

Hold on To Hope

Titus 1:1-2 (KJV)

1 Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; **2** In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

1 Corinthians 13:13 (KJV) And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

There is a very popular story in literature about an Italian woman named Sophia. Her name meant wisdom. Sophia had three daughters; Faith, Hope, and Charity.

This story is a great analogy for the truth of Christ's words in:

Luke 7:35 (KJV) But wisdom is justified of all her children

When Sophia's daughters were 12, 10, and 9, they came to the attention of the Roman emperor. He called Sophia and the three girls before him and demanded that they make sacrifice to a pagan goddess, but they refused and were placed under house arrest.

During the weeks that followed, Sophia made certain that her 3 daughters knew what faced them. All 3 girls told their mother that they would rather die than to deny Jesus. They believed that if they stood for Jesus and their lives were taken, they would all be reunited again. Without standing for Jesus, there would be no reunion.

Sophia and her daughters were soon called back before the emperor. He tried to get each girl to renounce her faith in Jesus. Faith refused first. She was tortured and executed. Hope refused next. Her defense being, "Am I not Faith's sister?" She was also tortured and executed. Finally, Charity stepped forward and said, "Am I not the sister of Faith and Hope?" Each died with her mother watching.

Sophia was permitted to gather the remains of her three girls and bury them as well. Three days later, she passed from this life as well. On that site, a church dedicated to Sophia has been built.

The grouping of these three virtues as sisters is not uncommon.

Hope's defense in this story was, "Am I not Faith's sister?"

Millions of sermons have been preached on faith. Books are written about faith. People desire faith; they pray for it, reach for it, and ask for more of it. But, in the words of Hope, "Am I not Faith's sister?"

Hebrews 11:1 (KJV) Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

However, charity is the greatest of the three.

Charity – Christian love; agape.

God is love. He loves each of us, but hope is love's sister.

After all, the Bible says:

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (KJV)

4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, **5** Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; **6** Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; **7** Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Unfortunately, hope is not preached about like charity and faith are. Hope is sometimes the neglected sibling. We sing less about hope than we do faith and love. We don't pray for hope. We don't ask God to build up our hope.

But, hope is crucial in this journey of faith and love.

Hope is fundamental to a Christian lifestyle.

Like a plant needs sunshine, we need hope.
Like the body needs vitamins, we need hope.
As a family needs shelter, we need hope.

Hope is as vital to the spirit as oxygen is to the body.

When we lose hope, we are overcome with feelings of senselessness, purposelessness, and despair. Lack of hope can destroy our very lives.

The word Hope occurs some 52 times in the New Testament alone. If you look up those 52 passages, you'll find that hope is always connected to God in some way.

God is the author of hope.

Romans 15:13 (KJV) Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Hope connects us with the future just as memories connect us with the past.

How do we know what has happened to us? We know through our memories.

This is what hope does for our future. How do we know what will happen in the future? We have hope, which is our Lord Jesus Christ. Sure, there might be valleys, just as there were in our past, but the hope we have in Jesus should make us realize that someday we will stand on the Holy Mountain of God, reigning with Christ.

That is what hope does for us.

But what exactly is hope? One of the definitions I read for hope stated, "Hope is desire, with the expectation of getting what is desired." One cannot hope for that which he neither desires or expects to receive.

Life can be difficult. There are times we think that things won't get better, but there is hope. True hope in Christ.

I want to give three reason for the type of hope Paul mentions in Titus 1:2.

1. The word of God gives hope.

Romans 15:4 (KJV) For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

We may think that our problems are unique to us, but someone else has gone through them before. God ministered to them in their situation and He will do the same for us.

The same God who dealt with those saints, deals with us today. God ministered to their needs and He will ours.

Elijah didn't have a friend in the world. He thought he was the only one who still loved God. He was alone and depressed, but Elijah found that God was still with him, that God was there. God showed Elijah that things weren't as bad as he thought.

Look at David, he fought a 9 foot 6 inch giant and beat him. God was with David. There's no need to be afraid when God is on our side.

Romans 8:31 (KJV) What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

What about Joseph? He was treated unfairly. He was treated unfairly by his family, Potiphar and his wife, and the list goes on. Yet, his hope was in God. He rose from prison to be the second most powerful man in Egypt.

What did Daniel do? He prayed, because He knew where his hope was, it was in God.

These stories, and many more, are given to us that we might have hope. Hope in God, knowing that He is still there, that He cares for his children.

None of our problems are new, God has seen them before. Maybe the outcome will be different than what we see in the Bible, but let us know where hope is!

The promises found in the Bible give us hope.

Hebrews 13:5 (KJV) Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

No matter what our situation, hope is there, that Hope that is Jesus Christ.

2. We have hope because of the cross.

The cross ought to remind us that someone loves me, and that someone is master of the universe, He is Lord of all, King of kings.

John 15:13 (KJV) Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

There is no greater love then the love of Jesus Christ.

A love so great that He paid the price of our sins with His own blood. We cannot even begin to understand the love of Christ.

That love ought to give us hope, because that love demonstrates to us, how much Jesus cares for us. How much God cares for us and desires what is best for us.

Romans 8:32 (KJV) He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Our hope is in God, because he showed us that he desires what is best for us on the cross.

The cross reminds us that God will forgive us. Our sins have been paid for in full by Christ.

When we place our trust in the finished work of Christ there is no place for guilt in our lives, we are forgiven!

Colossians 1:21-22 (KJV)

21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled **22** In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:

What hope there is in the cross of Christ. What assurance!

Many times, we wallow in our sin, thinking we cannot change, that there is no hope. We just resign ourselves saying that is just the way things are, that is just who I am.

That is not the truth, there is hope.

Romans 6:3-6 (KJV)

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? **4** Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. **5** For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: **6** Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

There is hope for us, because of the cross.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (KJV) Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

3. We need to make room for hope in our lives, because we have a promise from God.

During our storms, we need room for hope.

When Bartholomew Dias rounded the southernmost part of Africa, he called it the Cape of Storms. A few years later, another Portuguese navigator rounded the same cape, but he called it the Cape of Good Hope.

The enemy wants you to see the storm, but God wants you to see the hope.

When you make room for hope, you respond to problems differently.

Rather than running from the situation, or fighting the situation, you rejoice in the knowledge that God will bring you through.

When hope comes to the scene, get ready for rejoicing. When hope enters into the picture, prepare to praise God.

Hope has a shout, “Something good is about to happen.”

Hope says, “I’ve been here before, and God did it then, He’ll do it again.”

Making room for hope is what is going to see us through.

Florence Chadwick filled the news year ago. She was the first woman to swim the English Channel both ways, but on her first attempt she failed.

It wasn’t the cold water, the waves, the currents, or even the 15 hours in the water that caused her to quit.

In her words, it was not being able to see her goal. The fog rolled in and she lost sight of the end. When that happened, she lost hope. After she was pulled from the water, they let her know she was only 150 yards away from the end.

We can lose sight when life gets a bit foggy, but folks, I've come to tell somebody hold on to hope. We are almost to the other side. Don't let the devil cloud your vision. Hold on to the hope.

Hebrews 6:13-19 (KJV)

13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, **14** Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. **16** For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. **17** Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: **18** That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation,

who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: **19** Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

There's hope in the word. There's hope in the cross. We need to make room for that hope to see us through.

In closing, I want us to realize something, that without Christ there is no hope. Without God in your life, there is no hope. As someone once said, "Life with Christ is an endless hope, life without Christ is a hopeless end."

What connects faith and love is hope.