

We Have Hope

Last week we spoke about the coronavirus or COVID-19 and the Christian response to it. This week we want to follow that and encourage you with this message. The world needs hope and we have hope, in Jesus.

Two days ago I sent out a letter to all of our ministers and ministry leaders encouraging them during this time of trouble in the world. The letter is intended to encourage them and give them resources, like the notes from the message last week, to use when interacting and ministering to others. The letter also noted something that we have noticed. There are many people, in fact, most people, that are lacking hope right now. We are being asked by Christians and non-Christian alike what the Bible says about this pandemic. People are scared, feel helpless, and feel hopeless.

Most of the people who do not seem to feel hopeless are Christians. Most of the people that are not fearful are Christians. Church, this is an opportunity for us to let our light shine and encourage people around us. Let's share why we are not fearful. Let's share the hope we have in Christ with the hopeless. Let's encourage people to look to Jesus and follow Him. Let's encourage people.

Today we want to share some verses with you about hope. These are verses you can put in your toolkit when you are listening and encouraging others. These are verses you can stand on as promises from God when you are praying for others. These are verses you can reassure yourself with as you face this pandemic.

The first verse we want to read and commit to our heart is Jeremiah 29:11.

Jeremiah 29:11

(11) For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

This is a popular verse and most have heard it. If you read it in its full context you will see this is the Lord speaking to the prophet Jeremiah toward the end of the Babylonian captivity. He is about to release his people after 70 years of occupation. God is encouraging his people.

I believe this message is every bit as much for us today as it was for God's people who were being released from captivity thousands of years ago. God only has good plans for you. You may not know why you are going through what you are facing, but God does. From the beginning, God has only had good plans for you. As we face this global pandemic we can be sure that God's plans and purposes for us have not changed at all.

God wants us to prosper and have hope and a future. This is in His nature. He loves us. If you ever doubt God's love, just remember he sacrificed his own son, Jesus, just so we could be reconciled back to Him.

Sometimes we lose hope when we are facing something so much bigger than us, like this COVID-19 virus. We are doing everything we are supposed to, yet it continues to infect people and people die because of it. It is easy to feel discouraged when we are doing all we can do and we see no results.



Trust God. God sees what you are doing and he knows your intentions. Do not give up the hope future that he has planned for you. In fact, looking at our next verse we encourage you to continue to do what God has prompted you to do. Let's read 1 Corinthians 15:58.

1 Corinthians 15:58

(58) Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

As we continue to move forward in what God has asked us to do, don't falter. Don't allow anything to stop you. Even when you do not see results, keep doing what He has asked you to do, fully. Nothing we do sincerely for the Lord is done in vain.

Whatever you are doing, do it for the Lord, not for man. Have the hope that the God who commissioned you is faithful to carry out His will in your life. Nothing can change that except you.

The next verse we want to give you is found in Psalms 3:3-4

Psalms 3:3-4

(3) But you, LORD, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high. (4) I call out to the LORD, and he answers me from his holy mountain.

This is a classic time where we can fall to feeling helpless. The world is scared. The world is in panic. People are doing crazy things just trying to cope with this virus.

But we must know and believe that God is our shield! He is the one who protects us. He gives us wisdom and forethought so we can make smart decisions and He protects us from what the devil would intend to harm us with.

God answers prayer! Plain and simple, when we sincerely seek the Lord in prayer, He hears our prayers and He answers. Yes, He answers! If you are not hearing his answer, spend more time in prayer. Spend more time on your knees. Humble yourself and sincerely approach God in Jesus' name.

He hears our prayers and He sees our tears. We spoke last week how the Lord knows every hair on our head. We read in Matthew how he notices when even one sparrow falls from the sky. How much more does he care about us? He sees you and hears you. Jesus laments with you. Cling to the hope God has promised us and pray.

Something else to consider about our hope is that it is not sourced in this world, therefore it cannot fade or perish. Listen to what Peter tells us in 1 Peter 1:3-4

1 Peter 1:3-4

(3) Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (4) and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you,



As Christians, God has given us new life into a new living hope! This is for every single Christian, that is those who believe Jesus died for them, was buried, rose from the dead and now sits at the right hand of the Father in Heaven and follows him.

In God's great mercy, we have this new life and living hope that can never perish, spoil, or fade. We have hope, friends. We have hope in Jesus!

Finally, as we face this worldwide virus, some will succumb to it. Some will pass away from this life. Even in that, there is hope for the Christian as Psalm 16:9-10 says.

Psalms 16:9-10

(9) Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, (10) because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay.

No matter what takes our body, God will not abandon our soul. We have this ultimate hope that when we do pass from this life, we will be with God for eternity.

Friends, if you are without hope today, we pray that you find hope in Jesus Christ who took the punishment of our sin upon himself so that we can have eternal life through the forgiveness of those sins with God.

Hope is what we all need right now. Hope is medicine for the soul. It is this hope that must resonate in our hearts and then overflow onto others in the world as they panic. The world needs hope, and we can share this hope with them.

We have hope. Let's share it with the world.

