

Resources on the Blessed Hope

- The Blessed Hope: Part 1
- The Blessed Hope: Definition
- The Blessed Hope: Source of
- The Blessed Hope: Part 2
- The Blessed Hope: Stabilizing Effect
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- Other Resources on the Blessed Hope

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Journal Articles ([Available Subscriptions](#))

- [Hope In The Old Testament -- By- David A. Hubbard](#)
- [The Theme of Hope in Dispensationalism -- By- Gary L. Nebeker](#)
- [Our Only Hope -- By- Lehman Strauss](#)
- [Judgment And Hope- The Full-Orbed Gospel -- By- John Oswalt](#)
- [Prophetic Hope in the Writings of Arno C. Gaebelein- A Possible Demonstration of the Doxological Purpose of Biblical History -- By- Mike Stallard](#)

Articles Below are Free Online

- [The Book of Ruth and Hope in Hard Times - Timothy Paul Erdel](#) - free online
- [The Hope of the Gospel - Thomas R. Schreiner](#)

BOOKS OUR BLESSED HOPE

Considering the importance of the Biblical truth about the believer's **BLESSED HOPE** in the vitality our daily walk of faith, it is surprising to discover that relatively little has been written on this important Biblical truth. The following 3 sources are the most notable exceptions in the 20th Century but only one is currently readily available.

- 1) [The Hope of the Near Approach of the Lord's Return and Its Influence upon Life](#) -H G. C. Moule - 1919
- 2) [Hopeless, yet there is hope: A Study in World Conditions and Their Solution](#) - Arno C. Gaebelein - 1935.

Article by Gaebelein - [Twenty Prominent Facts Taught in the New Testament on the Return of the Lord](#)

Sadly one website cynically lists "Our Hope" in their "Book of the *Weak*"! "Our Hope" is taken from the name of one of the most prominent evangelical magazines in America, "Our Hope", from 1894 to 1945 which was edited by Arno C. Gaebelein.

3) [Hope Again](#) by Charles R. Swindoll - the only Biblically based book on Christian hope readily available.

4) Christian Hope - John Angell James -1859

- [Preface](#)
- [On Hope, Considered Generally](#)
- [On the Nature of Christian Hope, and — its Distinction from Faith and Love](#)
- [The Foundation of Hope](#)
- [The Object of Hope](#)
- [Salvation by Hope](#)
- [The Assurance of Hope](#)
- [The Author of Hope](#)
- [Hope as an Anchor](#)
- [Hope Considered as a Helmet](#)
- [A Good Hope Through Grace](#)
- [A Living Hope](#)
- [A Patient Hope](#)
- [A Purifying Hope](#)
- [A Hope That Makes Not Ashamed](#)
- [The Harmony Between Hope and Fear](#)
- [Hope Only in this Life](#)
- [The Hope of the Hypocrite](#)
- [Hope in Death](#)
- [The Necessity and Means of Strengthening Hope](#)

5) [His Coming – Our Hope](#) - Gerald Stanton

6) John MacArthur on Hope

- [A Theology of Hope](#)
- [The Purifying Hope, Part 1](#)
- [The Purifying Hope, Part 2](#)

BILLY GRAHAM ON HOPE
Your word is my source of hope.
—PSALM 119:114

Perhaps the greatest psychological, spiritual,
and medical need that all people have is the need for hope.

For the believer there is hope beyond the grave,
because Jesus Christ has opened the door to heaven for us
by His death and resurrection.

Christ wants to give you hope for the future.
He wants you to learn what it means to walk with Him every day.
When you come to Christ, God gives you eternal life—
which begins right now as you open your heart to Him.

Faith points us beyond our problems to the hope we have in Christ.

Christ's second coming reminds us that ultimately our hope
is not in this world and its attempts to solve its problems,

but in Christ's promise to establish His perfect rule over all the earth.

Man has no ability to repair this damaged planet.
The flaw in human nature is too great. God is our only hope!

Earth's troubles fade in the light of heaven's hope.

My hope does not rest in the affairs of this world.
It rests in Christ who is coming again.

Only because Jesus is God and we have
confessed Him as Savior and Lord,
can He bestow and we receive these benefits,
this blessed assurance and hope (see Romans 10:9).

Our world today desperately hungers for hope, and yet uncounted people
have almost given up. There is despair and hopelessness on every hand.
Let us be faithful in proclaiming the hope that is in Jesus!

Looking for the Blessed Hope

Dr. John Piper

- Do you eagerly await the coming of Christ?
- And I don't mean: do you believe in the doctrine?
- Do you eagerly await him?

This is a very crucial test of the genuineness of your faith. Peter said in his first letter (2:7)

To you who believe He is precious

And so the preciousness of Christ is the evidence of your faith. And the anticipation of His coming is the evidence of His preciousness. And therefore you can test the reality of your faith by whether you are eagerly waiting for Christ's coming. I don't mean that you must think about the Second Coming all the time. Even when you are in love you don't think about your sweetheart all the time. Rather, ask yourself these three questions:

- 1) Does your mind return frequently to the truth of Christ's appearing?
- 2) When your mind turns to the truth of his appearing does your heart want it -- is there an eagerness to see him?
- 3) Do you pray for his coming -- Maranatha, praised the early church! Come, Lord Jesus?

If you come up short in answering those three questions there are three possible explanations. From the least to the most serious:

- 1) You may have trusted Christ as your Savior and Lord but you have not yet been well taught about the Second Coming, and ignorance hinders the eager expectation of your heart and your prayers.
- 2) You may have trusted Christ as Savior and Lord; you may know in your head the truth of his Second Coming; but you have grown cold and distant and have not felt for some time that Christ is precious and that seeing Him would be the fulfillment of all your longings.
- 3) You may have never submitted to Christ as Lord and trusted Him as Savior and may stand in desperate need of new birth...

Do you love the appearing of Christ? If not, confess the sin; pray for the awakening of your heart; and set yourself to meditate on the blessedness, visibility and glory of the coming of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ." (for Dr. Piper's complete message click [Our Hope: The Appearing of Christ](#))

WHEN HOPE IS LOST

Radio Bible Class

[Click](#) for booklet

What do you do when you feel like all hope is lost like moon walker Buzz Aldrin? Some, like Buzz Aldrin, become depressed after they reach their goals and find that there is nothing left to live for. Others slip into a state of depression when hope for what has not been reached seems lost--hope for a caring companion, hope for a successful career, hope for enough money to pay the bills, hope for a reconciled relationship, hope for relief from a stressful situation, or hope for the fulfillment of a long-cherished dream. ([When Hope is Lost](#))

Related Resources:

- [Life After Loss: Grieving with Hope](#)
- [Hope: Choosing Faith Instead of Fear](#)
- [Hope for the World](#)

OUR BLESSED HOPE

HOPE KEEPS YOU GOING

"In a recent study, scientists placed a rat in a tub of water. After about 45 minutes of treading water, the rat drowned. (No, the study didn't stop there.) Then the scientists placed another rat in the water. This time, as the poor rodent neared exhaustion after about 35 minutes, the scientists rescued it. The result: When that same rat was placed in the water again (after a little rest), it kicked and swam for hours. Why? It had the hope of being rescued, so it didn't give up as easily. Hope can do that. The promise of better times ahead can help us withstand the toughest of times, filling us with energy we didn't know we had. Christians in the first century knew about this--from experience! They had begun to suffer persecution under Nero. Some even lost their lives. But the church endured, because those early believers knew that heaven awaited them. So when Peter encouraged them to "set [their] hope fully on the grace to be given [them] when Jesus Christ is revealed" ([1Peter 1:13](#)), they took his advice to heart. As a person who has trusted in Christ, you have that same hope of Christ's return. Whatever you have to give up because of your faith-- friends, reputation, chances for advancement--you have hope of something better awaiting you. Are you beginning to feel like the rat in the experiment, desperately treading water? Set your hope on Christ's promises. His resurrection gives us the assurance that helps to keep us going, even when we've been in deep water for a long time."

THE DANGER OF "COUNTERFEIT HOPE" - "The human body experiences a powerful gravitational pull in the direction of **hope**," wrote journalist Norman Cousins, who himself survived a near-fatal illness and a massive heart attack. "That is why the patient's **hopes** are the physician's secret weapon. They are the hidden ingredients in any prescription." We endure because we **hope**, but "**hope in hope**" (like "faith in faith") is too often only a kind of self-hypnosis that keeps us from facing life honestly. While a patient may be better off with an optimistic attitude, it is dangerous for him to follow a **false hope** that may keep him from preparing for death. **That kind of hope is hopeless. When the end comes, the patient's outlook may be cheerful, but the outcome will be tragic.** (Warren Wiersbe)

DEVOTIONALS

OUR BLESSED HOPE

Excerpts from Our Daily Bread (Click blue links for full devotional)

- [There Is Hope](#) 1 Kings 19:4 - No one is hopeless who knows the God of hope.
- [Waiting](#) Philippians 3:20 - The greatest joy on earth is to have the sure hope of heaven.
- [What Keeps Us Going](#) Philippians 1:21 - Those who are prepared to die are most prepared to live.
- [Responding With Hope](#) Colossians 4:2-6 - Each day, we are to yield ourselves fully to Jesus, so that we may live wisely and respond graciously to others about the One who gives us the assurance of eternal life. A Christlike life can be a message of

hope to a searching world.

