

We Have Hope

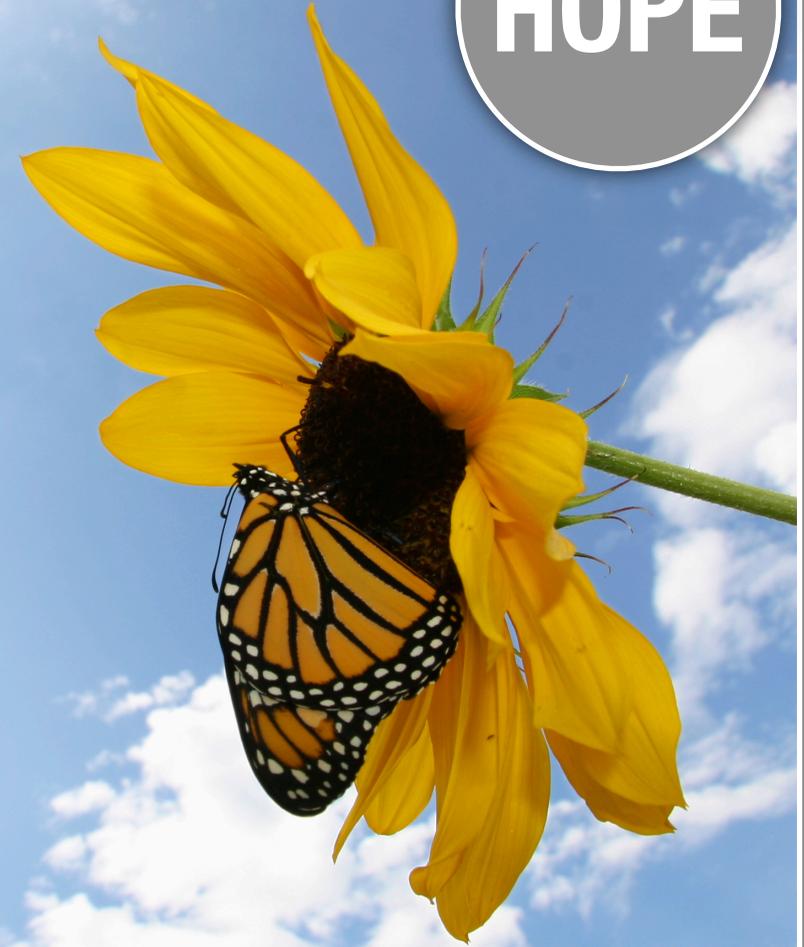
Shout to the mountains
We have hope
Let the bells toll
For we have hope
Tell the sun and the moon
We have hope
Tell all you know
We have hope
Pray thanksgiving to God
For we have hope
Let us live as though
We have hope
Whisper to the wind
We have hope
Let the day and night know
We have hope
Tell all of God's creation
We have hope
Sing praises to God
We have hope

Aileen Pearl Fancher

Winter

the \$WORLD2008

HOPE



FAITH

Now Faith is the substance of things Hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

HOPE

Now Hope does not disappoint, because the Love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

LOVE

Beloved, let us Love one another, for Love is of God; and everyone who Loves is born of God and knows God.

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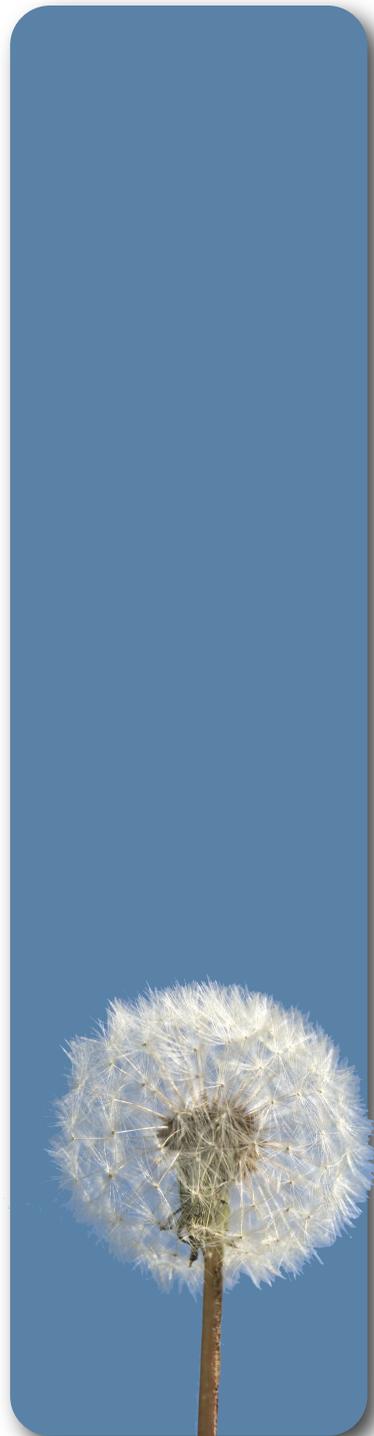
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The Christian's hope is founded upon "the resurrection of Jesus" (1 Pet. 1:3).

