say to our soul, hope in God. He holds the future. He holds you. He holds us. What about your future today?

[5:15] What about your future? The Bible tells us that our life is like a vapour. It says, what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away. Like this mist, like this steam, like a vapour, this passing substance that's going to dissipate and will be no more.

Your life is like a vapour. And it makes us question the mortality that we have. I know when we were talking to folk yesterday as we did some door knocking, we came across a house where someone had just passed away. And they were taking the furniture out and we passed on our condolences to the family that were there. And it can happen just like that. Life is a vapour. How much time have we got? There's no guarantee. What lies on this path ahead for each one of us? What are you going to do tomorrow? What's ahead for you? God knows. We don't know what's going to happen. Whether we'll even see tomorrow. That's the reality, isn't it? And we can only guess at what the future will bring.

We may lose a loved one. We may face devastating circumstances. The vast majority of us will not be fully prepared for what happens. We've had something happen in our own lives that just came out of the blue. And it was quite a devastating thing. That was just in recent days. Some devastation. And you think, wow, where did that come from? And it's a shocking thing. When life throws those curveballs at you and you wonder, wow, I wasn't expecting that to happen. And there's things that might strike us that really knock us for six. And who knows what's going to happen tomorrow, figuratively, or the tomorrow after tomorrow. That sense where sometime in the future, something's going to happen. And how are we going to face the future? We see the lost. They've got no hope.

There's a hopelessness that consumes them. How will we face the future? Now, we can be passive. We're just passengers in history rather than participants. Just let life go on without really taking much notice. We can be reactive, negative, and upset about what's going on, especially if it's something unpleasant. Or we can be proactive. We can face the future with faith, knowing who holds the future. He holds you in his hand. And we can face the future with courage and with hope. We're not going to know exactly what lies ahead, what tomorrow will bring. But we can face these uncertainties with a calm assurance that God is already there. God is already there in your tomorrow. And we can face that future with that calm assurance that our living faith relationship with Christ will hold us steady. God alone can see the future, brother, sister. If you're a believer, you can know that the Lord will be with you. He will give you strength to handle whatever a day brings. If we stay close to him, we'll have nothing to fear. We cannot change the past. Some spend a lot of time and energy and mental thoughts and feelings and anxieties about what has happened to them. We can't change that. It's gone.

We cannot change the past. We've got only limited control of the present too. But many present events, we can make decisions now though to trust God for our future, to trust God for our life ahead, building our life on him, knowing that our life with him will never end. It's eternal. And we can have hope. Think of it, friends, today. God offers you forgiveness for the past, his presence and provision for the present, and eternal life. Just around the corner, isn't it, for the future. Of course, you can have eternal life in the present tense. And for the unbeliever though, think of the contrast.

There's just an utter hopelessness. I think of loved ones of mine, of friends dear to me, that have yet to trust the Saviour. And they're living in this utter state of hopelessness.

[9:27] They're devoid of hope. For some, they may look for their purpose in life to be affluence, to get more and more, to gather more and more toys that they're going to leave behind. More and more of the pleasures, the vain pleasures, the fleeting fancies and the fleeting happiness so-called that this world can offer them. But it's utterly vain. It's vain. It's vanity. Let me be straight with you. If you are yet to be saved, you are in great peril. You are in great peril. You must be saved. To avoid the lake of fire, you must be saved. Make sure of that by God's grace. Some people, they live their lives without God, without hope. It tells us of that in Ephesians 2 verse 12. It reads of those, it tells us there of some, they were without Christ, having no hope without God in the world. What an utter state of hopelessness. They're devoid of hope, lifeless, dead in trespasses and sins, under the dark clouds of despair. Their lives ruined by sin, hurt by guilt and shame. No matter how seemingly they've got it together, if they're without Christ, they have no hope. My heart goes out. That's why we care about witnessing. That's why we care about evangelism. That's why we care about the gospel leaflets that we're passing out because we want the gospel message to be out there. That's why we've got a

Sunday school that tells people how to be saved. That was one of the messages this morning with the children's Sunday school. The gospel message was there for these little ones. That's why we've got a youth group that preaches the gospel that tells people how to be saved because we want the gospel to be front and centre. Because we're living in a world without Christ, having no hope, without God.