- [Too Much With Us](#) Ro 8:15 - No one is hopeless who knows the God of hope.
- [A Living Hope](#) 1 Peter 1:3-9 - If you have a living hope in Christ, you can deal with your past because of your future. God's glorious best for you lies up ahead. Christians can cope with their past because of their hope in the future.
- [Treadmill](#) Pr 4:18 - Life without Christ is a hopeless end; life with Christ is an endless hope.
- [Do You Have Hope?](#) 1 Thes 1:9-10 - If Christ lives in your heart, you have a living hope.
- [Prepare To Live](#) Ro 15:13 - No one is hopeless who hopes in God.
- [Reason To Hope](#) Lam 3:25 - God "alone gives the refreshment of hope, and therefore we too can proclaim, "Great is Your faithfulness."
- [The Hope Of The Heart](#) Romans 4:13-25 - Are you looking for hope? Then search the Scriptures diligently and claim the promises of God that apply to you. Promises truly are the hope of the heart, and God always keeps His word. The future always looks bright when viewed through the window of God's promises.
- [Source Of Hope](#) Lam 3:25 - Feeling hopeless reminds us that we are helpless without God.
- [Seeing With Hope](#) Ro 4:18 - Hope, like an anchor, is fixed on the unseen.
- [A Living Hope](#) 1 Pet 1:3 - Christians can cope with their past because of their hope in the future.
- [Hopeful Derelicts](#) Luke 7:48 - In Christ, the hopeless find hope.
- [The Brightest Hope](#) Rev 7:17 - Hope in the God of all our tomorrows provides optimism for the future and gives strength for today... Even in the bleakest times, Christians have the brightest hope.
- [The Book Of Hope](#) Psalm 119:97-104 - That Book, the Word of God, gives us real hope—a hope backed by all the authority, truth, and power of God. Many books can inform, but only the Bible can transform.
- [The King Could](#) Mt 19:26 - When the broken pieces of life seem beyond hope of repair, don't give up. We have a King who can put people back together again
- [Do You Have Hope?](#) 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 - If Christ lives in your heart, you have a living hope.
- [Finding New Hope](#) Ps 42:5 - Don't give in to despair! Remind yourself of God's goodness and love. Talk to Him. He will meet your needs. He'll lead you in paths of love and light and joy where you will find new hope.
- [A City Of Smiles](#) Rev 21:4 - Hope in the heart puts a smile on the face.
- [Hope In The Sad Times](#) Lam 3:26 - It's remarkable! No matter what we might be suffering, we can be sure that God will never leave us hopeless.
- [Letdown](#) Lk 2:19-20 - Feeling let down today? Try looking up.
- [Renewed Hope](#) 1 Ki 19:4 - God gives hope to us as we give help to others.
- [Where to Look](#) Heb 12:1-2 - Corrie ten Boom lived through the hellish life of Nazi concentration camps—a place where hope was lost for most people. She survived to tell her story of unfaltering faith and tight-fisted hope in God. Looking to Jesus, my spirit is blest, The world is in turmoil, in Him I have rest; The sea of my life around me may roar, When I look to Jesus, I hear it no more. —Anon.
- [The Need For Hope — \(Booklet - What's the Appeal of the New Age Movement?\)](#) Note that this is a booklet on the New Age Movement but in **chapter 3 (page 15) there is a section entitled "The Need for Hope"** - "A brilliant psychiatrist and observer of human nature, Victor Frankl was a Jewish survivor of the German concentration camps. As a prisoner living for many months on the knife-edge between death and life, he witnessed time and again the essential human need for meaning. He noted that survival in the camps wasn't as dependent on physical strength as it was on the possession of a deeply felt reason to live. He observed that prisoners usually died if they lost hope and had no purpose for carrying on." Subtopics include...What hope does our world have?...What is the New Agers' hope?...What is the reason for biblical hope?
- [Does God Want Me Well? — \(33 page Booklet\)](#) Finding hope in pain or illness
- [AIDS: Finding Hope And Compassion — \(Booklet\)](#) Our world is shrinking by the day. Global travel, a global economy, and advancing technology have drawn the world together more than ever before. But something else ties our world together—the AIDS crisis, which can no longer be viewed as "someone else's problem." This epidemic has grown to such a magnitude that it's now everyone's problem.
- [When Fear Seems Overwhelming: Finding Courage & Hope — \(Booklet\)](#) Fear wears many faces—being worried about what others may think of you, or being anxious about getting accepted at the college you've dreamed of attending, or being nervous while performing at a music recital, or refusing to speak in front of a crowd. Fear is the knot in the pit of your stomach that makes you wish you could just disappear. In a world filled with danger and uncertainty, one thing is certain—we cannot escape fear. So how are we to respond when we feel afraid? Let's take a look at what the Bible teaches about the source of our fears, why we fear, how fear helps or harms us, and how we can overcome debilitating fears that hinder healthy living.
- [No Disappointment](#) The promise of heaven is not empty hype but eternal hope.
- [Such A Hope](#) - The hope of heaven is God's solution for sorrow.
- [Hope For The World](#) - The only hope for world peace is the coming of the Prince of Peace.
- [New Hope](#) No one is hopeless whose hope is in God.
- [A Ray Of Hope](#) Even in life's darkest hour, Christians have the brightest hope.

- [A Reason For Hope](#) This hope of Lamentations 3 is echoed in a hymn by Thomas Chisholm (1866-1960). Although suffering sickness and setbacks throughout his life, he wrote "Great Is Thy Faithfulness." It assures us that even in times of great fear, tragic loss, and intense suffering we can find comfort and confidence as we trust in God's great faithfulness.
- [A Weeping World](#) The soul would have no rainbow if the eyes had no tears.
- [Keep Talking About Jesus](#) In life and in death, our only hope is Jesus.
- [A Good Day To Die?](#) No one is hopeless whose hope is in God.
- [Restoring The Years](#) No matter how dark your past, with Christ your future is bright.
- [A Good Will](#) The Christian's inheritance is guaranteed forever!
- [Bad News?](#) The future is bright if Christ is your hope.
- [Source Of Hope](#) Feeling hopeless reminds us that we are helpless without God.
- [Hope In God](#) No one is hopeless whose hope is in God.
- [A Living Hope](#) Christians can cope with their past because they have hope for the future.
- [Losing A Friend](#) When the sunshine of God's love meets the showers of our sorrow, the rainbow of promise appears.
- [What Keeps Us Going?](#) Those who are prepared to die are most prepared to live.
- [Looking Ahead](#) It's better to look ahead and prepare than to look back and despair.
- [He Lives!](#) Christ's empty tomb fills us with hope.
- [On Eagles' Wings](#) When you're weary in life's struggles, find your rest in the Lord.
- [Out Of The Dust](#) If we have hope, we can go on.

OUR BLESSED HOPE DEVOTIONALS

- [Hope is a Fixed Anchor](#) (Heb 6:19-20) Elizabeth Elliot
- [A Living Hope](#) (Psalm 39:7-13) Warren Wiersbe
- [Hope Laid Up for You in Heaven](#) (Col 1:4-5) W H Griffith Thomas
- [Hope in Waiting](#) (Lam 3:26) George Matheson
- [Hope for a Hopeless Failure](#) (1Peter 1:3) Elizabeth Elliot
- [Hope vs. Fear](#) (Matt. 28:20) Streams in Desert
- [Waiting for Hope](#) (Galatians 5:5) Streams in Desert
- [Resurrection Hope](#) (1Thes 4:16-17, Isaiah 26:19) Streams in Desert
- [Faith, Love & Hope](#) (Col 1:4-5) W H Griffith Thomas
- [Abiding Faith, Hope and Love](#) (1Cor 13:13) William G Scroggie
- [Saved by Hope](#) (Romans 8:24, 25) Gracegems
- [Hoping in the Lord](#) (Psalm 130:7) Gracegems
- [Hope](#) (Psalm 130:7) Gracegems
- [For Hope in Discouragement](#) (Psalm 43:5) Gracegems
- [The God of Hope](#) (Romans 15:13) Gracegems
- [The Blessed Hope](#) (Romans 15:13) Gracegems
- [HOPE](#) Gracegems
- [THE BLESSED HOPE](#) John MacDuff
- [The Hope of the Redeemer's Return](#) A W Pink

MESSAGES ON OUR BLESSED HOPE by Dr. John Piper

- [Romans 4:16-21](#) Faith: In Hope, Against Hope, for the Glory of God
- [Romans 5:1-2](#) Let Us Exult in the Hope of the Glory of God
- [Romans 5:1-5](#) Our Hope: The Glory Of God
- [Romans 5:1-8](#) Called to Rejoice in Suffering: For Holiness and Hope
- [Romans 8:18-25](#) Our Hope: The Redemption Of Our Bodies

- [Romans 12:11-12](#) The Fruit Of Hope: Joy
- [Romans 15:4](#) How Can I Keep On Hoping? The Scriptures!
- [2 Corinthians 3:12](#) The Fruit Of Hope: Boldness
- [Galatians 5:1-12](#) Our Hope: Righteousness
- [Colossians 1:3-8](#) The Fruit Of Hope: Love
- [Colossians 1:15-23](#) Why Hope? Gospel!
- [1 Thessalonians 1:2-3](#) The Fruit Of Hope: Endurance
- [2 Thessalonians 2:13-17](#) , [2 Thessalonians 2:13-17](#) - 2 God Has Given Us Good Hope Through Grace
- [2 Thessalonians 2:16-17](#) Why Hope? Grace!
- [Titus 2:11-13](#) Our Hope: The Appearing Of Jesus Christ
- [Hebrews 6:1-12](#) What Is Hope?
- [Hebrews 6:9-11](#) The Full Assurance of Hope
- [Hebrews 6:9-12](#) The Full Assurance Of Hope To The End
- [Hebrews 10:19-25](#) The Fullness of Hope & the Fellowship of Love
- [Hebrews 11:1-3](#) What Faith Know & Hopes For
- [Hebrews 11:13-22](#) The Hope of Exiles on the Earth
- [1 Peter 1:3, 22-25](#) How Can I Hope? New Birth!
- [1 Peter 1:3-9](#) The Power of Hope
- [1 Peter 1:13](#) Girding the Mind to Guard Your Hope
- [1 Peter 3:1-6](#) Holy Women Who Hoped In God
- [1 Peter 3:13-16](#) Make a Case for Your Hope
- [1 Peter 3:13-17](#) Christ is hallowed in us when we hope in him

MESSAGES ON OUR BLESSED HOPE PENINSULA BIBLE CHURCH

- Colossians 1:1-8 [Waiting in Hope for Christ](#)
- Colossians 1:1-8 [Where Hope Begins](#)
- Colossians 1:27 [Christ In You Hope of Glory](#)
- Romans 5:1-2 [Rejoicing In Hope](#)
- Romans 11:1-24 [There's Hope Ahead](#)
- 1 Peter 1:3 [The Living Hope](#)
- 1 Peter 1:3-5 [How Can We Maintain a Living Hope](#)
- 1 Thessalonians 1:3 [A Hope that Produces Endurance](#)

HOPE TORREY'S TOPIC

Suggestion - Hold pointer of the passage and make your observation of what it teaches about "hope" and then compare your assessment with Torrey's.

