

**Introduction:**

- A man is dying in his bed and in his last few gasps for breath he smells the hint of chocolate chip cookies in the air. As he begins to salivate, his eyes open one last time and with all the strength he could muster he pulls himself up and out of bed. Clinging to chairs, walls and furniture he follows his nose and makes his way slowly and with great labor to the kitchen door. There on the counter before him a sea of fresh baked chocolate chip cookies! With his last little bit of strength he reaches for a cookie, and 'WHAP!', his wife hits his hand with the spatula and says, "Don't eat these! They are for the funeral!" There goes your hope!
- The Bible is full of faith and hope stories. In fact, we could say it is the common denominator of most stories in the Bible. Full of men and women who faced insurmountable trials.
  - When you are facing tests of faith, even the strongest of Christians can find it a challenge to find and maintain hope. Hope is critical to our faith!
  - When you find yourself in the dark place of no hope and you are discouraged, depressed, and despondent, you have to make yourself find encouragement and refreshment for your soul. We all need reminded to periodically fill up our 'hope tank!'
- You may be asking, "Where do I find that hope?" You are in the right place, listen up.
- "Now faith brings our hopes into reality and becomes the foundation needed to acquire the things we long for. It is all the evidence required to prove what is still unseen." (Hebrews 11:1, TPT)

**I. The 'Big Deal' About Hope**

A. Hope is:

1. Heb. *yahal* – "the idea of "tarrying" and "confident expectation, trust."<sup>1</sup>
2. Heb. *tiqwa* – This root means to wait or to look for with eager expectation. *Waiting with steadfast endurance is a great expression of faith. It means enduring patiently in confident hope that God* will decisively act for the salvation of his people (Gen 49:18).<sup>2</sup>
3. Hope is future tense. "*Surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off.*" (Proverbs 23:18, ESV) As long as there is a future there is hope!
4. God is the source of hope for his people, and he has promised them a future and a hope.
  - a) "*For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him.*" (Psalm 62:5, ESV)
  - b) Jeremiah says to besieged Judah, "There is hope for your future" (31:17).

<sup>1</sup> Gilchrist, P. R. (1999). In R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer Jr., & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed., p. 373). Moody Press.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

- (29:11) *You have a future and a hope.*
- c) Zechariah calls God's people, "*prisoners of hope.*" And he calls them to look to God as their restorer. Therefore, Yahweh himself is called "the hope of Israel"
5. Hope gives us life!
- B. Without hope you are dead or at least you have started dying.
1. There are lots of hopeless people in the world.
  2. There are lots of people without hope and do not even realize it. They have accepted life as such and the lies of hell begin to torment them with thoughts of destruction.
  3. People enter the place of 'self destruction' when they have no hope. Drug and alcohol addictions abound with the hopeless, thoughts of suicide, depression. No hope puts people in a dark place.
- C. Fear is the opposite of faith. And if you do not have hope you will not have faith. So we have to feed our hope just like you feed your faith.
1. For faith is the substance of things hoped for. In fact, without hope you will be believing for things you do not want to receive.
- D. The 'big deal' about hope is that it is future tense, life giving, courage sustaining, strength building and peace giving.

## II. Dried Up, Cut Off, No Hope Ezk. 37:11

- A. The bones are saying: we are dried up, hope lost, and cut off. They were seeing only dryness in their future. They were seeing themselves as having no way back. In Christ we have to find vision of life.
- B. Some settle into a place that they determine is their fate. But I want you to know that fate does not possess us, and we are not stuck in it. We serve a God that is bigger than our problems and our fears. We have got to see God in order to feed our hope.
- C. Hope is lost:
1. When we see our enemies bigger than our God–Numbers 13:33 *We were like grasshoppers.*
  2. When we trust in our enemies more than our God–Numbers 13:32 "...*the land devours its inhabitants...*"; "*Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the Lord is with us; do not fear them.*" (Numbers 14:9, ESV)
  3. When we forget the promises and believe the lies.
    - a) The promises lead to life. They are fulfilled by following God.
    - b) The lies lead to destruction. They lead to death by the Father of lies.
  4. When our relationship with God is based on externals and not internals.
    - a) When you only know God in your head, you will lose hope when severely challenged.

- b) When your relationship with God is in your heart, you will not lose hope when challenged.
- 5. When we feel that God has forgotten us.
  - a) Due to the length of the trying time we are in.
  - b) Due to no longer feeling the presence of God.
  - c) Due to the intensity of the mental turmoil/stress we are in. *"my soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is, so I say, "My endurance has perished; so has my hope from the Lord.""* (Lamentations 3:17-18, ESV)

### III. Building Hope In The Midst of Hopelessness

- A. Hope comes from hearing God's voice.
  - 1. Position yourself to hear. To many just give up and quit and stop positioning themselves to hear from God. Ie. More sympathy on FB than power from the Word.
    - a) Position for the Word that God is speaking,
    - b) Positioned to hear. Prayer—that's me listening.
  - 2. Listen to mature believers not people who have no faith. Jesus called that, "The blind leading the blind."
  - 3. Worship has to be a part of hearing. It creates an atmosphere to hear.
    - a) *"I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me."* (Psalm 13:6, ESV)
    - b) *"Nursing infants gurgle choruses about you; toddlers shout the songs that drown out enemy talk, and silence atheist babble."* (Psalm 8:2, The Message)
- B. Hope comes from receiving God's life (breath)/Spirit
  - 1. John 6:63 His word is spirit and it is life.
  - 2. Pray in tongues, Jude 20 and build yourself up in your most holy faith.
  - 3. Yes, sometimes you are doing this for a long time. Ie. Building mortgage.
- C. Hope comes from knowing God is faithful
  - 1. *"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful."* (Hebrews 10:23, ESV).
  - 2. If it appears that He is not faithful, he is doing something in you.
- D. **Hope must be based on God's ability.** Grace—God's ability in me to do the things I cannot do in and of myself.
  - 1. Eph 3:8-9 we are saved by grace through faith!
- E. Hope brings joy. *"The hope of the righteous brings joy..."* (Proverbs 10:28, ESV)  
It brings joy because it involves God. IE. Your tide will come back in.
- F. Hope comes from being around others who believe and are of like mind.
- G. Ps 42:5-6 *Why are you downcast O my soul?*
  - 1. I will hope in God.

2. I will praise Him.
3. I will remember You.

**Conclusion:**

- “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.” (Jeremiah 29:11-14, ESV)
- “I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;” (Psalm 130:5, ESV)
- Hope needs the help of patience in the place of waiting.