And when you're feeling helpless and abandoned in these troubled times, where can we turn to the Saviour? There is hope for the hopeless and for the no-hopers. Really, I suppose there's that phrase that sometimes you might say, oh, looking at someone else, they're a no-hoper. But really, that was me too. I was once a no-hoper because I was without Christ. I was a no-hoper. But now I have hope. And it's the same for anyone, but for the grace of God. We can be in such a state too, can't we?

But thank God there is hope for the hopeless. There's really no no-hopers if they could simply trust him. And Christ can come and he can bring life and hope to the hopeless. He can bring healing to the broken.

When everything seems hopeless, yet he can bring hope. It's been truly said, men without Christ have a hopeless end. But with Christ, there is an endless hope. Think of that. Outside of Christ, without Christ, without hope, without God, they have a hopeless end. But with Christ, we have an endless hope.

[12:28] And so in contrast, we see the Christian, as you, as God's saved people, it tells for you that you have a certain hope. And it tells us here in Hebrews 6, 19, of this hope, this gospel hope, that this hope that we have is like an anchor of the soul. In those stormy seas, we can have a ship that is secure and it's not tossed about. It has an anchor. It's grounded and it's sure. It's steadfast. And this is the hope that we have. It's a certain hope. When things seem hopeless, put your hope in God. We think of the world, where do they put their hope? A lot of people are relying on antidepressants. Maybe you might need them and I'm not making light of that. But for some, it's like they're trusting in this or that, some substance, some bottle, some mixture, some crutch. But friends, we can know a hope that is sure and steadfast. It's the faith that we have in Christ. And for some, they're overcome by debt, by disappointments. And it's a reality that the word hopeless is one of the words most often used on suicide notes. Everyone needs hope, something to believe in, something to live for. And for a time,

I used to volunteer at a Christian telephone counselling service. And when I got the training, it was like everything was about the Bible. And all of the problems of the world, they had Bible verses for all of these problems. I was learning to be a counsellor. And at the time, I thought maybe they're a bit too Bible focused. But now on reflection, I see really the Bible is the answer. Really for every real mental, psychological relationship need, the Bible is the answer. The Bible is the ultimate counselling manual. And we see that the hope that we have, when there's a world that people are making calls, hey, I'm thinking about suicide, the best answer is Christ. It's the ultimate answer. Truly it is. The best answer is the hope that we have. And so think of that great hope that we have. I'll just unpack it a little. Think of what the Bible tells us about hope, the message of hope that we have. We see the very comfort and patience of the scriptures. It talks about that we might have hope. It says that these things were written, they were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. There's a message of hope here. The word of God is jam-packed full of a message of hope. And some would try in vain to find meaning and hope at the point of a needle, with the drink at the bar, through the feeling of the moment or the bars of some artificial high. It's a vanity. For some life is a vain hope. It's a hopeless search for reality. A life without God is without hope. But thank God we've got a message of hope. And what's more, the lost face of hopeless eternity? We think of hell as a place of hopelessness. We think of, really, as it's been truly said, you could paint a slogan over the entrance to hell, abandon hope. All ye that answer herein. Think of it, there's nothing that compares to hell, of the hopelessness there. Not one second of hope there. There's no exit. And when does hell begin?

It begins at the end of a Christless life. Hell begins at the end of a Christless life. Friends, if you're without Christ, flee to him for refuge. Flee from the wrath to come. Flee to Christ.

[16:06] And find your refuge there. There is hope in Christ. Thomas Jefferson wrote a Bible that ends the story of Christ with, There laid they Jesus and rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher and departed. That's it.