The resurrection of Jesus is found in all four of the gospel accounts (Mt. 28:1-8; Mk. 16:1-3; Lk. 24:1-43; Jn. 20:1-18).

The apostle Paul tells about Jesus' resurrection in his letter to the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 15:1-11). Peter was an eyewitness to the event, thereby, giving us foundation for our hope (1 Pet. 1:3).

The Character of the Christian's hope (1 Pet. 1:3-5).

God's great mercy caused us to be born again to a "living hope" in Christ Jesus. Several words that picture the Christian's hope.

"Living hope" puts our hope in contrast with those things that are dead, lifeless, and, therefore, hopeless (Eph. 2:1-3, 12; Heb. 4:12; Rom. 8:12-13).

"Hope" is described as an "inheritance" (1 Pet. 1:4). All through the scriptures the Christian's eternal inheritance is spoken of, comforting and motivating us to live faithfully (Eph.

1:3, 11-12; Rom. 8:16-17; Col. 1:9-12; 3:23-2; Rev. 21:7).

Our anticipation of the eternal inheritance is described as being "incorruptible", "undefiled", "does not fade away", and reserved in heaven" (Rev. 21:27; Tit. 1:2; 1 Jn. 2:25, Rev. 2:10).

Our hope is described as being "kept by the power of God through faith" (1 Pet. 1:5). God protects us through the power of His word (Rom. 1:16; Heb. 4:12).

Our "inheritance" is kept by the power of God through faith. This is conditional upon our faith in Christ. We must obediently respond to His word through faith (2 Pet. 1:10; Phil. 2:12; Jas. 2:14-26; Heb. 11:30).

Our "living hope" will strengthen our faith, rekindle our desire for heaven and increase our expectations of the blessings that we will enjoy throughout eternity in heaven. Hope is the anchor of the soul (Heb. 6:18-19).

need. We have confidence that almighty God provides just what He knows is needed, often in ways we would not anticipate.

As John wrote to his friend Gaius (3 John 2), we can have an expectation to prosper physically as well as spiritually, and petition God for good health. Paul warned against putting our focus on financial prosperity (1 Tim. 6:17). But he instructed to put hope first in the steadfastness of God, indicating that God will richly provide what He knows we need for the simple enjoyment of life. When we put ourselves in God's service and take on a heart of humility (1 Pet. 5:6), we may confidently hope for His good favor in this life, and trust that He will lead us in the light of His word through this temporary world, to the eternal home of our ultimate hope. All praise (Rom. 15:13) to the God of hope!

The Foundation Of The Christian's Hope

John Ledbetter

Any structure or any truth that withstands the trials and tribulations of

life must have a strong foundation. This is especially true with the Christian's hope.

The Christian's hope is founded upon being redeemed from service to sin "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:18-21).

Mankind is separated from Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:1-3, 12), enslaved to sin, and having no hope. God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross to ransom us from our slavery to sin (Matt. 20:20-28; 1 Tim. 2:3-6). The redeeming blood of Jesus is described as being "precious" as opposed to perishable things like silver and gold (1 Pet. 1:18-19; John 1:29) and part of God's eternal plan (1 Pet. 1:20).

The Christian's hope is founded upon the "gift of salvation" (1 Pet. 1:9-12).

Peter states that our salvation is the result of God's grace (1 Pet. 1:9-12). Our salvation was the theme of the prophetic message of the Old Testament (1 Pet. 1:12; Acts 4:12; 1 Cor. 1:18, 23-24) and the interest of the angels (1 Pet. 1:12).

