

Hebrews 7.11

The Coming of Hope

The world loves the story about a fat man in a red suit with a bag of toys; but the true story is so much better! This season we are thinking about the coming of Christ and the bag of blessings He brings. Today we come to the promise fulfilled (and paradoxically, still coming) of hope. Hope is the reality that what God says is as real as if we held it in our hands. It is the confirmation of promise that has been planted in our souls and it binds us to the God who gave it. Hope is the song of Jesus's birth, it is the reality of God manifesting that which has so long waited... but which still has parts unfinished in our sight. Hope is the lens of faith that allows us to rest easy in the arms of God. And all of this powerful truth came bound up in swaddling rags, and given no place in the lives of men... and still He was who He was, and is who He is; and in His coming we find hope beyond all understanding.

I. WITHOUT HOPE

A. Before the Gospel we have no hope

1. Man was separated from God in the Fall

Genesis 3:24 (NKJV) ²⁴ So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

a. Cut off from the divine presence

Ephesians 2:12 (NKJV) ¹² that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

b. Trapped in a world turned mad

c. Condemned to toil, strife and death

2. He has no desire to seek after God

Romans 3. 10 – 18

3. He is altogether determined to go his own way

Jeremiah 18.5-12

- B. Hope is not as the world defines it
 1. The problem is that they did not understand what hope was, nor did they possess any REAL hope.
 2. The world has 2 running definitions of hope
Optimism: a pie in the sky outlook, a Pollyanna type who says, "oh, tomorrow will be better, I'm just sure!" but with no grounds, or true reason.
Determination: I will change things and make them better on my own strength and power!...
- C. Hope is the certain promise of God

Psalm 119:81 (NKJV) ⁸¹ My soul faints for Your salvation, But I hope in Your word.

Psalm 119:49–50 (NKJV) ⁴⁹ Remember the word to Your servant, Upon which You have caused me to hope. ⁵⁰

This is my comfort in my affliction, For Your word has given me life.

Jeremiah 29:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

D. With the coming of Christ we have Hope

Isaiah 7:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

1. God has promised that He will come and restore us to Himself...
 - a. Since this is the heart of the curse, it is also the one thing that we need above all else. A way to find favor once more in the presence of God...
 - b. When Christ came, He changed **EVERYTHING**

c. John described Him as the one who would transform the whole dynamic between us and God...

John 1:29 (NKJV) ²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

II. HOPE IS

A. Unseen reality, not yet manifested

Romans 8:24–25 (NKJV) ²⁴ For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

1. It is important to note that this confident assurance is rooted and anchored in the promise of God... which is itself anchored in the PERSON of God

Isaiah 46:9–11

2. Hope and faith are Siamese twins, conjoined realities that support and sustain one another.

Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV) ¹ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

- B. So hope, Biblically defined is seeing the world as God sees it, and being purposed to live AS IF what God has promised is already present... even though it is still as yet unseen.
- C. Hope is living - and thus able to sustain no matter what comes against it. It is not static and brittle, but rather it is living and vibrant, a resource for all of life in these insane days.

1Peter 1:3 (NKJV) ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

- D. Rooted in the PERSON of Christ, in the Love of God which sent Him and in the promise which He fulfilled.

Jeremiah 17:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ Do not be a terror to me; You are my hope in the day of doom.

Psalms 31:23–24 (NKJV) ²³ Oh, love the Lord, all you His saints! For the Lord preserves the faithful, And fully repays the proud person. ²⁴ Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart, All you who hope in the Lord.

Psalms 33:17–18 (NKJV) ¹⁷ A horse is a vain hope for safety; Neither shall it deliver any by its great strength. ¹⁸ Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, On those who hope in His mercy,

III. HOPE REQUIRES

A. Trust

Jeremiah 17:7–8 (NKJV) ⁷ “Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, And whose hope is the Lord. ⁸ For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will

not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit.

B. Confidence in the character of God

Lamentations 3:25–33 (NKJV) ²⁵ The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, To the soul who seeks Him. ²⁶ It is good that one should hope and wait quietly For the salvation of the Lord. ²⁷ It is good for a man to bear The yoke in his youth. ²⁸ Let him sit alone and keep silent, Because God has laid it on him; ²⁹ Let him put his mouth in the dust— There may yet be hope. ³⁰ Let him give his cheek to the one who strikes him, And be full of reproach. ³¹ For the Lord will not cast off forever. ³² Though He causes grief, Yet He will show compassion According to the multitude of His mercies. ³³ For He does not afflict willingly, Nor grieve the children of men.

C. Knowledge

Isaiah 8:16–18 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Bind up the testimony, Seal the law among my disciples. ¹⁷ And I will wait on the Lord, Who hides His face from the house of Jacob; And I will hope in Him. ¹⁸ Here am I and the children whom the

Lord has given me! We are for signs and wonders in Israel From the Lord of hosts, Who dwells in Mount Zion.

D. Grace

1. Hope is the outflow of Grace, to a transformed heart. It is the very fruit of God dwelling among us, Christ in His coming brought us this grace...

2Thessalonians 2:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace,

IV. HOPE BRINGS

- A. Hope is a powerful source of transformation to those who trust in the God of hope... it changes us from the inside out and it aids in the work of God to conform us to the image of Christ.

1. Consolation in all our trials - we just read of the everlasting consolation brought to us by the coming of Christ...
2. Peace and fruitfulness - again consider Jeremiah 17...

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3. Transformation of our character...

Romans 5:1–5

4. Joy and peace

Romans 15:13 (NKJV) ¹³ 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.

B. Hope is also the guarantee God writes in our hearts that we WILL one day be accepted into His presence... we WILL be made righteous

Galatians 5:5 (NKJV) ⁵ For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

1Thessalonians 5:8 (NKJV) ⁸ But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

a. The hope of salvation is a helmet because it guards our thoughts and our minds. It defends us from the whispering lies of the deceiver... it settles us in the assurance of the promise of God...

b. We can simultaneously know what we are, and what we are becoming and be at peace with both the process and the GOD who holds us in it....

C. Hope is the promise of God of our eternal inheritance in Christ -

Titus 3:7 (NKJV) ⁷ that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

V. HOPE DOES

- A. Because of its spiritual aspect, hope does some things in us and through us
- B. Ironically, hope imprisons us

Zechariah 9:12 (NKJV) ¹² Return to the stronghold, You prisoners of hope. Even today I declare That I will restore double to you.

- C. It is the binding nature of hope that makes us return, that helps us continue...

1John 2:19 (NKJV) ¹⁹ They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

- D. Hope unites

Ephesians 1.15-25

E. Hope empowers

Hebrews 10:23 (NKJV) ²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

F. Hope aids in sanctification

1John 3:3 (NKJV) ³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

G. Hope invites

1Peter 3:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

H. Hope emboldens

2Corinthians 3:12 (NKJV) ¹² Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech—

I. Hope sends

Philippians 1.19-26