Jefferson took out the part of the resurrection. He took out the mention of the resurrection. So that Bible's got no hope in it. There's no hope in that Bible. But friends, we've got a Bible that says he's risen from the dead. He's not here. He's risen. That's in the word of God. That's the hope that we have. It's a living hope. It's a resurrection hope. Christ is alive. He's risen.

We serve a risen saviour. He's in the world today. There is hope in him. People need to have hope. We can't go on without hope. Really, it's the ultimate despair, isn't it? To not have any hope. And some will throw up their hands and want to quit. They feel like things are hopeless. Without Christ, there is no hope. But in Christ, it's the opposite, isn't it? For you that are saved. Even though troubles come, you've got a hope that goes beyond the circumstances. We think of Job. He was human such that in Job 3, he talked about that he wished he'd never been born. He was human. But thank God he didn't end his life. Things turned around. He went through that time of grief. He lived through that testing, that suffering. And now his story, his testimony is a source for us that in such a time of testing that we might go through because of Job's story. And we can know that hope of the message of hope. We see also we've got a God of hope. It tells us in Romans 15, 13, 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. So we've got the message of hope through patience and comfort of the scriptures. We can have hope. We've got the God of hope. He's the very source of it. He's the very author of hope.

[18:10] The one who gives us hope. He's the one who gives us that absolute hope, that abounding in hope. And even if the world around us is in a hopeless mess, there is a sure source of hope, the God of hope. We can know him personally. Even when everything seems troubled, we've got the God of hope. And he's here. He's with us. We can know him, the giver of hope. And really when you think of it, true hope, it comes from him. He's the one who, he's made us and he sustains us. He gives us his peace. He helps us to cope, to have that assurance when troubled times come. And there is joy and peace in believing. And you can abound in hope. It tells us there. It promises that we can have that.

And we can have hope today because of his saving love. And what's more, there's a hope yet to come. It tells us in Titus 2, 13 through 14 of the saved. They're looking for that blessed hope and

the glorious appearing of the great God and 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. Notice that looking for that blessed hope. In other words, that joyful hope, that glad hope. We've got a certain hope, a sure hope, a hope today and tomorrow as well. And for eternity as we are waiting for our Lord's returning. We've got the God of hope. What's more, this hope is a hope that we can share.

We see that there in 1 Peter 3, 15. It tells you, but sanctify, set apart 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. When we share the gospel, we're not out to win an argument. We're there to win souls. We're not out there to prove a point or to show ourselves knowledgeable or to make some human effort. We've got a hope that we want to share. We've got a hope that we want to give, to impart. And it's with meekness and fear. We're not doing it out of pride, out of our own ego.

We're doing it in humility, in gratefulness that we ask that hope that we have. We don't want to hold it and keep it to ourselves. It's too important, this salvation that we have. It's too important for us to keep it to ourselves. The hope that we have in Christ, we just have to give it away.

We look out on the multitudes like our Lord did and he saw them as sheep without a shepherd, scattered, harassed and flustered and like a storm-tossed vessel on the seas. We see Christ, he wants to give hope. He wants them to know his hope. And so we've got a hope. We have to give it away. The hope that we have, we want others to find. This hope is for the most hopeless, for those that are in the dire straits, to those that are the hurting, the despairing.

[21:18] We want them to know the hope that we have, to put their hope and trust in Christ. And so as a Christian, we can face the future with hope and we can know a hope that we can share. Think of it, just another aspect of this thought of the future. As we look towards the future, we can look forward with hope. We're not like the world because we have a hope that sees us through the turmoils of life because we can know three things. We can know God's plan, God's purpose and God's promise. Think of it, God's plan, that he's ordered this universe, he's made this solar system and runs this whole planet and he has a plan for us too. Let's have a mind that we want our plans to line up with his plans, with his will. It tells us in Proverbs that a man's heart deviseth his way. In other words, the man in his own mind, he makes his own plans, but then it says the Lord directeth his steps. God determines our steps. When we're thinking about the future, do we think and care about God's will?