The LORD looks from heaven;
He sees all the sons of men.

From the place of His dwelling He looks
On all the inhabitants of the earth;
He fashions their hearts individually;
He considers all their works.

No king is saved by the multitude of an army;
A mighty man is not delivered by great strength.
A horse is a vain hope for safety;
Neither shall it deliver any by its great strength.

Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him,
On those who **hope in His mercy,**
To deliver their soul from death,
And to keep them alive in famine.

Psalms
33:13-23

Our soul waits for the LORD;
He is **our help** and **our shield.**

For our heart shall rejoice in Him,
Because **we have trusted** in His holy name.

Let Your mercy, O LORD, be upon us,
Just as **we hope** in You.

Hope: An Overview

Phil Lumpkin

In the last issue of The Sword we focused on faith as the first of three abiding (continuing or enduring) characteristics of Christianity. We discussed the necessity of deep, trusting faith in God and noted that men like Abraham exhibited the kind of faith that pleases God and it was reckoned to them as righteousness. Abraham also hoped, as recorded by Paul in Romans 4:18; “In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, so shall your descendants be.” As Abraham hoped, so too all of God’s children are expected to hope in Him and look for the blessings of God’s faithfulness. In this issue let’s explore the second abiding characteristic of Christianity – Hope.

Hope is perhaps given less attention and emphasis than either faith or love, yet it is no less important in our Christian walk. The Hebrew writer states, “now faith is the assurance of things hoped for...” (Heb.

11:1) These two characteristics go hand in hand; we can’t have one without the other. Faith without hope is “hopeless.” Hope without faith is unachievable.

When we speak of hope, our thoughts naturally turn to the future, to what lies ahead. Thayer defines Christian hope as the “joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation.” As baptized believers, we Christians have great confidence that our sins have been forgiven – and indeed we are saved! Interestingly, we don’t need hope to realize this present salvation. But our ultimate salvation, our confident expectation of eternal life lies in the future, beyond our resurrection and the judgment. Hope then is associated with achieving our ultimate objective. Since we live in the here and now, hope is interwoven with the sometimes arduous process of faithful Christian living; it provides purpose to our lives and orientation toward eternity.

As the earth’s magnetic poles provide orientation to a compass (and in turn the user of the compass), hope

things are part of the hope that He provides for His children in this life.

-Encouragement as Part of God’s Family-

The idea of delayed gratification is foundational for the Christian’s sustained faith. We accept that our full reward is in the future – “in the sweet by and by,” we sing. Technically we know the value of our long-term commitment, but still we long for comfort that our efforts for good would bear a reward not just in eternity, but in our own time. We can become discouraged with the thought that our effort to do the right thing is taken for granted and not at all reciprocated.

God knows that in our weakness we need encouragement that we are making good choices in this life. His word reassures that the Christian’s hope can include finding comfort and peace and happiness – an abundant life – as part of the community of God’s people on earth, the church.

-Encouragement in Financial Concerns-

It is perhaps inevitable that we will encounter those around us who have

physical needs. When we use our money and goods to help others, we might wonder if we are being prudent financially. Remember that Jesus taught His disciples to have confidence that such benevolence would not go unnoticed by the Father, and that He would know the right way to acknowledge the generosity in our lives.

“Give, and it will be given to you” (Luke 6:38) is an indicator that God knows how to continue your measure of prosperity even as you give to others. And to be generous without seeking superficial honor further pleases the Father who is waiting to reward your good heart (Matt. 6:3-18; 2 Cor. 9:8). That’s part of the hope He fills us with in this life.

-Satisfaction in a Godly Life-

Our day-to-day hope is sustained with assurance that the Father will provide things He knows are truly important for a satisfying life. Paul wrote (2 Cor. 1:3-11) that the “God of all comfort” knows how to comfort us in afflictions. And we can then be a comfort ourselves when others have

Hope That Sustains

Dick Dabney

Have you tried to explain the concept of hope to a small child? Maybe you tried to describe the feeling in the heart that looks forward to a result or situation that is very much desired, but isn't here yet. Our ultimate hope as Christians is the promised eternal life in the presence of God our Father.