- In God -Psalms 39:7; 1 Peter 1:21
- In Christ -1 Corinthians 15:19; 1 Timothy 1:1
- In God's promises -Acts 26:6,7; Titus 1:2
- In the mercy of God -Psalms 33:18
- Is the work of the Holy Spirit -Romans 15:13; Galatians 5:5

OBTAINED THROUGH

- Grace -2 Thessalonians 2:16

- The word -Psalms 119:81
- Patience and comfort of the Scriptures -Romans 15:4
- The gospel -Colossians 1:5,23
- Faith -Romans 5:1,2; Galatians 5:5
- The result of experience -Romans 5:4
- A better hope brought in by Christ - Hebrews 7:19

DESCRIBED AS

- Good -2 Thessalonians 2:16
- Living -1 Peter 1:3
- Sure and steadfast -Hebrews 6:19
- Gladdening -Proverbs 10:28
- Blessed -Titus 2:13
- Makes not ashamed -Romans 5:5
- Triumphs over difficulties -Romans 4:18
- Is an encouragement to boldness in preaching -2 Corinthians 3:12

SAINTS

- Are called to -Ephesians 4:4
- Rejoice in -Romans 5:2; 12:12
- Have all, the same -Ephesians 4:4
- Have, in death -Proverbs 14:32
- Should abound in -Romans 15:13
- Should look for the object of -Titus 2:13
- Should not be ashamed of -Psalms 119:116
- Should hold fast -Hebrews 3:6
- Should not be moved from -Colossians 1:23
- Should continue in -Psalms 71:14; 1 Peter 1:13
- Connected with faith and love -1 Corinthians 13:13

OBJECTS OF

- Salvation -1 Thessalonians 5:8
- Righteousness -Galatians 5:5
- Christ's glorious appearing -Titus 2:13
- A resurrection -Acts 23:6; 24:15
- Eternal life -Titus 1:2; 3:7
- Glory -Romans 5:2; Colossians 1:27
- Leads to purity -1John 3:3
- Leads to patience -Romans 8:25; 1Thessalonians 1:3
- Seek for full assurance of -Hebrews 6:11
- Be ready to give an answer concerning -1 Peter 3:15
- Encouragement to -Hosea 2:15; Zechariah 9:12
- Encourage others to -Psalms 130:7
- Happiness of -Psalms 146:5
- Life is the season of -Ecclesiastes 9:4; Isaiah 38:18
- The wicked have no ground for -Ephesians 2:12

OF THE WICKED

- Is in their worldly possessions -Job 31:24
- Shall make them ashamed -Isaiah 20:5,6; Zechariah 9:5
- Shall perish -Job 8:13; 11:20; Proverbs 10:28
- Shall be extinguished in death -Job 27:8

Illustrated by

- An Anchor -Hebrews 6:19
- A helmet -1 Thessalonians 5:8

Exemplified

- David -Psalms 39:7
- Paul -Acts 24:15
- Abraham -Romans 4:18
- Thessalonians -1 Thessalonians 1:3

HYMNS

Related to Hope

- [My Hope is Built \(The Solid Rock\)](#)
- [Jesus, My Only Hope by Fanny Crosby](#)
- [O Jesus My Hope by Charles Wesley](#)
- [Whispering Hope](#) (or [here](#))
- [Christ of All My Hopes, the Ground](#)
- [The Hope of the Coming of the Lord](#)
- [I Know That My Redeemer Lives by Charles Wesley](#) (Job19:25)
- [O Glorious Hope of Perfect Love by Charles Wesley](#)
- [O Hope of Every Contrite Heart by Bernard de Clairvaux](#)
- [Prisoners of Hope, Arise by Charles Wesley](#)
- [Songs of Hope](#) - 37 Well done free Mp3 Vocals that will be like water to your thirsty soul if you are grieving a loss.
- [Third Day - The Blessed Hope](#)

THE BLESSED HOPE

C H Spurgeon Quotes

Memory is very often the servant of despondency. Despairing minds call to remembrance every dark foreboding in the past, and every gloomy feature in the present. Memory stands like a handmaiden, clothed in sackcloth, presenting to her master a cup of mingled gall and wormwood. Like Mercury, she hastes, with winged heel, to gather fresh thorns with which to fill the uneasy pillow, and to bind fresh rods with which to scourge the already bleeding heart. There is, however, no necessity for this. Wisdom will transform memory into an angel of comfort. That same recollection which may in its left hand bring so many dark and gloomy omens, may be trained to bear in its right hand a wealth of hopeful signs. She need not wear a crown of iron, she may encircle her brow with a fillet of gold, all spangled with stars. When Christian, according to Bunyan, was locked up in Doubting Castle, memory formed the crab-tree cudgel with which the famous giant beat his captives so terribly. They remembered how they had left the right road, how they had been warned not to do so, and how in rebellion against their better selves, they wandered into By-path Meadow. They remembered all their past misdeeds, their sins, their evil thoughts and evil words, and all these were so many knots in the cudgel, causing sad bruises and wounds in their poor suffering persons. But one night, according to Bunyan, this same memory which had scourged them, helped to set them free; for she whispered something in Christian's ear, and he cried out as one half amazed, "What a fool am I to lie in a stinking dungeon, when I may as well walk at liberty! I have a key in my bosom, called Promise; that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle." ([Page 101 includes illustrations - print very small](#)) So he put his hand into his bosom, and with much joy he plucked out the key, and thrust it into the lock; and though the lock of the great iron gate, as Bunyan says, "went damnable hard," yet the key did open it, and all the others too; and so, by this blessed act of memory, poor Christian and Hopeful were set free. (For full sermon on Lam 3:21 see - [Memory—the Handmaid of Hope](#))

- See Youtube video on [Memory The Handmaid of Hope by C. H. Spurgeon - Part 1 part 2 part 3 part 4 part 5](#))

PURITY, even purity of heart, is the main thing to be aimed at. We need to be made clean within through the Spirit and the Word, and then we shall be clean without by consecration and obedience. There is a close connection between the affections and the understanding: if we love evil, we cannot understand that which is good. If the heart is foul, the eye will be dim. How can those men see a holy God who love unholy things?

What a privilege it is to see God here! A glimpse of Him is heaven below! In Christ Jesus, the pure in heart behold the Father. We see Him, His truth, His love, His purpose, His sovereignty, His covenant character, yea, we see Himself in Christ. But this is only apprehended as sin is kept out of the heart. Only those who aim at godliness can cry, "Mine eyes are ever towards the Lord." The desire of Moses, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory," can only be fulfilled in us as we purify ourselves from all iniquity. We shall "see him as he is," and "every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself." The enjoyment of present fellowship and the hope of the beatific vision are urgent motives for purity of heart and life. Lord, make us pure in heart, that we may see Thee!

No Cause to Blush - "Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed."—Isaiah 54:4

WE shall not be ashamed of our faith. Carping critics may assail the Scriptures upon which we ground our belief, but every year the Lord will make it more and more clear that in His Book there is no error, no excess, and no omission. It is no discredit to be a simple believer: the faith which looks alone to Jesus is a crown of honor on any man's head and better than a star on his breast.

We shall not be ashamed of our hope. It shall be even as the Lord has said. We shall be fed, led, blessed, and rested. Our Lord will come, and then the days of our mourning shall be ended. How we shall glory in the Lord who first gave us lively hope, and then gave us that which we hoped for!

We shall not be ashamed of our love. Jesus is to us the altogether lovely, and never, never, shall we have to blush because we have yielded our hearts to Him. The sight of our glorious Well-beloved will justify the most enthusiastic attachment to Him. None will blame the martyrs for dying for Him. When the enemies of Christ are clothed with everlasting contempt, the lovers of Jesus shall find themselves honored by all holy beings, because they chose the reproach of Christ rather than the treasures of Egypt.

Looking for Him - "Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."—Hebrews 9:28

THIS is our hope. He to whom we have already looked as coming once to bear the sins of many will have another manifestation to the sons of men; this is a happy prospect in itself. But that second appearing has certain peculiar marks which glorify it exceedingly.

Our Lord will have ended the business of sin. He has so taken it away from His people, and so effectually borne its penalty, that He will have nothing to do with it at His second coming. He will present no sin-offering, for He will have utterly put sin away.

Our Lord will then complete the salvation of His people. They will be finally and perfectly saved and will in every respect enjoy the fullness of that salvation. He comes not to bear the result of our transgressions, but to bring the result of His obedience; not to remove our condemnation, but to perfect our salvation.

Our Lord thus appears only to those who look for Him. He will not be seen in this character by men whose eyes are blinded with self and sin. To them He will be a terrible Judge, and nothing more. We must first look to Him, and then look for Him; and in both cases our look shall be life.

The Divine Light in Darkness "For thou wilt light my candle."—Psalm 18:28

IT may be that my soul sits in darkness; and if this be of a spiritual kind, no human power can bring me light. Blessed be God! He can enlighten my darkness, and at once light my candle. Even though I may be surrounded by a "darkness which might be felt," yet He can break the gloom, and immediately make it bright around me.

The mercy is that if He lights the candle, none can blow it out; neither will it go out for lack of substance nor burn out of itself through the lapse of hours. The lights which the Lord kindled in the beginning are shining still. The Lord's lamps may need trimming, but He does not put them out.

Let me, then, like the nightingale, sing in the dark. Expectation shall furnish me with music, and hope shall pitch the tune. Soon I shall rejoice in a candle of God's lighting. I am dull and dreary just now. Perhaps it is the weather, or bodily weakness, or the surprise of a sudden trouble; but whatever has made the darkness, it is God alone who will bring the light. My eyes are unto Him alone. I shall soon have the candles of the Lord shining about me; and further on in His own good time, I shall be where they need no candle, neither light of the sun. Hallelujah!

He Came; He Is Coming - "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."—Acts 1:11

MANY are celebrating our Lord's first coming this day; let us turn our thoughts to the promise of His second coming. This is as sure as the first advent and derives a great measure of its certainty from it. He who came as a lowly man to serve will assuredly come to take the reward of His service. He who came to suffer will not be slow in coming to reign.

This is our glorious hope, for we shall share His joy. Today we are in our concealment and humiliation, even as He was while here below; but when He cometh it will be our manifestation, even as it will be His revelation. Dead saints shall live at His appearing. The slandered and despised shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Then shall the saints appear as kings and priests, and the days of their mourning shall be ended. The long rest and inconceivable splendor of the millennial reign will be an abundant recompense for the ages of witnessing and warring.

Oh, that the Lord would come! He is coming! He is on the road and traveling quickly. The sound of His approach should be as music to our hearts! Ring out, ye bells of hope!

Some Choice Sayings on Hope by Spurgeon...

- Hope what you please; but remember, that hope without truth at the bottom of it, is an anchor without a holdfast. A groundless hope is a mere delusion.
- It is reported that in the Tamul language there is no word for hope. Alas! poor men, if we were all as destitute of the blessed comfort itself as these Tamul speakers are of the word! What must be the misery of souls in hell where they remember the word, but can never know hope itself!
- Hell alone excepted, hope is a dweller in all regions.
- Hope as much as ever a man can hope; for when your hope is in God you cannot hope too much.
- Do not bury a man before he is dead; hope that so long as a sinner lives he may yet live unto God.
- Kill hope in a man, and you have killed the man's best self.
- In a word, no condition can be so bad but God can change it.
- The New Zealander has a word for hope which signifies "the swimming-thought"; because when all other thoughts are drowned, hope still swims. (From Exploring the Mind and Heart of the Prince of Preachers)

THE BLESSED HOPE

DEVOTIONALS & SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS

OUR DAILY BREAD

The Son Will Shine Again - This hope we have as an anchor of the soul (Hebrews 6:19).

A newsboy, thinly clad and drenched by the soaking rain, stood shivering in a doorway one cold day in November. To get a little warmth, he would hold one bare foot against his leg for a moment and then the other. Every few minutes he would cry out,

"Morning paper! Morning paper!"

A man who was well protected by his coat and umbrella stopped to buy the early edition. Noting the boy's discomfort, he said,

"This kind of weather is pretty hard on you, isn't it?"

Looking up with a smile, the youngster replied,

"I don't mind too much, Mister. The sun will shine again."