Is that a deciding factor? Ordin' it to be? What is God's will? That should be what my future is directed by. We can devise our own way, but we want the Lord to direct our steps, to determine the walk that we will walk. Are we willing to, to seek and find his will, to find God's perfect will? Or do we just settle for God's permissive will, what we can get away with?

It's important to plan. Think of it. Just the world knows about planning. There's a Chinese proverb that says, dig a well before you are thirsty. It's a thought, isn't it? We think, what is ahead of us? And can we prepare, prayerfully prepare? Are we following God's plan, God's master plan? Is it God's blueprint for our lives that we're caring about? Or do we just willy-nilly set our own direction and devise our own way? Instead of thinking, what's his plan? That should overrule our plans, shouldn't it? And sometimes we have to change our plans. Are they in line with God's plan?

Because each one of us have to individually come to that mind. What is God's will? And sometimes we've got good intentions. Here's another quote. It's always easier the night before to get up early the next morning. We've got intentions to get up early, but in the morning we don't follow through.

[23:47] It's important to plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark. And here's another quote about planning. If we fail to plan, we plan to fail. It's true, isn't it? What would be God's plan?

What's God's best? Do we care about that? Do we care what that is or do we not? There was a man, an engineer of the Brooklyn Bridge, and he was injured while it was being built. And he'd had all his plans to build it, but he had to be shut up in his room. He was an invalid. And they carried the plans from the workman to him. And his wife helped direct the workman. And one day they put him in a cot and carried him to the bridge. And he lay there helpless. He looked at the beautiful structure

that he had created. He looked at the beams and the cables and the rods and the rivets. He saw that every detail was just precisely as he dreamt it to be in his dreams. And he cried out, it's just like the plan. It's just like the plan. What about God? Will he say that of your life? Will he say that of the life that you've lived? It's just as I planned it to be. Will our lives be lived out according to his perfect plan? Think of it. Let's just have a mindset. When we're thinking of the future, does God's will feature as the determining factor? God's plan. We can face our future with God's plan in mind. Also, we can face our future with a purpose. We see Daniel 1, it tells us that Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself. He had a godly purpose. He said, I'm going to decide to purpose in my heart, to live right, to do right. We see Barnabas 2, he had a godly purpose. And it says of Barnabas when he came, he saw the grace of God. He was glad. He exhorted them that with purpose of heart, they would cleave unto the Lord. That was his message, that with purpose of heart, they would cleave unto the Lord. That's a good purpose, isn't it? That we would have that purpose of heart, to cleave unto the Lord, to hold him tightly, to hold closely to your Saviour. That's a good godly purpose. Solomon 2, he had a good godly purpose. It tells of him, it reads, and behold, I purpose to build a house unto the name of the Lord my God. Solomon had a godly purpose.

What is your heart's purpose? As you're thinking about the future, can you purpose in your heart, like Daniel, I'm going to do right. Can you purpose in your heart, like the people Barnabas exhorted, I'm going to cleave unto the Lord. Can you purpose in your heart, I want to do something for God. I want to be in his will. What is our heart's purpose? It's a good question to consider.

What's my desires? What's the driving motive? What motivates me? We can know a purpose for living. It's Christ, isn't it? It's Christ. To live a life that glorifies God, whatever the future holds.

[26:42] So we've seen the plan. God's got a plan. We see the purpose. It's a resolution we can make. And we see the promise. We see the promises of God. We touched on it this morning, the exceeding great and precious promises. God's got a promise that extends into your future, such that God's promised some things. And we can believe his promises. It tells us that the Christian has a living hope, a lively hope, because of Christ rising from the dead. It says we've got abundant mercy. It says he's begotten us again. We're born again. It says we've got a living, lively hope, because Christ has risen. There's a bright future for you as God's people. You've got a lively hope. There's a promise of the life that now is and that is to come. We see that in 1 Timothy 4, that godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of the life that is to come. There's promise in the life that now is, promise in that which is to come. So we've got a sense where we can have the sense of God's plan for us, that we've got a sense of God's purpose, that we can come into alignment with God's purpose for us and we can see that God's promises, promises for the life that now is, promises of the life to come. We can live knowing that God holds the future and God has got promises.