But before the eternal reward there is the challenge of enduring in this physical world. And from time to time this pilgrim life bears heavily. Whether the devil is tempting us to wander from our faithful walk or God is letting us have experiences to grow by, we have struggles. We long for peace and comfort and assurance as we fulfill our appointed days. We hope for good in this life while we look forward to our eternal reward.

-Strength in Difficult Times-

The word of God lets us know that Christians can expect to be afflicted with stress and trouble, and to encounter trials in this life. But we also

hear encouragement that God knows how to lift His children up along the way. And that's just the right message to help us keep our spiritual compass steady day after day and year after year.

The apostle Paul wrote to the Christians at Corinth to assure that God would not let our temptations be completely overpowering (1 Cor. 10:13), but that He would provide a way of escape. When you feel you are under the pressure of great temptation, don't forget to pray to the Father for help in finding that escape. Similarly, Paul lets us know that God gives encouragement and the ability to persevere (Rom. 15:5), and will give strength against the devil (2 Thes. 3:3).

In times when we face the storm clouds of life, when challenges must be met, remember that God knows how important is the feeling of the shared burden. Paul wrote to the Romans (Rom. 16:1; Rom. 8:28) that brothers and sisters in Christ can be called on for help and comfort, and that God has the ability to work out the right things along the way. These

provides orientation to our lives. Confidence in our ultimate objective gives us strength and resolve to persevere in the face of adversity. When we know where we're going and keep our eyes on the ultimate objective, our faith is bolstered and can be focused to overcome the trials and tribulations of life. As we know, Job faced extraordinary challenges and, though sorely vexed, his faith in God never wavered because his hope remained fixed in Him (Job 13:15).

By inspiration, the apostle Peter capably summarized our hope. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so

that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls" (1 Pet. 1:3-9).

Hope Distinguishes Christians From Unbelievers

Carol Lumpkin

Heaven is a real place with real blessings. There the pure river of water of life, clean as crystal, proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. There the tree of life, with leaves for the healing of the nations, bears twelve manner of fruit and yields her fruit every month. No curse will be there. Those who go will see the face of God and His name will be on their foreheads. There will be no night there; no need for candles or the sun, for the Lord God gives light. They who

go will reign forever (Rev. 22:1-5). Heaven will be unimaginably wonderful for those who prepare to go there. Jesus has gone to prepare for His disciples and will come again to receive those who obey him (Jn. 14:1-12). I not only want to spend eternity in this blissful setting in the presence of God – I confidently expect to do so.

Christians should take great comfort in their hope. Peter wrote, “Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to every one who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence” (1 Pet. 3:15). Not only do Christians have hope, we’re supposed to be ready to talk about it, to share it with anyone; with everyone. As Paul concluded his epistle to the Romans, he wrote, “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 15:13). So in addition to having hope, talking about it and sharing it, we are also to abound in hope. Hope that abounds in us will

be something that is evident. Like newlyweds who exude that confident expectation of marital bliss, we Christians are to exude a similar confident, joyful expectation of eternal life.

Unbelievers – people who have not obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ, or those who were saved but returned to the world, have no hope. Long ago Job said, “For what is the hope of the godless when he is cut off, when God requires his life?” (Job 27:8). Paul used this self evident truth as a basis of two different arguments. Writing to the Ephesians he said, “remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world” (Eph 2:12). Paul described the Ephesians’ previous condition (Gentiles outside of Christ) as a hopeless condition. In answering questions about the Lord’s second coming for the Thessalonians, Paul contrasted the blessed state of Christians who had died with the

With God’s hope, on the other hand, we must completely re-work our definition. The writer of Hebrews speaks of hope in an interesting way in chapter 6:17-20:

*“In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the **unchangeableness of His purpose**, interposed with an oath in order that by two unchangeable things, in which **it is impossible for God to lie**, we may have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us.*

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”

When we deal with hope on earth, we deal with what we really think is possible. In fact, we say “I hope” to express the improbability of what it is we hope for. Otherwise, we would just say, “I know.”

However, take notice of what the writer of Hebrews precludes the idea of hope with: “it is impossible for God to lie.” He also notes “the unchangeableness of His purpose.”