Chilling winds of adversity and gray skies of a sinful environment easily discourage us. But we can count on better days because we know God is working in our lives. This hope is called an "anchor of the soul," and the Bible says that it abides (1 Cor 13:13) and does not disappoint (Ro 5:5). It promises righteousness (Gal. 5:5), eternal life (Titus 1:2), and the return of Jesus (Titus 2:13). It is a "living hope," founded on the resurrection of Jesus from the dead (1 Pet. 1:3).

When circumstances get out of control and pressures threaten to overwhelm us, we know that Jesus died for us, is working in us, and will never leave us. We can hold fast to God's promises and patiently endure. The "anchor of hope" will hold us firm. —D. J De Haan ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

It is always darkest just before dawn.

Hold Fast. He's Coming - "Behold, I come quickly! Hold fast what you have" (Revelation 3:11).

During the American Civil War, General William T. Sherman drove his troops on his decisive march to the sea. In a fort on Kennesaw Mountain, he left behind a small contingent of men to guard the rations. General John Bell Hood of the Confederate Army attacked the fort, and a fierce battle followed. One-third of Sherman's men were killed or wounded and J. M. Corse, the general in command, was severely injured. Just as he was about to hoist the white flag and surrender, a message came through the signal corps set up on a chain of mountains. General Sherman was within fifteen miles of the fort and sent the message:

"Hold fast. We are coming."

Those few words so encouraged the defenders that they held on and kept the fort from falling into the hands of their attackers.

Our heavenly Commander has also sent us the assurance that He is coming. The Lord Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:2-3). The fact that our Savior is coming again gives us hope. It makes us want to stand our ground. It encourages us to continue fighting the good fight of faith. It assures us of victory. Fierce as the battle may rage and difficult as the conflict may be as we serve Him, we dare not give up. Christ is coming again—perhaps today. —R. W. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When faithfulness is most difficult, it is most rewarding.

Let in A Ray of Hope

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing (Romans 15:13).

The English poet Alexander Pope said,

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast, man never is but always to be blessed."

As Christians, we know there is only one sure and abiding source of hope, and that is God. If hope originated in ourselves, we would be cast into the depths of despair because life's complex problems have a way of squeezing every last ounce of it from our hearts. But when we trust God, hope abounds by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In his book *Live With Your Emotions*, Hazen G. Werner quotes part of a letter from a woman who had run out of hope. She wrote,

"A vile and ugly sin had dogged my way for years. My soul had been eclipsed in darkness. I began to feel I would never be emancipated from its grasp. Then one evening in the midst of my despair, I felt the impulse to say, 'Thank you, God, anyway,' and for a moment it was light. I said to myself, 'That must be the way.' I began to thank Him still more, and the light continued and grew, and for a whole evening I was relieved of my burden."

What that woman seemingly stumbled onto by accident, the psalmist knew from experience. The power of gratitude can lift the weight of the most pressing trial. Turning the gaze of his soul heavenward, he saw God as an inexhaustible source of hope.

When we get discouraged, we can talk to ourselves as David did:

"Why are you cast down, O my soul? Hope in God" (Psalm 42:5).

No matter how dark the path, thank God for Himself. It will open a window to heaven and let in a ray of hope. —D. J. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Hope, like an anchor, is fixed on the unseen.

Is There Any Hope? - "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope" (1 Timothy 1:1)

On December 17, 1927, a submarine sank off Provincetown, Massachusetts, and forty crewmen died. In the failed rescue attempt, one diver heard a trapped sailor tap out a pathetic question in Morse code:

"Is there any hope?"

The disciples must have been asking the same question at their last meal with Jesus. The One they loved the most was going away to a place where they could not immediately follow.

Although packing His bags to leave, He promised to return for them. When they least expected it, He would walk up the front path, climb the porch steps, and knock boldly on the door. Jesus told His disciples to feed on that hope because He was the hope for years to come.

This hope became a major theme of the New Testament. In essence, Paul pictured Christians skydiving in reverse, free falling upward through the clouds, reaching out their hands to His, and floating into eternity (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Peter proclaimed a sure hope because of Christ's resurrection (1 Peter 1:3) and challenged everyone to be ready to give a reason for that hope (3:15).

Until Jesus returns we have a message for those sleepwalking on trails that lead to a hopeless end. We on the other road—the one of endless hope—must awaken them with our shouts of joy,

"He is the Christ. He is coming again. He is our hope!"

Already enjoying the pleasures of a future event - [We] rejoice in hope of the glory of God (Romans 5:2).

The glories that await the Christian defy our comprehension. What little we understand about them, however, fills us with anticipation. We look longingly to that day when we shall enjoy heaven in all its fullness.

In Dare to Believe, Dan Baumann told a story that illustrates the unique experience of knowing something is ours yet longing to enjoy it more fully. Every year at Christmastime, he would do a lot of snooping, trying to find the gift-wrapped presents and figure out what was in them. One year he discovered a package with his name on it that was easy to identify. His mother couldn't disguise the golf clubs inside. Baumann wrote:

"When Mom wasn't around, I would go and feel the package, shake it, and pretend that I was on the golf course. The point is, I was already enjoying the pleasures of a future event; namely, the unveiling. It had my name on it. I knew what it was. But only Christmas would reveal it in its fullness."

That's the way it is for believers as we await what God has for us in heaven. Wrote Baumann, "We shall be glorified, but we are beginning to taste glorification now... This quality of life begins the moment an individual places faith in Christ and thereby shares His life. We have eternal life—here and now—but it is only a foretaste of its fullness. God has whetted our appetites for the main course, which has to come later!"

Christians have good reason to rejoice in hope! —R. W. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Future prospects bring present joys.

No Hopeless Situation for God - "That in my flesh I shall see God, whom ... my eyes shall behold" (Job 19:26).

Children of God can rise above every trouble and trial of life if they anticipate the glories of heaven and the joy of being there with the Savior.

I received a letter from a severely handicapped man who possessed the sense of victory that comes from a forward look of faith. He had survived a long, delicate cranial operation, but he suffered some brain damage, partial blindness, some deafness, and mild paralysis. In addition, he spent several months on dialysis after both kidneys failed. He went through an unsuccessful transplant operation and endured another period of dialysis before receiving a replacement kidney. He admitted that he felt pretty low at times, but he didn't stay down in the dumps. He fully believes that God has a loving purpose in everything He allows, and he said he was looking forward to the glorified body awaiting him. He closed his letter by saying,

"I can live with my problems because I know all of these things are preparing me for heaven."

In Job 19 we read not only Job's bitter lament but also his beautiful expression of hope. He bewailed his loneliness, for in addition to losing his health and wealth he had lost his sons and daughters and all his friends had abandoned him. Even little children would have nothing to do with him. Yet he found consolation. Deep within, he believed that on the other side of death he would see God as His Friend and Savior. With that hope he could triumph over everything—and so can we. —H. V. Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)).

No one is hopeless whose hope is in God.

Hope Springs Eternal - Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord. --Jeremiah 17:7

The English poet Alexander Pope wrote,

Hope springs eternal in the human breast: Man never is, but always to be blest.

But where does man turn when hope dries up?

The director of a medical clinic told of a terminally ill young man who came in for his usual treatment. A new doctor who was on duty said to him casually and cruelly,

"You know, don't you, that you won't live out the year?"

As the young man left, he stopped by the director's desk and wept.

"That man took away my hope," he blurted out.

"I guess he did," replied the director. "Maybe it's time to find a new one."

Commenting on this incident, Lewis Smedes wrote,

"Is there a hope when hope is taken away? Is there hope when the situation is hopeless? That question leads us to Christian hope, for in the Bible. Hope is no longer a passion for the possible. It becomes a passion for the promise." ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The secret of coping is hoping in God.

Hope in Your Darkest Hour - During the Thirty Years' War in the 17th century, German pastor Paul Gerhardt and his family were forced to flee from their home. One night as they stayed in a small village inn, homeless and afraid, his wife broke down and cried openly in despair. To comfort her, Gerhardt reminded her of Scripture promises about God's provision and keeping. Then, going out to the garden to be alone, he too broke down and wept. He felt he had come to his darkest hour.

Soon afterward, Gerhardt felt the burden lifted and sensed anew the Lord's presence. Taking his pen, he wrote a hymn that has brought comfort to many.

[Give to the Winds Thy Fears](#)

"Give to the winds thy fears;

Hope, and be undismayed;

God hears thy sighs and counts thy tears;

God shall lift up thy head.

Through waves and clouds and storms,

He gently clears thy way;

Wait thou His time; so shall this night

Soon end in joyous day.

(Ed note: [click](#) and thank Him for being the God of hope - of the promise of absolute certainty of future good)

It is often in our darkest times that God makes His presence known most clearly. He uses our sufferings and troubles to show us that He is our only Source of strength. And when we see this truth, like Pastor Gerhardt, we receive new hope.

Are you facing a great trial? Take heart. [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

Put yourself in God's hands.
Wait for His timing.
He will give you a "song in the night."

River Of Disappointment - Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

—John 14:6

Sir Alexander Mackenzie (1764-1820) is a Canadian hero. An early fur trader and explorer, he led a daring expedition across Canada to the Pacific Ocean. His incredible journey was completed in 1793, 11 years before Americans Lewis and Clark began their famous expedition to the West.

Mackenzie was determined to succeed, for an earlier attempt in 1789 had ended in failure. His crew of 12 explorers in three canoes had set out from Lake Athabasca in an effort to find a water route to the Pacific. The valiant group followed a mighty river (now named the Mackenzie) with high hopes, paddling furiously amid great danger. Unfortunately, it didn't empty into the Pacific but into the Arctic Ocean. In his diary, Mackenzie called it the "River of Disappointment."

Many people are following religions that lead to ultimate disappointment. Because these beliefs do not point to Christ, they are false and will not lead to heaven. Only Jesus can take us to the waters of eternal life (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

We must not be fooled by those who teach another way to God. And we must help others to see that Jesus Christ is humanity's only hope. By trusting Him as our Savior, we will not end up on a "River of Disappointment." —D C Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Man gropes his way through life's dark maze,
To gods unknown he often prays,
Until one day he meets God's Son—
At last he's found the Living One! —D. De Haan

Those who put their hope in Christ will never be disappointed.

Don't Lose the Upward Look - He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly" (Revelation 22:20).

The great preacher F. B. Meyer once asked D. L. Moody,

"What is the secret of your success?"

Moody replied,

"For many years I have never given an address without the consciousness that the Lord may come before I have finished."

This may well explain the intensity of his service and the zeal of his ministry for Christ.

One of the most encouraging teachings in the Bible is that of the Lord's return to earth. Three times Revelation 22 repeats this promise. As God was about to close the pages of divine revelation, He called attention to this grand theme, announcing in the words of Christ Himself, "Surely I am coming quickly." The last words of our Lord before leaving this earth twenty centuries ago remind us that He is coming back for us. With such a forceful assurance closing the canon of Scripture, we can have this hope continually in our hearts. The expectation of seeing our Savior, being like Him, and being with Him for eternity should prompt us, as it did Moody, to serve the Lord.

In this sinful world it's easy to lose our upward look. Yet we must keep the hope of Christ's return burning in our hearts. The apostle Paul talked about this when he said...

"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; Who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself." (Philippians 3:20)

The hope of Jesus' last words "Surely I am coming quickly" should motivate us all to lives of sacrificial service. -- PRV [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The hope of glorification keeps before us the need of purification.

Will They See Him In Us?

Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the **hope** that is in you. --1 Peter 3:15

On April 19, 1995, a bomb destroyed the federal building in Oklahoma City, killing 169 people. On the same day, an Ohio couple,

Julie and Bruce Madsen, set out on a cross-country odyssey to write a book about hope and goodness in America.

In their search, the Madsens found stories of hope in the lives of ordinary people responding to adversity and tragedy. For example, a minister leads prayer vigils at the site of every murder in his midwestern city, and a physician has devoted his career to helping the homeless.

"By their fruits you will know them," Julie wrote in one of her stories. She wondered, "Do we leave people feeling uplifted, or drained and downhearted?"

If the Madsens had met you or me, would they have discovered a story of hope? If Christ is at work in and through us, the answer can be a resounding "Yes!" Whether our service for Christ is obvious or obscure, even if we suffer for doing good, the Bible urges us to keep Christ on the throne of our hearts and be ready to answer everyone who asks us about the hope within us (1 Pet. 3:15).

People are looking for hope. They can find it in Christ. Will they see Him in us? --D C McCasland [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Let my hands perform His bidding,
Let my feet run in His ways;
Let my eyes see Jesus only,
Let my lips speak forth His praise. --James

Your life can be a message of hope for a searching world.

Funerals: The Big Difference! - If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. 1 Corinthians 15:19

As I left a funeral home one day after a memorial service for a dear saint of God, one of the directors of the mortuary remarked,

"You know, there's a big difference between the funerals of those who are Christians and those who are unsaved!"

I have never forgotten his words. What a testimony to the reality of the Christian faith! Here was a man who had witnessed hundreds of funerals and had been impressed by the striking difference between the behavior of true believers in a time of bereavement and those who had no faith. Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians 4:13 that the unsaved should not sorrow like worldly individuals who have "no hope." The reason for Paul's admonition is found in the following verses, where the apostle describes the day when

"the Lord himself shall descend from heaven and the dead in Christ shall rise first [and] we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

Let it be remembered, however, that even believers grieve when death separates them from their loved ones. After all, when human ties are broken, it does hurt and tears are bound to be shed. But notice Paul does not say that we do not sorrow at all. Rather he declares that we

"sorrow not, even as others who have not hope!"

The grief is lessened and the heart-ache softened in the realization that those who died in Christ go into the presence of the Lord Jesus Himself, and the day is coming when with glorified, resurrected bodies all believers shall in one great, glad, grand reunion rise to meet the Lord in the air. No wonder Paul concludes this passage by saying,

"Wherefore, comfort one another with these words!"

Those who are looking for that blessed hope find courage and comfort in the upward look. The thought of Christ's soon return and reunion with loved ones makes a big difference! ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O how sweet it will be on that wonderful day,
So free from all sorrow and pain;
With songs on our lips and with harps in our hands
To meet one another again! —E. H. Gates, alt.

UNION with Christ here,
means REUNION with loved ones over There! —G.W.

Hope: Absolute Certainty of Future Good - Let us hold fast the confession of our hope ... for He who promised is faithful

(Hebrews 10:23).

Suppose a wealthy man were to give you a note saying,

"Sometime in the future, a time I've decided upon, you will receive fifty thousand dollars that I have set aside for you."

Although you might become impatient as you wait for the money, you would confidently expect to get it. But if that same man were to say,

"If everything works out, I might give you fifty thousand dollars"

you'd expect the money only if he didn't go bankrupt, change his mind, forget his promise, or die. The first situation carries the greatest certainty.

That's the way it is in God's economy. His promises are dated in heaven. And since we know only "in part" (1Cor. 13:12), we don't always know when they will be fulfilled. But that doesn't matter, for we do have the confidence that God will keep them. Nor does this diminish the value of God's promises, for He backs them all with the infinite riches of His character. He never changes. He never forgets His Word. He never dies. God may seem to delay the fulfillment of a promise, but we can be encouraged that every promise is as good as His word.

Most of us have come to the end of our resources. And there we have discovered that God, at the right time and in the right way, imparted His strength. He was neither slow nor tardy. So we need not be discouraged. We can keep on claiming the promises. God is the faithful Promiser. —P. R. Van Gorder. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Our prospects are as bright as the promises of God.

Elijah and Depression - **Adoniram Judson**, the pioneer missionary to Burma who translated the Bible into Burmese and is considered one of the great early missionaries, had difficulty dealing with the death of his wife, Nancy. In deep depression, he said,

"God is to me the Great Unknown. I believe in Him, but I find Him not."

We have all gone through times when the only certainty was uncertainty. Like Christian in Pilgrim's Progress, we have all faced Giant Despair. As Winston Churchill put it, we are sometimes overtaken by the

"black dog of depression."

Jezebel scared Elijah with her death threat, and he ran for his life. He was so discouraged that he asked God to carry out Jezebel's pronouncement. Instead, God reassured Elijah with His presence and plan for the future. Like Elijah, the two disciples from Emmaus were near despair. Their hope that Jesus would redeem Israel had been dashed, leaving them disappointed and puzzled—but only until the resurrected Christ appeared. With His presence came a bright light for the future.

Faith and doubt travel hand in hand, and doubt about God's goodness and care often leads to depression. Yet sorrow has a spur; depression can drive us to Him. If we do not find Him, He finds us; and we cry out for joy. He is alive and He loves us.

"Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!" (1 Kings 19:4).

A letter came to Radio Bible Class that bore no signature and no return address. It read,

"By the time you receive this letter, I will have committed suicide. I accepted Christ two years ago. Lately my world has been crumbling around me. I can't take it anymore. I can't fall again or be 'bad' anymore. God and I have drifted apart... Lord, help me. Could you take a moment and say a prayer for me, a teenager? Lord forgive me!"

Even Christians can get so desperate that they want to take their own life. In 1 Kings 19 we read that Elijah was so physically and emotionally exhausted that he asked God to take his life. Although that's not suicide, his request arises from the same feelings of despair. But God brought Elijah out of his depression. He lifted him up by strengthening him with food, restoring him through sleep, listening to his complaint, gently correcting him, reassuring him in a still, small voice, giving him new work to do, and telling him that all was not lost.

Most people who take their own lives do so when they are deeply depressed. Reality has become distorted, and they can't see the selfish, sinful nature of their act. But God wants to restore and uphold them. Sometimes He speaks hope directly to the soul, but more often He uses sensitive, caring people who come alongside to help. We can be God's hope to others. With a word, a smile, or

a helping hand we can say to those who are cast down, "In Christ there is hope." —D. J. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When we are most ready to perish, God is most ready to help us.

God moves in a mysterious way - "Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, ... To deliver their soul from death (Psalm 33:18-19).

William Cowper, though a Christian, had sunk to the depths of despair. One foggy night he called for a horse drawn carriage and asked to be taken to the London Bridge on the Thames River. He was so overcome by depression that he intended to commit suicide. After two hours of driving through the mist, Cowper's coachman reluctantly confessed that he was lost. Disgusted by the delay, Cowper left the carriage and decided to find the London Bridge on foot. After walking a short distance, he discovered that he was at his own doorstep. The carriage had been going in circles. Recognizing the restraining hand of God and convicted by the Spirit, Cowper realized that the way out of his troubles was to look to God, not to jump into the river. With gratitude he sat down and wrote these reassuring words:

"God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea, and rides upon the storm.
O fearful saint, fresh courage take; the clouds you so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break in blessings on your head."

Cowper's hymn of gratitude has comforted many of God's people since the eighteenth century.

The psalmist said, "The eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him." Our need is always His concern. —H. G. Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

No life is hopeless unless Christ is ruled out.

Looking Back to Restore Hope to Look Ahead - "This is my anguish; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High" (Psalm 77:10).

After a long and hard winter, the bright and balmy days of spring were again invaded by a renegade polar air mass. Winter seemed to be starting all over again. Those with cabin fever started to panic. Others, worn out from shoveling snow, slumped back into their chairs and worried about another high heating bill. But nobody concluded that the age-old order of the seasons had come to an abrupt end, or that the solar system had reversed its cycle. Looking back reminded them that late-season storms have happened before and reassured them that spring would eventually come.

Likewise, looking back on past blessings can restore our hope and give us reason to look ahead. The author of Psalm 77 had sunk so low that all hope seemed gone. He was so troubled he couldn't sleep. He was so depressed he couldn't even talk about it. He was so low that the fleas of the field had to get on their knees to bite him. But then something happened. He remembered his forefathers. They had gone through similar troubles before the Lord delivered them. Remembering the Lord's faithfulness to them renewed his faith.

The Bible reminds us that we are not the first to walk this way. Men and women of God have seen dark times before, but the forecast of faith is always bright. —M. R. De Haan II ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Judge God's love by His promises, not by His providences.

No Hope Carter - While attending college, I visited a psychiatric institution with a group of students to observe various types of mental illness. The experience proved to be very disturbing. I remember one man who was called "No Hope Carter." His was a tragic case. A victim of venereal disease, he was going through the final stages when the brain is affected.

Before he began to lose his mind, this man was told by the doctors that there was no known cure for him. He begged for one ray of light in his darkness, but had been told that the disease would run its inevitable course and end in death. Gradually his brain deteriorated and he became more and more despondent.

When I saw him in his small, barred room about 2 weeks before he died, he was pacing up and down in mental agony. His eyes stared blankly, and his face was drawn and ashen. Over and over he muttered these two forlorn and fateful words: "No hope! No

hope!" He said nothing else. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

HOPE ILLUSTRATIONS & QUOTES

In 1965, naval aviator James B. Stockdale became one of the first American pilots to be shot down during the Vietnam War. As a prisoner of the Vietcong, he spent seven years as a P.O.W., during which he was frequently tortured in an attempt to break him and get him to denounce the U.S. involvement in the war. He was chained for days at a time with his hands above his head so that he could not even swat the mosquitoes. Today, he still cannot bend his left knee and walks with a severe limp from having his leg broken by his captors and never reset. One of the worst things done to him was that he was held in isolation away from the other American P.O.W.s and allowed to see only his guards and interrogators.

How could anyone survive seven years of such treatment? As he looks back on that time, Stockdale says that it was his hope that kept him alive. Hope of one day going home, that each day could be the day of his release. Without hope, he knew that he would die in hopelessness, as others had done.

Such is the power of hope that it can keep one alive when nothing else can. {Illustrations for Biblical Preaching: Over 1500 sermon illustrations arranged by topic and indexed exhaustively},

-
- Christ is our hope of glory and the glory of our hope. Anon.
 - Hope is grief's best music. Anon.
 - Our hope lies not in the man we put on the moon, but in the man we put on the cross. Don Basham
 - 'Hope' is biblical shorthand for unconditional certainty. John Blanchard
 - The Christian's hope of glory is not the fact that Christ is in him, but the Christ who is in him as a fact. John Blanchard
 - Bless God that there is in us resurrection life, and that there awaits us a resurrection morn! J. J. Bonar
 - A man full of hope will be full of action. Thomas Brooks
 - Hope can see heaven through the thickest clouds. Thomas Brooks
 - We are refugees from the sinking ship of this present world order, so soon to disappear; our hope is fixed in the eternal order, where the promises of God are made good to his people in perpetuity. F. F. Bruce
 - Hope is never ill when faith is well. John Bunyan
 - Hope is the foundation of patience. John Calvin
 - The word hope I take for faith; and indeed hope is nothing else but the constancy of faith. John Calvin
 - When hope animates us there is a vigour in the whole body. John Calvin
 - Hope means expectancy when things are otherwise hopeless. G. K. Chesterton
 - When you stop hoping you are on the vestibule of hell, for there is no hope there. A. J. Cronin
 - Hope is the only tie which keeps the heart from breaking. Thomas Fuller
 - If it were not for hopes, the heart would break. Thomas Fuller
 - Where there is no hope, there is no faith. William Gouge
 - Faith and a good conscience are hope's two wings. William Gurnall
 - Hope is the saint's covering wherein he wraps himself when he lays his body down to sleep in the grave. William Gurnall
 - The nearer to heaven in hopes, the farther from earth in desires. William Gurnall
 - The Christian's hope is like a rainbow. It is essentially one, yet made up of the most glorious colours which, though they merge together to form an exquisite whole, may each be admired individually. Graham Heaps
 - He that was our help from our birth ought to be our hope from our youth. Matthew Henry
 - Our fear must save our hope from swelling into presumption, and our hope must save our fear from sinking into despair. Matthew Henry
 - The ground of our hope is Christ in the world, but the evidence of our hope is Christ in the heart. Matthew Henry
 - Hoping is disciplined waiting. Ernst Hoffmann
 - Like faith, New Testament hope carries unconditional certainty within itself. Ernst Hoffmann
 - There can be no hope without faith in Christ, for hope is rooted in him alone. Faith without hope would, by itself, be empty and futile. Ernst Hoffmann
 - Hope is the mother of patience. William Jenkyn
 - My future is as bright as the promises of God. Adoniram Judson
 - Hope teaches endurance and an eager anticipation of that which will become reality. Simon J. Kistemaker

- True faith is never found alone; it is accompanied by expectation. C. S. Lewis
- The Christian hope is the hope of a time when even the possibility of our sinning will be over. It is not the hope then of a return to the condition of Adam before the Fall but the hope of an entrance into a far higher condition. J. Gresham Machen
- Apart from the bright hope of the gospel everything would be meaningless. Poul Madsen
- What an excellent ground of hope and confidence we have when we reflect upon these three things in prayer—the Father's love, the Son's merit and the Spirit's power! Thomas Manton
- I am walking toward a bright light and the nearer I get the brighter it is. D. L. Moody
- The future belongs to those who belong to God. This is hope. W. T. Purkiser
- From Christ's death flow all our hopes. J. C. Ryle
- The nature of hope is to expect that which faith believes. Richard Sibbes
- The Christian hope is not a matter for tickling our minds but for changing our lives and for influencing society. Stephen Travis
- The world hopes for the best, but Jesus Christ offers the best hope. John Wesley White
- As God is the author of our salvation, so Christ is the embodiment of our hope. Geoffrey B. Wilson
- Our risen and glorified Lord is himself our hope, because his triumph over sin and death provides the objective pledge of our final redemption. Geoffrey B. Wilson
- Hope is faith in the future tense. Peter Anderson
- [Blanchard, John: Complete Gathered Gold: A Treasury of Quotations for Christians](#) This Resource is Highly Recommended - In my opinion this is by far the best collection of Christian quotations available - well worth the investment
- "The human body experiences a powerful gravitational pull in the direction of hope," wrote journalist Norman Cousins, who himself survived a near-fatal illness and a massive heart attack. "That is why the patient's hopes are the physician's secret weapon. They are the hidden ingredients in any prescription."
- Warren Wiersbe - We endure because we hope, but "hope in hope" (like "faith in faith") is too often only a kind of self-hypnosis that keeps us from facing life honestly. While a patient may be better off with an optimistic attitude, it is dangerous for him to follow a false hope that may keep him from preparing for death. That kind of hope is hopeless. When the end comes, the patient's outlook may be cheerful, but the outcome will be tragic.
- The greatest enemy of man is not disease—it's despair (absence of hope)

THE BLESSED HOPE

OUR DAILY WALK and

OUR DAILY HOMILY

by F B Meyer

May 19 THE SILVER LINING IN THE DARK CLOUD

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him, Who is the health of my countenance, and my God."-- Ps 42:5, Ps 42:11; Ps 43:5

THESE TWO Psalms are evidently one. See how the same refrain rings through them both! They are generally allocated to that sad time in David's history, when the rebellion of his favourite son, Absalom, drove him as an exile beyond the Jordan (2Sa 15:14). But amid the great sorrows that rolled over his soul, there was one glad ingredient. Thrice over the Psalmist encourages himself to Hope! For many a sorrowful soul, this is a true emblem. Amid all the disappointment and despair of life, there is always one chord of Hope--God! We may stand amid the wreck of our earthly hopes. Through misconduct or mistake, as the result of folly or sin, we may have reduced ourselves and those dear to us to the last degree of misery; but the soul may always turn from its low estate to God, sure that He will have mercy, will abundantly pardon, and will turn again the adverse pressure of the tide.

See how the broken-hearted may still speak of God! This man had grievously sinned. He seemed to have forfeited all claim on God's recognition and care. He had brought shame and disgrace on the cause of religion. All down the years the story of his wrongdoing would give the enemies of truth abundant reason to blaspheme. And yet see how he dares to speak of God! He describes Him as the God of his life, as his Rock, as the Health of his countenance, the God of his strength, and the Gladness of his joy. This is a great lesson! We may change, but God changes never. We may turn our face from Him, or allow some evil thing to loom between ourselves and the clear shining of His face. But he shines on, and when we confess our sins, and put them away, we find ourselves afresh in the clear shaft of His illuminating rays. You may have lost all hope in yourself, your friends, your circumstances, but you must never lose your hope in God.

The past, which can only be viewed with repentance, is forgiven; the present, in which God is willing to be All-in-all; the future, when again the soul shall praise Him with joyful lips. Hope looks into the future.

I shall yet praise Him.

PRAYER - Our Father, forgive, we pray Thee, our murmuring and discontent, our perverseness and waywardness. Teach us to discern the silver edge of the lowering clouds, and to trust Thy love, which is leading us safely and by a right way to our home. AMEN.

November 23 - THE GOD OF HOPE

"Now the God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in Hope, in the power of the Holy Ghost."-- Romans 15:13.

WE ALL need to abound in Hope. Hope is the artist of the soul.

Faith fills us with joy and peace, which brim over in Hope. When Faith brings from God's Word the Materials of anticipation and expectation, Hope transfers the fair colours to her palette, and with a few deft dashes of her brush delineates the soul's immortal and unfading hope. Faith thus excites Hope to do her fairest work, until presently the walls of our soul become radiant with frescoes. Our faith rests on God's Word, and hope rests on faith, and such hope cannot be ashamed. It is the anchor of the soul, which enters that which is within the veil, and links us to the shores of eternity (Heb 6:18-19).

Faith rests on the promises of God. She does not calculate on feeling, is indifferent to emotion, but with both hands clings to some word of promise, and looking into God's face, says; "Thou canst not be unfaithful." When God has promised aught to thee, it is as certain as if thou hadst it in hand. Faith not only takes the Word of God, and rests her weight on it, but often when hard-pressed goes beyond the Bible back to God Himself, and argues that God is faithful and cannot deny Himself. Because God is God, He must ever act worthily of Himself.

It was thus that Moses argued, when he was with Him in the Holy Mount into do thus, would not be worthy of Thyself! (Nu 14:13-20). We may be assailed with a hundred questions of doubt in the day, but must no more notice them than a barking cur. A business man once said that when he is convinced of the rightness of a certain course, he is sometimes assailed by doubts which arise like the cloud-mist of the valley, or the marsh gas from the swamp; but when thus tempted, he turns to the promises of God, often reading three or four chapters of the Old Testament. This brings him in touch with the eternal world, filling him with joy and peace and abounding hope in believing, through the power of the Holy Ghost. They shall not be ashamed that hope in Him!

PRAYER - Make me, O Lord, to know the Hope of Thy calling, the riches of the glory of Thine inheritance in the saints, and the exceeding greatness of Thy power towards them that believe. Above all, grant me the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Thyself AMEN.

From May 28 NIGHT AND MORNING

"... The Night of Doubt--the Morning of Faith. It is indeed a memorable moment in the history of the human spirit, when we suddenly wake up to see that the Almighty is the All-Loving Father, that the righteousness of God is no longer a ground of anxiety and fear, but of assured hope; that He has no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live."

September 20 OUR SHEET ANCHOR! (Great Illustration of hope as a motivating truth to purify ourselves)

"That we be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things."-- Ephesians 4:14-15.

"Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."-- 1John 3:3.

OUR DESTINY is the highest possible--"We shall be like Him." For this we were created, redeemed, and sanctified, that we should be conformed to the image of God's Son, that He might be the First Born among many brethren (Ro 8:29).

The Apostle says that those who have this Hope will purify themselves.

A young friend of mine once asked me if I would try to see her lover, as my train stopped at a wayside station in a far-distant western State. It was a dark night when we arrived, and a hurried conversation took place on the steps of the great Pullman car. I found that

amid the many temptations of a rancher's life, this young fellow was holding on to purity and truth. He said that he had very infrequent opportunities of attending any religious services, but that the letters which came from the old country had been his sheet anchor. I understood what he meant. He realized the strong drift of circumstances, but to be loved by a sweet pure girl, who made him the object of her incessant prayer, and to receive her inspiring letters, kept him from yielding to the evil which enveloped him as an atmosphere; the thought that before long he might claim her as his bride helped to purify and steady his life. So the expectation of being with, and like Christ, should be to us as a sheet-anchor, who bear His Name.

To see Christ face to face, to be with Him in unbroken fellowship, and to be like Him--this is the threefold destiny of every Christian soul. But how little can we imagine our future life! We strive to penetrate the dense veil of mist in vain--what the resurrection body will be like; what the converse with holy beings will amount to; what ministry may be assigned to us--we know not what we shall be, but "we know that we shall be like Him"--and it is enough! All that we have ever dreamed and hoped for will find its flower and fruitage in that glad summer time.

PRAYER - O God, it is my earnest desire that I may not only live, but grow: grow in grace, and in the knowledge of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. May I grow in patience and fortitude of soul, in humility and zeal, in spirituality and a heavenly disposition of mind. AMEN.

October 20 VICTORY OUT OF DEFEAT

"I will give her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth."-- Hosea 2:15.

THE VALLEY of Achor is the emblem of defeat, failure, and the fainting heart. Down its long pass the terrified fugitives had fled, bearing to Joshua the story of defeat ([Joshua 7](#)). Is there a single life without its valley of Achor? Is there one of us who has not gone up against a foe, which in the distance appeared quite insignificant, but it has proved to be more than a Match for all the resolutions with which we had braced ourselves to meet it. Can good come out of such evil, and sweetness from such bitter despair?

The tragic story told in the seventh chapter of Joshua tells how that defeat wrought good. The disaster led to the searching out of the sin of Achan, and the cutting away of gangrene, which, otherwise, would have eaten out the heart of Israel. It led to humiliation, self-examination, prayer and faith, and finally to victory. May we not say as much of our defeats? Certainly, it would have been better had they not cast their shadow on our past; but they have not been without their lessons of priceless value. Each valley of Achor has had its door of Hope. Sin has reigned unto death, but the grace of God has reigned unto eternal life. Through our sins we have learned, as never before, to appreciate God's forgiveness; through our failures we have been taught our own weakness, and led to magnify the grace which is made perfect in weakness.

Out of such experiences comes the song--"She shall sing as in the days of her youth." You say that the spring and gladness of life are gone for ever. You insist that you must go mourning all your days, and that life will only bring added grief. But God says that you shall sing! Though the summer is gone, there will be a second--an Indian summer, even mellowed than the first. God wants to give you a new revelation of His love, to draw you into His tenderest friendship and fellowship, to lift you into the life of victory and satisfaction. And when all these things come to pass, and they may begin to-day as you return to Him, you will find that He has put a new song into your mouth, even praise unto our God.

PRAYER - Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for opening doors of Hope in the valley of Achor, for giving us beauty for ashes, and the oil of joy for mourning. Put a new song into our mouths to-day, and let us taste afresh the glad sense of Thy pardoning love. AMEN.

To wait for his son from heaven. 1 Thessalonians 1:10

Oh blessed hope! Is it not wonderful that each of the chapters of this Epistle brims over with the glad anticipation of the Master's quick return!

We should never lose this spirit of eager longing and waiting. It hath the promise of the life that now is, as of that which is to come. It lifts above the darkness of the present age; links the present with the great future; comforts us amid bereavement with the hope of speedy reunion; quickens us to watchfulness and consecration by the thought of the shortening of our opportunities; leads us to purify ourselves as He is pure, to gird our loins and trim our lamps.

Notice how closely the apostle combines the service of the living and true God, herein distinguishing Him from the dumb, dead stones of heathen idolatries, with this waiting for his Son from heaven. It has been alleged that the hope of the Second Advent is a dreamy, mystical sentiment, which disqualifies one for the active fulfilment of the duties of life. Nothing could be further from the truth. Those who cherish that anticipation, who awake in the morning, saying, "Perhaps it will be today"; who go to their sleep

whispering to their hearts, “Perchance I shall be changed into his likeness in a moment as I sleep, and wake in my resurrection body” — these are among the most devoted, strenuous, and successful workers of the Church. They are not recognized in the daily or religious Press; but God knows and honors them.

“Oh, blessed Hope! With this elate, Let not our hearts be desolate; But strong in faith and patience, wait Until He come.”

THE BLESSED HOPE

MISCELLANEOUS RESOURCES

Charles R Swindoll tells a somewhat humorous story about hope... a missionary was sitting at her second-story window when she was handed a letter from home. As she opened the letter, a crisp, new, ten-dollar bill fell out. She was pleasantly surprised, but as she read the letter her eyes were distracted by the movement of a shabbily dressed stranger down below, leaning against a post in front of the building. She couldn't get him off her mind. Thinking that he might be in greater financial stress than she, she slipped the bill into an envelope on which she quickly penned “Don't despair.” She threw it out the window. The stranger below picked it up, read it, looked up, and smiled as he tipped his hat and went his way.

The next day she was about to leave the house when a knock came at the door. She found the same shabbily dressed man smiling as he handed her a roll of bills. When she asked what they were for, he replied:

“That's the sixty bucks you won, lady. *Don't Despair* paid five to one.” (Charles R. Swindoll, *Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life*)

To the unsaved, hope is nothing more than mental fantasy, like wishing upon a star. It's the kind of Disneyland hope that says, “I sure hope I win the lottery.” ... “I hope my boy comes home someday.” ... “I hope everything works out OK.” That's not a living hope. That's wishful thinking. But those who are “born again” in the Lord Jesus Christ have been promised a living hope through His resurrection from the dead. So if you want to smile through your tears, if you want to rejoice through times of suffering, just keep reminding yourself that, as a Christian, what you're going through isn't the end of the story ... it's simply the rough journey that leads to the right destination. “Hope is like an anchor,” someone has said. “Our hope in Christ stabilizes us in the storms of life, but unlike an anchor, it does not hold us back.”

Jon Courson - Did Peter's faith fail? No. He believed in the Lord, even though he ended up denying the Lord. Nor did his love fail. What failed? His hope. When he saw Jesus being led away in ropes, being brought to Caiaphas, his hope was lost. Maybe you're in Peter's sandals. You believe in the Lord. You have a definite love for the Lord. But your hope has been diminished because you can't figure out how what's happening to you could possibly work for good. **(ILLUSTRATION)**

A number of years ago, a study was done on Norwegian wharf rats. After being thrown in the open water, one group paddled for about three and a half minutes before drowning. A second group was thrown in, but plucked out right before they drowned. The next day, when the rats were thrown back into the water, scientists were astounded to find them able to tread water for forty-five minutes or more—evidently because they were hoping they would be rescued as they were the previous day.

The same is true with us. If we don't have hope that we'll be rescued, we sink. But if we have hope that a rescue is coming, we can tread water through the hard times. I don't think it is at all coincidental that the doctrine of the Rapture is called the blessed hope (Titus 2:13) because, although sometimes we feel we're in a rat race and going under quickly, we know today could be the glorious day of the Lord's return.

The same illustration from 10000 Sermon Illustrations -

A number of years ago researchers performed an experiment to see the effect hope has on those undergoing hardship. Two sets of laboratory rats were placed in separate tubs of water. The researchers left one set in the water and found that within an hour they had all drowned. The other rats were periodically lifted out of the water and then returned. When that happened, the second set of rats swam for over 24 hours. Why? Not because they were given a rest, but because they suddenly had hope! Those animals somehow hoped that if they could stay afloat just a little longer, someone would reach down and rescue them. If hope holds such power for unthinking rodents, how much greater should its effect be on our lives.

HERE IS THE BACKGROUND FOR THIS ILLUSTRATION OF HOPE IN THE DROWNING RATS...

The story is broadly based on a real series of experiments by Curt Richter in the 1950s, but many modern retellings simplify, exaggerate, or slightly distort the details.

The original source is:

Curt P. Richter, "On the Phenomenon of Sudden Death in Animals and Man," [*Psychosomatic Medicine* 19, no. 3 \(1957\): 191–198.](#)

Here is what appears to be true from the original research and later summaries:

- Richter placed rats in containers of water to study survival and "giving up" behavior.
- Some rats drowned rather quickly.
- Other rats that had previously experienced rescue or conditioning swam dramatically longer afterward.
- **Richter interpreted this as evidence that the removal of hopelessness changed the animals' behavior.**

However, the popular version has been polished into a motivational illustration, and some numbers vary widely depending on the retelling:

- some versions say 15 minutes vs. 60 hours,
- others say 1 hour vs. 24 hours,
- and some confuse different parts of Richter's experiments involving wild vs. domesticated rats.

So the core idea is rooted in an actual experiment, but the exact wording and dramatic details in circulating stories are not precise quotations from Richter.

A more careful way to state it would be:

In experiments conducted by Curt Richter in the 1950s, rats that had previously experienced rescue or conditioning were able to swim far longer than rats that had no such experience. Richter concluded that the removal of hopelessness profoundly affected endurance and survival behavior.

The illustration is often used devotionally because it captures a biblical truth about hope and endurance:

"For in hope we have been saved" (Romans 8:24).

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing" (Romans 15:13).

"We have this hope as an anchor of the soul" (Hebrews 6:19).

Charles Swindoll writes that "while I was on vacation I finished a book called *Adrift*. It's a story of a man who built a vessel that was to sail him through the whole of the Atlantic, sort of a large loop. He hit bad weather and his vessel went down. He existed on a raft for almost eighty days. The thing that kept the man alive was hope. His lowest days were the days when he could see no hope and he could not see the possibility of being rescued or making it to the islands or coming into the shipping lanes and being found by one of those vast vessels on its way on the trade routes. His hope kept him alive. Someone has said, "We can live forty days without food, eight days without water, four minutes without air, but only a few seconds without hope." (From "The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart and 1501 other Stories)

Vance Havner - Paul had a desire to depart and be with Christ which is far better. A seasick man was leaning in agony over the rail when a friend said, "Cheer up! Seasickness never killed anybody." "Don't tell me that," groaned the suffering voyager, "it's the hope of dying that has kept me alive!" The Christian's hope of dying does help keep us alive through the trials and tribulations of this present time, for it speaks of heaven and seeing our Lord and reunion with dear ones gone before. The hope, not the dread, of dying can be a tonic, an elixir to the tired traveler in these lowlands. The best is yet to be and we can't lose for winning!

Vance Havner - The early Christians looked for His return. Preparation was accompanied by expectation. It is true that Jesus did not return during their lifetime, but no one is mistaken when he lives as though He might come anytime. It is always proper to live, looking for that blessed hope, and remembering that unto them that look for Him, He shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

These believers [early Christians] lived in the light of the Lord's return. What good does it do to speak much of His appearing? Well, for one thing, "... every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:3), and we are sadly in need

of cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. That is what revival means and surely we need revival.

Also, when men love His appearing and look for Him, they make good witnesses, missionaries, and evangelists. All one needs to do to prove that is to check the list of God's servants who have been most greatly used as ambassadors of Christ and fishers of men.

It is indeed a strange and sinister silence that has fallen over so much of the church today, that so many who name the name of Christ speak not a word of His return. We can understand why the world is dumb because it is also blinded by the gods of this age to all the revelation of God; but remember that David's greatest worry, in the passage with which we started, was that his own kinsmen of Judah should be the last to welcome him. Have you noticed the words he used? "Ye are my brethren, my bones and my flesh" (2 Sa 19:10). Does not that remind you of another verse, "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Eph. 5:30). If it grieved David that his kinsmen in the flesh should be so slow to speak of his return, what must our Lord think of us, the members of His body the church, when we speak not a word to welcome Him again? May God loosen the strings of our tongues and make us all members of His reception committee!

Vance Havner - The New Testament Christians were not only ready, they were expectant, hilariously anticipating the Lord's return.

And we are bidden not only to prepare but to look for our Lord.

"Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of the Lord";

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

"Look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

It is one thing to be ready for someone to come; it is another thing eagerly to expect and await the coming of someone.

