

# Hope in Christ

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The dictionary says that hope is desire with the expectation of fulfillment. We like to be able to look forward to things. But without hope, life is difficult. Sadly, many people find themselves in situations that seem hopeless: lost jobs, deteriorating health, broken relationships, failed businesses, etc. After more than three decades of teaching, I have seen some very heartbreaking situations.

So, where can hope be found? Consider the headlines, where technology, medical science, government programs, and other institutions offer hope for the future. In fact, every subgroup of society in general is seeking to proclaim the power in what they have to offer as providing significant, if not ultimate, hope for the future of mankind, and in some cases, the entire planet. Nevertheless, the hope offered by the world system is frequently like the illusionary promise of a mirage seen in the desert by a desperate thirsty traveler. It may not be all that it appears to be. There are multiple problems facing man today that far exceed his or her ability to even hold a line of defense, let alone gain an advantage that leads to an undisputable victory. Technology solves one problem, but inadvertently creates several new consequential problems. A revolutionary new medication may be found to have dozens of side effects, while exposure to harmful chemicals and years of detrimental cell mutations have generated an impossible task for medical science. Politicians promise solutions, but pander to special interest groups or sell their influence to financially enrich themselves.

Yes, I enjoy the comfort that modern technology affords. Refrigerators and vehicles are very handy and most of us like our electronic gadgets. I really appreciate the skill and dedication of doctors and nurses to help those in need throughout the world. However, no secular institution can offer long-term permanent hope. It is not in their

power. Modern science says that you will die and cease to exist eternally with absolutely no hope of any kind available to you.

Yet, hope does exist and I would love to share some thoughts with you on the subject of hope. First of all, real hope is not a thing. It is a person. We are told in the Bible, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is" (Jeremiah 17:7 KJV). The current condition of the world is one of sin, sickness, and death. People ask, "Why doesn't God fix everything?" He will and He does on His schedule, according to His master plan, described in the Bible, His Word.

Real hope cannot be seen. "For in this hope we were saved; but hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he can already see?" (Romans 8:24 KJV).

Hope must extend beyond this life. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Corinthians 15:19 KJV). Hope is an anchor for our soul. "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and steadfast" (Hebrews 6:19 KJV).

Hope cannot be found in fraudulent counterfeit idols. In the Old Testament, the king of Babylon (present day Iraq), Belshazzar, did not humble his heart before the true and living God. He worshiped man-made idols. He "praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified" (Daniel 5:23 KJV). That very night, Belshazzar was killed and Darius, the Median king, took the kingdom. I have been to places where statues of wood and stone are worshiped. Hear the words of Isaiah the prophet: "Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made" (Isaiah 2:8 KJV). "See, they are all a delusion; their works amount to nothing; their images are as empty as the wind" (Isaiah 41:29 KJV).

Idols can take on many forms. Some folks serve idols of money and things, but hope can never be found in materialism. Did you know that coveting other people's possessions is also considered idolatry? "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Colossians 3:5 KJV). Leonard Ravenhill

asked, "Are the things you are living for worth Christ dying for?" The best reason to look at your neighbor's table is to make sure they have enough to eat.

I once stood by a glass case in a museum near the ruins of an ancient Mediterranean city. It was filled with hundreds of artifacts, including small idols crafted for the poor. They were the size of toy soldiers. What a shame that hopeless people would worship and pray to lifeless trinkets. Mankind will continue to do so until the end. In the future, "The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk" (Revelation 9:20 KJV).

Hope cannot be found in religious dogma or fulfilling the law. <sup>19</sup>Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. <sup>20</sup>Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:19-20 KJV). Hope cannot be found in works, period. <sup>8</sup>For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: <sup>9</sup>Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9 KJV).

There is hope. There is light. There is salvation. His name is Jesus. <sup>16</sup>For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. <sup>17</sup>For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. <sup>18</sup>He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. <sup>19</sup>And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup>For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. <sup>21</sup>But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:16-21 KJV).

Life everlasting with Christ, who loves us, and died to redeem us, that is not doomsday; that, my friend, is real hope.

If the Spirit of God is speaking to you today, then today is your day of salvation. Second Corinthians 6:2 says that at just the right time, God heard you. If you cry out to God, He will hear you. On the day of salvation, He will help you. He will send the Holy Spirit to guide you and draw you to Him. Certainly, the "right time" is now. Today is the day of salvation! There is no guarantee of tomorrow. Your heart may become hard and your ears deaf to His call. Today, if you are fortunate enough to hear His voice, I urge you to say yes to Christ and His love.

You can experience a spiritual rebirth today. Romans 10:9 (KJV) says, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Will you pray today and begin your journey with Christ? "Lord Jesus, I confess with my mouth today that You are the only begotten Son of the living God. I repent and turn from my sins. I believe that You died on the cross to save me from my punishment and I receive You as Savior and Lord of my life. Please help me to grow in Your fellowship and serve You all the days of my life. I ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

If you prayed that prayer today from your heart, then you have become a child of God. You have been born again and your adventure with Christ begins. Read the Bible each day, beginning with the book of John. Talk to God each day and ask for His help. Find a church that loves Jesus, loves people, worships God with enthusiasm, and teaches the Bible. They will help and encourage you on your journey with Christ.

May God bless you,  
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