We need to understand that God has given us a hope of inheritance and that “all good things work together for good to those that love God (Rom. 8:28). Combined with that we need to understand, that God does not give oaths that do not come to pass. Therefore, to have a hope in God is to know for certain that something is coming. The only reason God calls it “hope” is simply because we haven’t received it yet. There is no degree of doubt, no hint of improbability. If God said that we are to receive an eternal home with Him, then it is so.

To exhibit this further, the author of Hebrews says that we have hope “as an anchor of the soul!” Surely we would not anchor upon ponies or Rangers. Those earthly things fall apart so quickly. But a hope in what God has said is a hope that will come to pass without fail. Our hope is the anchor of our souls.

As servants of God, we should also take time to reflect on the evidence of God's lovingkindnesses and compassions in our own lives. Regardless of circumstances, God is faithful, He is the God of hope. We've noted three examples of individuals who put their hopes in Him and in each case God demonstrated His faithfulness. The bottom line is that we can count on Him; we can put our hope in Him. When our lives get tough, whether because of the mundane affairs of life all the way to the relentless bombardment of unrighteousness, we can benefit from contemplating God's influence in our lives. I believe we will reach the same conclusion as Jeremiah and have every reason to explode with our own triumphant shout – truly, the Lord is my portion, therefore I will have hope in Him.

The Anchor

David Henderson

We often talk about hope in our lives. Perhaps the time we hear the word most is around a child's birthday,

when little Suzie says, "I hope I get a pony!"

The interesting thing about little Suzie's statement is that what is actually imbedded between the lines is a degree of doubt. She hopes that she gets a pony, but really she is completely unsure of whether she will actually get a pony. Children aren't the only people who use that word, though. We grown-ups often find ourselves "hoping" for a raise, or "hoping" that the Texas Rangers will finally have a good season, or "hoping"...for a pony. In all of these cases (especially that of the Texas Rangers) what we express is doubt as to whether the event hoped for will actually come to pass. We do so rightfully, because earthly things all possess a glimmer of doubt. Jesus Himself warns us of that very thing in Matthew 6:19: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal." We know those things about earth's treasures, so, naturally, our hope comes with a pinch of doubt.

hopeless state of outsiders, those outside of Christ. "We don't want you to be uninformed, brethren about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope" (1 Thes. 4:13). For those who deny Christ or simply never come to Him in this life, why would they hope for eternity with Him? Even if they did, how could they expect a reward from Him whom they rejected?

Thankfully, Jesus came to seek and save the lost. No one is condemned to remain in unbelief – no one has to remain without hope. Remember John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." Jesus lovingly invites all mankind in every age to believe in Him (Jn. 8:24), repent of sin (Luke 13:3), confess Him as the Son of God (Acts 8:37), and be baptized into Him for the remission of sin (Acts 2:38). He also expects us to live faithfully as His disciples (Luke 6:46). By coming to Christ, anyone – everyone – can lay hold of the blessed hope found only in Him.

Hope is established upon faith and obedience of God's word and faithfulness unto death.

Faith & Hope: The Constant Companions

Russ Ward

Two farmers early one spring began to prepare their land for the upcoming cotton season. Farmer Smith cultivated, pre-irrigated, and tilled in pre-emergent herbicide prior to planting. He planted early and caught the June rains with a good stand of cotton already growing in the fields. He removed the few weeds and grasses that did come up and he reveled in the spectacle of blooms from his healthy cotton crop. Farmer Jones only cultivated the soil awaiting the rains that did not come until early June. His cotton germinated late and was over run with grass and weeds having few and sparse blooms to show in preparation of the coming summer heat. At the end of summer both men ceased their irrigation efforts in anticipation of how their crops would produce in the coming fall. That

evening as both men sat down to dinner their wives asked them, "Will we come out of the year ok?" Both answered "I hope so honey". I have often wondered if the hope expressed by both is truly the same. Both men are equally in need of a good harvest, but which man do you think went to bed with the expectation, anticipation, and conviction that a crop was there for the making?

I would like to think that we as Christians are the Farmer Smiths of the world. Christ has provided insight into hope in that God will be true to His Promises. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

Hope for the Christian is not a flimsy, wistful wanting or desire. Rather, it is the assurance and confidence obtained through Faith. "... We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God..." (Rom. 8:28). Why? Because God has revealed himself to us in all that He has said and done, and from these truths and evidences comes our hope of what he

will do in the time to come; whether it is on this earth or at the end of time. "... And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us..." (Rom. 5:5).

