

“How To Keep Hope Alive”

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30TH, 2008

TEXT: 1PETER 1:1-9

INTRODUCTION:

Sometimes in spite of all the positive thinking we can generate, life can be extremely trying and for some folks it is really terrible. Simple optimism will not do. Genuine hope must go beyond positive thinking or a positive attitude. Genuine hope is not, “Wishing for something you know isn’t going to happen.” It is not an idle wish at all. Hope, for the child of God is the daily reality that God is everything that He said He was and often times much more. Hope is that constant reminder that we are in a position to receive from God the richness of His blessings through the most difficult, and yes even the best of circumstances.

The folks that Peter is writing too were familiar with persecution, struggle and suffering. Whenever we go through times of trial or persecution one of two things will result, either growth or bitterness. Our response to life’s circumstances will determine the results. There had been generations of Jews who had been scattered after the Babylonian captivity to the far corners of the earth. They were a displaced people with nothing to hope in other than the message of redemption Peter had delivered to them. The value of good people ought not to be estimated by their present external condition. Here was a group of people, beloved of God, and yet strangers, dispersed and poor in the world; the eye of God was upon them in all their dispersions, and Peter was tenderly careful to write to them for their direction, consolation, and hope.

Vv.1-2

The first two verses are critical to our understanding of Peter's exhortation of hope and encouragement. The word "**pilgrims**" is translated as *sojourners*, or those who are temporary residents. Even though these folks were dispersed they still had a **HOME** (in heaven) a **FAMILY** (spiritual) and a **FATHER** (heavenly). Their new life in the faith was the result of God's "**election**" (favorite and chosen), as the result of God's "**foreknowledge**" (forethought), they were on God's mind from the beginning of time. The result of God's election and foreknowledge was their "**sanctification**" (purification, purity as the result of the purifier) in the Spirit. What is all this for? One word tells us "**obedience**" (attentive compliance or submission) to the Lordship of Christ! The phrase "**sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ,**" means the cleansing from sin that brings about holiness, since it was by the sprinkling of that blood that they were to be made holy.

11 But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.

12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

13 For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh,

*14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?
(Heb. 9:11-14)*

As we consider Peter's message of hope to these dispersed and displaced folks there are five things that can show us "**HOW TO KEEP HOPE ALIVE.**"

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I. **THE ORIGIN** OF GENUINE HOPE (V. 3A)

- A. All real hope is “...**according to His abundant mercy.**” The idea is, that there was great mercy shown them in the fact that they were renewed.
- B. It is a gift of his mercy because He has “**begotten us.**” the meaning is, that as God is the Author of our life in a natural sense, so he is the Author of our second life by regeneration. The Savior said, (Joh 3:3,) that “**except a man be born again**” or begotten again, Greek, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”
- C. Genuine hope is a result of our salvation. We were born into a living hope.

II. **THE FOUNDATION** OF GENUINE HOPE (V. 3B)

- A. The foundation is the work and ministry of Jesus Christ.
1 “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.
2 “In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.
3 “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.
4 “And where I go you know, and the way you know.”
5 Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?”
6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

*7 "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him."
(John 14:1-7, NKJV).*

- B. The resurrection of Jesus is particularly crucial in the formation of genuine hope. It makes all the difference.
25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live."
(John 11:25, NKJV).

III. **THE DURABILITY OF GENUINE HOPE (V. 4)**

- A. It is **INCORRUPTIBLE**. This speaks of its essence.
45 *And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.*
46 *However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.*
47 *The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven.*
48 *As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly.*
49 *And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.*
50 *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.*
51 *Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed--*
52 *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*
(1 Corinthians 15:45-52, NKJV).

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- B. It is **UNDEFINABLE**. This speaks of its purity.

1 ALEPH. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, Who walk in the law of the LORD! (Psalms 119:1, NKJV).

26 For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; (Hebrews 7:26, NKJV).

- C. It is **UNFADING**. This speaks of its longevity.

3 We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints;

5 because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, (Colossians 1:1-5, NKJV).

IV. **THE POWER** OF GENUINE HOPE (VV. 5-7)

- A. It keeps us in the faith. V.5

11 “Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.

12 “While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

13 “But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.

14 “I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

15 *"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.*
16 *"They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.*
17 *"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.*
(John 17:11-17, NKJV).

- B. It helps us to rejoice in our trials with joy. V.6
2 *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,*
3 *knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.*
4 *But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*
5 *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.*
(James 1:2-5, NKJV).

- C. It reminds us of the genuineness of our faith. V.7
17 *By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,*
18 *of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called,"*
19 *concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.*
(Hebrews 11:17-19, NKJV).

V. **THE WONDER** OF GENUINE HOPE (VV. 8, 9)

- A. We love a person we have never seen. V.8a
20 *If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?*
(1 John 4:20, NKJV).

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29 Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

(John 20:29, NKJV).

B. We long to go to a place we have never visited. V.8b

1 For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

(2 Corinthians 5:1, NKJV).

8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;

10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. (Hebrews 11:8-10, NKJV).

C. Genuine hope concerns our greatest need—salvation.

V.9

4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. (Romans 10:4, NKJV).

CONCLUSION

Hope is a powerful concept. Without hope in the future, we have no power in the present. Hope may keep us alive.

Without hope there is no reason to live. It has been said, “Life without Christ is a hopeless end, but life with Christ is an endless hope.”

In 1863, Edward Mote penned one of the most famous hymns ever written and sung, **Solid Rock**. When asked about the inspiration for this hymn his reply was this passage of scripture.

Matthew 7:24-28 (NKJV) ²⁴Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:

²⁵and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.²⁶But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:

²⁷and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.

1. My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
 On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
 All other ground is sinking sand,
 All other ground is sinking sand.
2. When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In every high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the veil.
3. His oath, His covenant, His blood
Support me in the whelming flood;
When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.
4. When He shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh, may I then in Him be found;
Dressed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne.