

The Problem of Hopelessness

May 17, 2020

Not having hope leads to:

Loss of vision – Thomas (Jn 20:24-29)

Jn 20:25 So the other disciples were saying to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

A sense of despondency – Peter (Jn 21:1-17)

Jn 21:3 Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will also come with you." They went out and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing.

Jn 21:17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep.

Definitions: [from Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary]

despondency = the state of being despondent:

DESPONDENT = feeling or showing extreme discouragement, dejection, or depression; it implies a deep dejection arising from a conviction of the uselessness of further effort

Synonyms of despondent:

DESPAIRING suggests the slipping away of all hope and often despondency

DESPERATE implies despair that prompts reckless action or violence in the face of defeat or frustration

HOPELESS suggests despair and the cessation of effort or resistance and often implies acceptance or resignation

And ultimately to death (suicide) Judas (Mt 27:1-5)

Mt 27:3 Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

Mt 27:5 ... (he) departed; and he went away and hanged himself.

Illustration - He died because he lost hope: [from Victor Frankl; in "Man's Search for Meaning"; Viktor Frankl recounts what happened to his friend, a fellow inmate in Auschwitz]

"I would like to tell you something, Doctor. I have had a strange dream. A voice told me that I could wish for something, that I should only say what I wanted to know, and all my questions would be answered... I wanted to know when we, when our camp, would be liberated and our sufferings come to an end."

"And when did you have this dream?" I asked. "In February 1945," he answered. It was then the beginning of March.

"What did your dream voice answer?"

Furtively he whispered to me, "March 30."

When my friend told me about this dream, he was still full of hope and convinced that the voice of his dream would be right. But as the promised day drew nearer, the war news which reached our camp made it appear very unlikely that we would be free on the promised date.

March 29, my friend suddenly became ill and ran a high temperature.

March 30, the day his prophecy had told him that the war and suffering would be over for him, he became delirious and lost consciousness.

March 31, he was dead.

This shattered hope lowered his body's resistance against the latent typhus infection. His faith in the future and his will to live had become paralyzed and his body fell victim to illness - and thus the voice of his dream was right after all" (p. 97).

Hopelessness is powerful but hope is even more powerful.

The foundation of hope is the resurrection of Jesus Christ

1Pt 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

To have hope we need vision (the eyes of the heart enlightened)

Eph 1:18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

Hope has the power to change your life, it gives perspective.

1Pt 1:4-5 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Illustration of Hope – Two people can have the same menial job; bad work conditions, long hours and no vacations. One is paid \$15,000 per year, the other is paid \$15,000,000 per year.

The 15,000 person will:	The 15,000,000 person will:
grumble and complain	whistle while he works
do the job poorly	try to be excellent in his work
maybe even quit	put up with the filth gladly
come to work already down	won't let the long hours keep him down

Having hope gives a Christian perspective, we know that we will inherit everything in Christ. We have an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.

We have more than \$15 million secured for the future and today we can live in the presence of that future.

We receive hope through Jesus Christ

Col 1:27 to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Hope works with patience (Rom 5:3-5)

tribulation leads to perseverance; perseverance leads to proven character; proven character leads to hope; hope leads to the love of God; the love of God leads to the Holy Spirit.

Definition of perseverance = the capacity to continue to bear up under difficult circumstances; endurance, being able to endure. endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ'

1Thes 1:3 constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father,
(From the Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament)

The Old Testament word for "Hope" is also translated as "Wait".

Definition:

A long and patient waiting, a lingering hope, still expecting and earnestly desiring, though hitherto with delay and disappointment.

Translated as "hope" 22 times, "wait" 12 times, [Enhanced Strong's Lexicon]

Ps 130:5 I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, And in His word do I hope.

Translated as Hope

Job 13:15 "Though He slay me, I will hope in Him.

Ps 33:18 Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, On those who hope for His lovingkindness,

Ps 38:15 For I hope in You, O LORD; You will answer, O Lord my God.

Ps 42:5 Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him For the help of His presence. (Ps 42:11; 43:5)

Ps 71:14 But as for me, I will hope continually, And will praise You yet more and more.

Ps 119:49 Remember the word to Your servant, In which You have made me hope.

Ps 130:7 O Israel, hope in the LORD; For with the LORD there is lovingkindness, And with Him is abundant redemption.

Ps 131:3 O Israel, hope in the LORD From this time forth and forever.

Lam 3:19-24 Remember my affliction and my wandering, the wormwood and bitterness. 20 Surely my soul remembers And is bowed down within me. 21 This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope.

22 The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. 23 They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. 24 "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I have hope in Him."

Translated as Wait

Ps 119:43 And do not take the word of truth utterly out of my mouth, For I wait for Your ordinances.

Ps 119:74 May those who fear You see me and be glad, Because I wait for Your word.

Ps 119:81 My soul languishes for Your salvation; I wait for Your word.

Ps 119:114 You are my hiding place and my shield; I wait for Your word.

Ps 119:147 I rise before dawn and cry for help; I wait for Your words.

Ps 147:11 The LORD favors those who fear Him, Those who wait for His lovingkindness.

Isa 40:28-31 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. 29 He gives strength to the weary, And to him who lacks might He increases power. 30 Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly, 31 Yet **those who wait for the LORD** Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.

Isa 51:5 "My righteousness is near, My salvation has gone forth, And My arms will judge the peoples; The coastlands will wait for Me, And for My arm they will wait expectantly.

Mic 7:7 But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me.