Hope therefore is the True Companion to our Faith. One does not and can not exist without the other. For if our Faith in Christ is manifested by our works of obedience how much more so will our Hope be manifested by His good will of grace and mercy. For it is with this very same Hope that Paul with full assurance and strength of conviction spoke unto Timothy:

"... For I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Tim. 1:12), and again: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the Faith; there is therefore laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge will give to me on that day" (II Tim. 4:7-8)

he was beaten and put into stocks (21:1-2), met with reproach and derision, made a laughingstock, mocked (20:7-8), a yoke was put on his neck (28:10-16), imprisoned again and again (32:1-5; 37:11-21) and thrown into a cistern (38:1-13). Yet, like other godly men before him, Jeremiah hoped against hope. Jeremiah was deeply conflicted as he first prophesied about and then observed God's judgment on his countrymen. He didn't write from a detached perspective; he was there, he also was taken captive, bound up in chains for Babylonian captivity (40:1-4). He experienced the utter hopelessness of crushing defeat. But it's at this time that he uttered the following words:

*Remember my affliction and my wandering,
the wormwood and bitterness.
Surely my soul remembers
And is bowed down within me.
This I recall to my mind,
Therefore I have hope.*

*The Lord's lovingkindnesses indeed
never cease,
For His compassions never fail.
They are new every morning;
Great is Thy faithfulness.
"The Lord is my portion," says my
soul,
"Therefore I have hope in Him."
The Lord is good to those who wait
for Him,
To the person who seeks Him.*

Lamentations 3:19-25

From the depths of despair, Jeremiah's hope and trust in God soared to sublime heights. Jeremiah took time to remember God's lovingkindnesses. As he thought about God's impact on his life, he could see God's compassion everywhere. Regardless of his circumstances, God was with him; He was faithful. With these thoughts welling up in his heart, Jeremiah seems to have exploded with a triumphant shout – the Lord is my portion, therefore I will have hope in Him.

Abraham's hope was realized because God's promise was steadfast and sure.

Joseph is another example of someone who put his trust in the God of hope (Gen. 37-50). For about 12 years, from the time of his own dreams at age 17 until he interpreted Pharaoh's dream, he was grievously mistreated. When his father sent him to check on his brothers, they threw him into a pit and sold him into slavery. As a slave in Egypt, he was bought and initially prospered as administrator of Potiphar's household. But when he withstood the licentious advances of Potiphar's wife, he was falsely accused and thrown into prison without trial or recourse. Yet like Abraham, Joseph hoped against hope. As an alien prisoner he made the most of his seemingly hopeless situation and rose to administer the entire prison. It was in this dank confinement that he interpreted the butler's and baker's dreams. Two wretched years later the butler remembered how Joseph interpreted his dream and convinced Pharaoh to send for him. We remember how Joseph gave God all

the glory and credit for the interpretation. He not only interpreted Pharaoh's dream, but also laid out a visionary plan for dealing with the coming years of plenty, followed by famine. Throughout Joseph's ordeal, he could easily have become dejected and to feel that God had forsaken him. Yet Joseph seems to have redoubled his trust and hope in the Almighty God. And Joseph's patient confidence was richly rewarded by the God of hope.

Jeremiah is a third example of someone who put their trust in the God of hope. He prophesied during Judah's final years, a time when the God's judgment was at hand for Judah's idolatry and deplorable morality. Jeremiah's prophecies offered Judah a final opportunity to repent, while also pronouncing her fate – captivity like that of her sister Israel. You can guess how this message of doom was received. Like other prophets before him, he personally received the brunt of the Judah's indignation and disdain for God's message. Some sought his life (11:18-21), everyone cursed him (15:8),

For Farmer Smith, all that could have been done had been done, all that was within his power he had undertaken, and all that remains now lies within God's hands. His assurance of success resides in his confidence in God's laws and in the continual blessings He bestows upon His creation. O' that we all were spiritual Farmer Smiths.

Job's Hope

Carol Fertig

Job is considered to be the epitome of patience, longsuffering. Surely, he is that, but he is also an example of hope that is lost and regained. His hope can be traced as he loses and gains his fortunes, both spiritual and temporal. He defines for us the important place of hope in our own lives.

Job's life was one of privilege and comfort. Not only did he enjoy great wealth and a large and happy family, he was respected by his peers. His friends who came to "comfort" him praised Job for the things he had done in the past: admonishing many,

strengthening weak hands, helping the tottering to stand, strengthening feeble knees (Job 4:3-4). The story of Job's life, however, changed drastically and tragically when all his temporal blessings were stripped from him in a single day! At the end of the first chapter of Job, however, it says, "Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God." Even when the suffering was amplified to include suffering in his own body, and he was in so much pain that he cursed the day of his birth, Job was still able to say in Job 6:10, "But it is still my consolation, and I rejoice in unsparing pain, that I have not denied the words of the Holy One."

There is no doubt at all that Job suffered horribly in the flesh. To read Job 7:4-6 is to understand how terrible his situation had become, but the last part of the 6th verse begins to reveal the worst of the suffering: "And come to an end without hope." Job dreaded losing the hope that he had enjoyed because of his security in the integrity of his ways (Job 4:6). He feared God and behaved obediently and

righteously, or so he believed. Now, the physical suffering made him believe he might come to an end without hope. His friend Zophar told Job that if he would repent, “Then you would trust, because there is hope” (Job 11:18). He also reminded Job that “the eyes of the wicked will fail, and there will be no escape for them; and their hope is to breathe their last” (Job 11:20). Job, however, still saw nothing in his attitude, belief, or behavior that he considered worthy of repentance. Job asserted boldly, “I desire to argue with God,” in 13:3, and in 13:15 said, “Though He slay me, I will hope in Him, nevertheless I will argue my ways before Him.” Job said he is hoping in God, but arrogantly trusts in himself to argue his case to the Almighty. One wonders where his hope really resides!

Job replied in a long speech to Zophar in chapters 12, 13, and 14. Near the end of his speech in chapter 14, verse 19, Job said, “Water wears away stones, its torrents wash away the dust of the earth; so Thou dost destroy man’s hope.” Job was getting

to the bottom reaches of his despair. In Job 17:15, he finally cried, “Where now is my hope? And who regards my hope? Will it go down with me to Sheol? Shall we together go down into the dust?” His hope has spiraled downward with him, as he sank into despondence – hopelessness. Chapter 19 expresses Job’s pitiful, desolate state. Verse 10 says, “He breaks me down on every side, and I am gone; and He has uprooted my hope like a tree.” He longed for death to get away from the physical suffering, but where could he go to escape the hopelessness? Job said it would follow him to Sheol.

Job’s desire to hear God answer for Himself was granted. God spoke to Job from the whirlwind with what I believe is the most profound picture of Himself, what He has done, what He does, and what He will do, in the Bible. When the Lord said to Job in Job 40:2, “Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer it,” Job wisely answered, “Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to Thee? I lay my hand on my

mouth.” Job began to understand his position in relation to God, and we can see where hope can safely reside: in the One who has made all, sustains all, knows all, owns all. Job said, “I know that Thou canst do all things, and that no purpose of Thine can be thwarted. . . I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes.” At this point, God restored all Job’s possessions twofold, his family, even the respect of his friends. The best blessing of all is stated at the end of verse 9 in chapter 42: “...and the Lord accepted Job.”

Job could hope again, this time in God Whom he learned was worthy of his trust and hope. Through Job, we see there are worse things than losing your prosperity or even your health. Losing your hope is one of them. Job learned that hope in the Lord cannot exist with self-righteousness. God is the righteous One, and we are privileged to hope in Him.

God Is The Source And Object Of Our Hope

Phil Lumpkin

By its very nature, hope is associated with confidence we have in the outcome of future events; events over which we may have little or no control. The Apostle Paul describes God as the God of hope. “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing . . .” (Rom. 15:13). From cover to cover, the Bible testifies that God is trustworthy and faithful, that you and I can put our full and complete confidence in Him.

Abraham “hoped against hope” (Rom. 4:18). When he was an elderly, fatherless man, God promised him that he would be the father of many nations. Though well beyond the time of life when both he and Sarah could normally expect to raise a family, he confidently expected God to fulfill His promise. He didn’t know how or when God would make it happen – but he hoped in God’s power and in His commitment to fulfill His promise. And his confidence was rewarded in the birth of Isaac and other children –