

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – April 18, 2020

The lord be with you.

It has been said a person can live 40 days without food three days without water, eight minutes without air, but only one second without hope. And I'm wondering how you're doing on hope today, are you hopeful. For the next few moments, I wanna share from God's Word, some thoughts about hope, hope in Difficult Times, The Bible calls hope the anchor of the soul, because Hope anchors us who gives a stability in all the storms of life.

Now I've a verse, I wanna share with you is I am fascinated by this verse, I love this verse, it's 1 Peter 3:15. Always be ready to make your defense or your explanation to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you.

This is the apostle Peter in Rome who's writing, it's about the year 64, as he is writing to Christians, who are facing persecution for the crime of being Christian.

And just about a year or so Peter will be martyred he'll be crucified upside down as this is a time that the crazed Emperor Nero is beginning to round up Christians and feed them to the lions, and that's why the word "suffering is mentioned 15 times in this short letter, as it is a frightening time it is a dangerous time to be a Christian. But here we have people who are coming to these Christians and they're wanting them to explain the reason for the hope in them.

It were pagans, who are wanting to know more about a kind of faith that produces hope in a very hopeless situation and it's not the Christians are going out into the floor passing out Gospel tracks, whether there are people who are coming to them, people who are seeking them out, wanting to know what Christians have that they don't have.

Where does that hope come from?

You see that the world never really understands hope. In Ephesians the Apostle Paul, he speaks of the unbeliever as having no hope and without God in the world. So you notice when the world talks about hope, it's always something that's uncertain.

We don't know how things are gonna turn out that but I've got my fingers cross. I'm hoping that's gonna turn out. Well, I'm trying to be positive 'cause it's really come down to all we have is hope.

So it's uncertain.

But the Christians were filled with hope, the certainty as they were... Easter people, and they linked hope to Christ's resurrection.

In fact, the Apostle Peter introduces this little letter with the hope and resurrection First Peter 1 chapter 3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by His great mercy He has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, so our hope as Christians, it rises up from the resurrection of Jesus

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from the dead. We have Peter say, "a new birth into a living hope, hope is alive inside us because the risen Jesus is alive inside of us, it is a living hope through the resurrection.

So you see the Christian hope really has nothing to do with a sunny disposition or optimistically hoping that things will turn out okay. Hope is a gift of God that comes to us in our salvation. Paul in Romans 8:24 says We are saved by hope, the Apostle Paul says that in this life there are three lasting qualities: faith, hope, and love. So hope has always been a mark of people who follow Jesus. It was in first century Rome and it is today, as hope is the result of the living God coming to us and taking up residence in us.

So, hope is the expectation that God is up to something. The God is up to something. And what we're going through right now, please know that hope is not a feeling. Feelings come and go, but hope is knowing. Hope is knowing that we know that we know that nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus, Paul says, Not hardship or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword?

We can't lose hope. Hope is knowing that we are more than conquerors, through him who loved us. Now whenever we talk about hope please, please know that Christian hope is not just for the sweet by and by. It's not just for when we die... Or Jesus returns. Yes, it is about that, but it's about more than that.

I sometimes hear people in talking about hope they just seem to skip over what we're going through right now until the last day, we ask people if they know where they're going, when they die, as if that's all there is to the good news.

Yes, there's hope for life after death, but that's not the full meaning of our hope. Hope is also for what we're going through right now, hope is resurrection hope, hope is the expectation on the expectation that God brings good out of bad.

It is the expectation to that. The truly good things in our lives will never ultimately be taken from us and the hope is the expectation that the best is yet to be. That's the hope that was in those early Christians that made Pagan. seek them out, and to ask them to explain the reason for the hope that was in them.

They will know where Christians by our love, yes but they'll also know we are Christians by our hope. Take a moment with me. I want you to turn your palms down, palms of your hand downward as you let go into God's hands, your anxieties about how things are gonna turn out your uncertainty, your fears about the future, you let go of all of that into God's faithful hands knowing that He cares for you and now want you with me, turn your palms upward. Ready to receive from God's hands, what He is up to receiving with the expectation that God will work all of these things for your good, and for the good of His kingdom, may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace, in believing so that you may abound in hope, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler on the pilgrim way. Thanks for listening, until next time...

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