As we talked about earlier today, there's many scriptures that talk about promises, the promises of God, a yay and amen. We can know God has promised some things for us. We can hold that with the hope that we have. There was a song leader leading the singing of standing on the promises and midway through the song he asked people, hey, just stop singing for a minute and I want you to tell me some of the promises that you're standing on. And one said, lo, I am with you always. Another quoted, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. Still another said, where two or three are gathered together, there am I in the midst. Think of all the promises of God. You've got a book full, the Bible's full of his promises, isn't it? And we can think there's promises after promise. How can we think when we sing that song standing on the promises? I know you can get Bibles, can't you, that have got promises highlighted or you can highlight them yourself. You can highlight the promises of God. Think of it. It's a good exercise to go through the Bible and think, hey, that's a promise. That's a promise. That's a promise. And they're promises we can claim. We can hold them dear and confess them and believe them. And we can know that God has promised some things for us.

There's only one person in the Bible who received a direct promise of heaven, a thief, but he received that promise. And think of it, you might think, who am I to claim the promises of God? He loves you and the promises are for you. Just got to find them in your Bible and read them and claim them. We can have that assurance of the one who holds the future. He's got promises for you. And a Christian need not worry about what comes next. In this time where it's fantastic, sometimes it's fearful, we see the future, what's going to happen next, especially if you, and I tend to do a bit of tuning into what's the latest news, the latest horror stories, the latest scaremongering. And we can find a fearfulness for the future. But really, truly, you as God's people, you've got a great hope. And we've got that assurance today. And it says, this is the promise that he has promised us, even eternal life in a world where people are worried about the future, even fearful of the future. Consider the hopelessness of a Christless life. A life without God is a life without hope. That's why we want to share the saving message. Even if they scorn you when you do it, better that you tell them, better that you tell them. Because a life without God is a life without hope. For the believer, we've got a certain hope. We've got an anchor. It's sure, it's steadfast. It's not going to be budged. It's going to be steadfast. And through the scriptures, we can have comfort and hope. And this book tells us of the God of love. The God of hope. And we can abound in hope, it tells us. It tells us of the blessed hope yet to come. There's even more hope on the horizon. Amen? The blessed hope. We can trust God's plan. We can have a godly purpose. And we can believe God's promises. Because he is for you. And if God be for you, who can be against you? So believe God's promises. Claim them. Let us pray. We pray here,

Lord, tonight for each one here gathered. And Lord, if there's any yet to trust you, Lord, that they would believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and know you are the saviour. Lord, to know that you have poured out your soul at the cross. You've taken our shame and sin, the foulness of it, the penalty of it, the wickedness of our sin, the exceeding sinfulness of our sin, that it was all there on Calvary's tree in the body of your son. Lord, we praise you that you would give such love to us that we can receive you, the God of hope. And believing, we can abound in hope. We can have joy and peace in believing.

[32:18] Pray that each one might have that heart's trust today. And Lord, to know that you've got a plan for us. And it's the best. You've got a purpose that we've got to deliberately purpose to be in alignment with your purpose. And Lord, we've got a wonderful promise of everlasting life. Lord, we pray that each one might have that trust today. And Lord, that as we face the future, even if it be, even if our lot is to be as Job, yet we can say, I know that my Redeemer liveth. I know that you are my Saviour, my living Saviour. Pray each one might have that trust today. Even amongst the younger ones amongst us, that just that simple trust, that anchor that we need, it's going to be you, Lord, that anchor, that sure and steadfast hope, that gospel hope, that they might have that hope, that is a sure and certain hope. It's a glad, assured hope that we can know you and know your promises. In Jesus' name,

Amen. Praise Him.