Let us visualize a small-town railroad station at train time. Inside the little ticket office is the station agent. He is an authority on the train schedule, he has read up on that, he knows when the train is due. Out in the station yard is a young bride-to-be who is looking for her lover to come on the next train. She does not know a great deal about the train schedules and the only reason why she is interested in this schedule is because of him who is coming. The station agent may be an authority and yet he may be very dull today, because he is not eagerly expecting anyone on the train. The girl in the station yard may not be an authority on the schedule but she is so happy that she can hardly live. If I had to choose between them, I'd rather be the girl in the yard. But I don't have to choose between them, for the old station master also may have dear ones coming in on the train, loved ones whose advent turns the time-table from prose into poetry. And yet it is possible, in this matter of our Lord's coming, to study the time-table and miss the Visitor!

Prophetic truth calls us not only to preparation and expectation but also to purification: "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:3).

A W Tozer: We have been born of God and our Christian hope is a valid hope! No emptiness, no vanity, no dreams that cannot come true. Your expectation should rise and you should challenge God and begin to dream high dreams of faith and spiritual attainment and expect God to meet them. You cannot out-hope God and you cannot out-expect God.

Remember that all of your hopes are finite,
but all of God's ability is infinite!

G. K. Chesterton: As long as matters are really hopeful, hope is a mere flattery or platitude; it is only when everything is hopeless that hope begins to be a strength. Like all the Christian virtues, it is as unreasonable as it is indispensable

John Bunyan wrote - Hope has a thick skin and will endure many a blow; it will put on patience as a vestment, it will wade through a sea of blood, it will endure all things if it be of the right kind, for the joy that is set before it. Hence patience is called "patience of hope" (steadfastness of hope) because it is hope that makes the soul exercise patience and long-suffering under the cross, until the time comes to enjoy the crown.

Hope is never ill when faith is well.

Amy Carmichael wrote:

Make us thy mountaineers

We would not linger on the lower slope,
Fill us afresh with hope,
O God of hope.

Thomas Adams: Hope is a virgin of a fair and clear countenance; her proper seat is upon earth, her proper object is in heaven... Faith is her attorney—general, prayer her solicitor, patience her physician, charity her almoner, thankfulness her treasurer, confidence her vice—admiral, the promise of God her anchor, peace her chair of state, and eternal glory her crown.

William Gurnall: Hope fills the afflicted soul with such inward joy and consolation, that it can laugh while tears are in the eye, sigh and sing all in a breath; it is called "the rejoicing of hope"

Nothing more unbecomes an heavenly hope than an earthly heart.

The saints are often feeding their hopes on the carcasses of their slain fears.

We did not dare to breathe a prayer,
Or give our anguish scope.
Something was dead within each of us,
And what was dead was Hope.
—Oscar Wilde, The Ballad

Warren Wiersbe - "Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us, just as we hope in You" (Psalm 33:22). We have hope and faith in waiting on the Lord. If you find it hard to wait, remember that God's delays are not His denials. He has a greater blessing in store for you. You can be sure that one day the waiting will end, and you will start worshiping and praising Him.

Are you waiting for God to answer a specific prayer? Keep trusting Him to work on your behalf. Your waiting will turn into worship and praise (Warren Wiersbe. Prayer, Praise and Promises Ps 33:20)

For many months I visited a young man in a hospital who had almost burned to death. I do not know how many operations and skin grafts he had during those months, or how many specialists visited him. But the thing that sustained him during those difficult months was not the explanations of the doctors, but the promises they gave him that he would recover. That was his hope. And the thing that sustained his hope was the love of his family and many friends as they stood by him. The love of God was channeled through them to him. He did recover and today gives glory to God. - Warren Wiersbe

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The Greek poet Theocritus wrote, "There is hope for those who are alive, but those who have died are without hope." Archaeologists found this epitaph on an ancient tomb: "I was not—I became—I am not—I care not." Pessimism ruled the day. "The best thing is not to be born," said one writer. "The second best is to escape life as soon as possible." The people were "without hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12). Then Jesus Christ, the Son of God, appeared on the scene! - Warren Wiersbe

William Temple said, "This world can be saved from political chaos and collapse by one thing only, and that is worship." The only hope for the world is the church, and the only hope for the church is a return to worship. God must transform His people and His church before He can work through us to meet the crushing needs of a world lost in sin. As I said at the beginning of our pilgrimage, every ministry of the church should be a by-product of worship. Ministry that's divorced from worship has no roots and therefore can produce no lasting fruits... I once heard A. W. Tozer say, "If God took His Holy Spirit out of this world, what the church is doing would go right on and nobody would know the difference." - Warren Wiersbe, Real Worship

Wiersbe writes on A Living Hope: David asked, "And now, Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in You" (Psalm 39:7).

That's a good question. What are you waiting for? And how can you be sure that what you're waiting for is going to come?

David said his hope was in the Lord. Biblical hope means confidence in the future. It's a confidence born of faith. Faith, hope and love go together (1 Cor. 13). When we have faith in God, we claim His promises, and they give us hope for the future. Hope for the Christian is not a feeling of "I hope it's going to happen." It's exciting expectancy because God controls the future. When Jesus Christ is your Savior and your Lord, the future is your friend. You don't have to worry.

Why is this hope so important? When we lose hope, we lose joy in the present because we have no confidence for the future. I have been in hospital rooms when the surgeon has walked in and said to a patient's loved ones, "I'm sorry. We did the best we could. There is no hope." The faces of the loved ones fall. Sadness fills the room. We live on hope; it springs eternal in the human breast. But it's more than a feeling down inside; it's a confidence that God is in control, and we have nothing to fear.

What is the basis for our hope? It is the character of God. We've been born again unto a living hope (1 Pet. 1:3). It's not a dead hope that rots and falls apart but a living hope whose roots go deeper and whose fruits grow more wonderful. You can have joy, confidence, encouragement and excitement today if you will remember that you have a living hope.

Your hope for the future is founded in the promises of God's Word.

Do you have confidence in the future? Make a mental list of His provision on your behalf during the past year--answered prayers, met needs and other blessings. God's faithfulness in keeping His promises in the past gives you confident hope for the future.

"Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God" (Psalm 146:5).

This tells us that God is all we need for today--and for tomorrow. When you know God, you have happiness, help and hope: happiness in walking with Him, help for the burdens of the day and hope for the concerns of the future. What more could you want? (Warren Wiersbe. Prayer, Praise and Promises Ps 146:1)

"While there's life, there's hope!" That ancient Roman saying is still quoted today and, like most adages, it has an element of truth but no guarantee of certainty. It is not the fact of life that determines hope, but the faith of life. A Christian believer has a "living hope" (1 Peter 1:3, NASB) because his faith and hope are in God (1 Peter 1:21). This "living hope" is the major theme of Peter's first letter. He is saying to all believers, "Be hopeful!" (Warren Wiersbe-The Bible exposition commentary)

Wiersbe commenting on Ro 15:13 - Don't try to manufacture hope in your own strength. Let the Holy Spirit who lives within you generate the hope that you need. We "abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit." Yield to the Spirit, let Him take control of your heart and mind. Spend time reading the Word of God, and you will discover the Spirit of God filling your heart with a wonderful hope. Of course, if you don't know Jesus Christ as your Savior, you have no hope. Yield to Him and the gift of hope will be yours through the power of the Holy Spirit. (The bumps are what you climb on)

Wiersbe - I was paging through an old Bible of mine one day and discovered a note I had written in the margin on August 13, 1957. At that time I was sharing an evangelistic mission in Denmark, and the going was really tough. The verse I had marked was Psalm 146:5: "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God." I'm sure that verse gave me great encouragement for that day, because it promises everything that the Christian needs—help, hope, and happiness. This verse is like those charts on the back of cereal boxes that list the minimum daily requirements for health. Here we have the minimum daily requirements for spiritual health—help, hope, and happiness... Our hope in Christ is based on the Word of God, the Bible. Because we trust His promises, we experience His hope. No matter how dark the day may become, we still have the light of His Word to encourage us.

Ferdinand Magellan took thirty-five compasses with him when he started on his voyage around the world. A ship without a compass is doomed—and so is a life without hope.

The Word of God is the light that encourages us and the compass that guides us. Of course, if you have never trusted Christ as your Savior, you have no hope. It is only when you surrender to Him that hope comes into your heart. The Christian never has to lose hope because he has a Savior to walk with him into the future. Even when you walk through the valley of the shadow of death you will not be afraid, because Jesus will be right there with you. When you know Him, you have help and you have hope, so that the present and the future are all taken care of. No wonder the Christian experiences happiness: "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God. (The bumps are what you climb on)

What is the relationship between faith, hope, and love? Certainly the more we love someone, the more we will trust him. We do not trust a casual acquaintance to the same degree that we trust a confidential friend. As we come to know God better, we trust Him more and we love Him more. Love and faith encourage each other. But hope also has a valuable contribution to make. Wherever there is a relationship of faith and love, there will be a growing hope. When a man and woman fall in love and learn to trust each other in that love, their future always becomes brighter. In fact, Paul taught that hope is a motivating power for love and for faith: "The faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven" (Col. 1:5, NIV). The blessed hope of seeing Jesus Christ and going to heaven to be with Him is a powerful force in the Christian's life. (Wiersbe)

Infants do not realize that their mother's decision is for their own good, for weaning sets them free to meet the future and make the most of it. The child may want to keep things as they are, but that way lies immaturity and tragedy. When we fret over a comfortable past, we only forfeit a challenging future. In the Christian vocabulary, hope is not "hope so." It is joyful anticipation of what the Lord will do in the future, based on His changeless promises. Like the child being weaned, we may fret at our present circumstances, but we know that our fretting is wrong. Our present circumstances are the womb out of which new blessings and opportunities will be born (Rom. 8:28). (Wiersbe)

Christians live in the future tense; their present actions and decisions are governed by this future hope. (Wiersbe - The Bible exposition commentary) When confronted by the stern fact of death, not everybody dives into an escape hatch and shouts, "Let's eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die!" Many people just grit their teeth, square their shoulders, and endure. They hold on to that ancient motto, "Where there's life, there's hope!" (That's a good paraphrase of Eccl. 9:4.) That motto goes as far back as the third century BC. It's part of a conversation between two farmers who are featured in a poem by the Greek poet Theokritos. "Console yourself, dear Battos," says Korydon. "Things may be better to morrow. While there's life, there's hope. Only the dead have none." Shades of Ecclesiastes! Solomon would be the last person to discourage anybody from hoping for the best. Better to be a living dog (and dogs were despised in that day) than a dead lion. (The Wiersbe Bible Study series: Ecclesiastes)

Ps 25:21-22 - "I wait on you" also means "I have hope in you." To lose hope is to surrender the future to the enemy, and that only destroys the meaning of the present. (Wiersbe - Be worshipful)

BIBLE DICTIONARY ENTRIES ON HOPE

- [HOPE](#) in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Easton's Dictionary & Naves Topical List
- [HOPE](#) in Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology