

I hope. Do you? I've been thinking a lot about the necessity of "hope" lately. The word is full of references to it.
Hope is the anchor of our soul (stabilizing assurance) Heb 6:19; 10:23 that gives us endurance in hardship
Hope is the attractiveness of our influence 1 Pet 3:15 that opens opportunities in our relationships
Hope is the anticipation of His appearing Col 1:27, Titus 2:13 that gives us motivation in our labors

In conversational English, the word **hope** is a weak and pitiful thing. The word **wish** and **hope** are synonymous in modern English. It is merely a *desire expressed* with no certainty at all. **hope** it doesn't rain on our parade. + Thus, we have **washed hopes** (found nearly 400,000 times on Google), **disappointed hopes**, and **dead hopes**.

Not so the biblical word **hope**. It is a strong, immovable, powerful, life giving, life saving, life sustaining, unswerving, unchanging, victory achieving, foe defeating, joy imparting, blessing filled word!

Defined: Hope is the certain assurance of a delightful destination while accepting an uncertain timing and path to get there. We KNOW what. But we DON'T KNOW when! The certainty of TRUTH with the uncertainty of TIME.

The believer alone possesses **hope**. All people have desires, dreams and wishes. But to have hope is to have certainty based on an omnipotent Promiser who makes immutable promises and fulfills every single one without fail. Consider the following:

- Our hope rests on the Promises of God Heb 6:18-19; Rom 5:1-5; Titus 1:1-2
- Our hope rests on the Purposes of God Rom 8:18-30; Jer 29:11
- Our hope rests on the Power of God Rom 15:13; 2 Thes 2:13

Our **hope** is not mere **WISHFUL THINKING**. Things aren't so bad. Hey, maybe they are! Hope doesn't minimize the reality of a fallen world, unpredictable events, suffering, grief, confusion or pain. Hope isn't blind to life's struggle.

Our **hope** is not mere **OPTIMISM**. It will all be better soon. Yo, it may not be! We are clearly told that evil and suffering will only increase as end times approach. Hope isn't deaf to the cries of our present crises.

Our **hope** is not mere **FANTASY**. Isn't life great. Uh, excuse me. Sometimes life stinks! Hope does not require me to call evil good, applaud misery or put happy face stickers on obituaries.

The hope-filled believer is not an *optimist*, but rather the *ultimate realist*. We know we live in a fallen world. We also know we are fallen. But also forgiven people with a future. We are grieved but not surprised by pain, sorrow or suffering. Hope doesn't call us to check out of this present world, but to serve it sacrificially and joyfully, while drying tears (sometimes our own). Hope calls us to the tender touch of sympathy and the blessed silence of shared sorrow. It calls us to look at today in the light of our everlasting tomorrow and move ahead with ultimate confidence in the ultimate purpose of our omnipotent God and Savior.

Hope looks at the cross and knows that sin, evil, injustice, and agony are real.

Hope looks at the cross and knows also that forgiveness, sovereignty, love and transformation are also real and will prevail.

Self Check Questions:

1. Is my hope so obvious that it causes confusion to unbelievers who are getting to know me really well?
2. When was the last time my heart was really lifted up to consider the ultimate **blessed hope** of Christ's appearing?
3. Have I accepted the reality of a fallen, unpredictable world and God's mysterious, hidden purposes?

For Further Study: Ps 42:5,11; 43:5; 71:5; 78:7; 130; 131; Lam 3:18-29; 1 Cor 9:10; 13:13; 15:19; 2 Cor 3:12; Eph 1:18; 2:12; 4:4; 2 Thes 2:16; 1 Tim 1:1; 1 Pet 1:3,13,21; 3:15; 1 John 3:1-3

Lord God of Hope, deliver me from flippancy on the one hand and fatalism on the other. Grant me a faith that accepts the reality of my fallen world as well as the reality of Your sovereign working in it. Fill me with genuine, confident anticipation of Your building Your church, Your prevailing kingdom purpose, and Your return to fulfill every promise You have made. Make me a vessel of hope to the hopeless multitudes I live among. Let me not disguise my struggle from my fellow pilgrims and rob myself of their assistance, yet let me not dishonor You by a hopelessness that refuses to embrace Your promises even with the weakest of grips. O God of Hope, fill me with hope today. In the Name of my Crucified, Risen Hope I pray, Amen+ Remember, you are very special to us and are praying for you continually. Living with leaving in view.... Jn 9:4
Ron & Val

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable, changed by The Immutable, running after The Irresistible with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows, spending our time on eternity, owning nothing yet possessing everything that matters and lasts. We are Pilgrims in Paradox. Welcome to THE JOURNEY.