



Where Do You Place Your Hope?

By Wendy Wood

Over the past five weeks of being home, the question I keep asking myself is “Where am I placing my hope?” During a time when we are not able to see friends and family and do the fun activities that were on our calendars, it is good and right to feel some loss and sadness at not participating in those events. It’s good to miss friends and long to see them face to face and give them a hug. It’s good to miss the fellowship of life group friends and church services and count the days until we meet again. All of us have had a change of plans - from not going to work, kids being home full time, vacations being canceled, graduations canceled, sporting events canceled, and so many other things that we were looking forward to have not happened and may not for several months. This season has been a good reminder that we live in a sin cursed world and that nothing in this world is meant to meet our longings, expectations, and hopes. Rather, this world should make us long for a greater one.

Psalm 42:5 “Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.” Our hope is not vague or abstract. Our hope is in a Person - God, who reveals Himself in Scripture to be holy, just, righteous, merciful, gracious, loving, omnipotent, omnipresent, infinite, and good.

The first few weeks of isolation seemed easy for me. I love to be outdoors and taking very long walks is fun for me. Sometimes I take several walks a day! However, after

having leg surgery a couple weeks ago, that, too, came to an end. As I am forced to sit on the couch all day (which is very hard for me), I keep coming back to contentment. If my hope is in my health, or friends, or vacation, or activities, I will be devastated by losing them. I will be grumpy and complain about my current circumstances. I will voice my dislike of the situation and get others around me to join my pity party. I will think about how difficult my circumstances are and envy those around me who are out walking and enjoying the sun. But, if my hope is in God, my circumstances don't determine my joy. I can miss my friends and the activities on my calendar that got canceled, but not be devastated that they've been taken away for now. I can receive the gift of time that God has given me to be in my home, on my couch, and use that time to pray and be drawn closer to Him. As my family comes and goes from the living room I can offer words of encouragement and engage with them in ways I would not if I were up doing my usual routine. My hope in God means that I can trust what He puts in my life as a good gift from Him and that a future with Him is guaranteed.

Romans 15:13 “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.” God is the God of hope! God confidently and joyfully knows the future. His victory over death and sin has already happened! God is directing all things to bring about His purpose and He guarantees that purpose will stand. He fills believers with joy and peace so that by the Holy Spirit, which He gives us, we abound in hope too!

Hope is the certainty of a desired future. Hope in God, is trusting who He is and what He has done, so that we live in a way that demonstrates how sure His promises are.

Hope means to wait with full confidence and joy. A Christian lives a life of hope in the gospel of Christ. A believer doesn't cross their fingers or wish for an unsure future, but is rock solid in the guarantee of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Consider what the Bible says about HOPE!

1 Peter 1:3-4 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,”. We are born again to a living hope! Our

hope is living because our Savior is living. Christ rose from the dead and ascended and is in heaven as our living advocate and mediator. Our hope is alive and we know that we will live eternally in God's presence because of this promise. Our hope is imperishable - we can't lose our salvation! Our hope is undefiled - it cannot be tainted in any way! Our hope is unfading - it is eternal!

Colossians 1:27 "To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Christ is our hope. He indwells every believer. We receive His power and His presence! The hope of glory means we will be glorified in heaven. It is a surety that our justification guarantees sanctification and glorification.

Colossians 1:23 "if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation". The hope of the gospel is that it is the power of God to save and sanctify people for the Lord (Romans 1:16). Our hope is in God's power and His decisive will to save to the uttermost those who believe (Hebrews 7:25).

Hebrews 6:17-18 "So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us." God does not change. Our hope is secure because He will never change! God swears by His own name. There is no variation or shadow due to change in our God (James 1:17). He does not change so our hope is unwavering.

Hebrews 6:19 "We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain". Our hope is in Christ, who was our perfect substitutionary atonement, who opened the way for us to be in relationship with God. The inner place behind the curtain was only for the high priest in the old testament who would make sacrifices once a year for the sins of the people. When Christ died on the cross, the curtain in the temple was torn from top to bottom. This is a picture of God now providing access to Himself through faith in the atoning work of Christ. We are not dependent on a priest because Christ was the final High Priest whose sacrifice was once for all sins.

These are just a few of the many verses about our hope. **Hope is the certainty of a desired future. Hope in God, is trusting who He is and what He has done, so that**

we live in a way that demonstrates how sure His promises are. How you have been responding to being in isolation reveals where your hope is placed.

Where will you place your hope today?