

"The Hope"

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1) It tells us in I Pet.3:15 that we are to *always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks us a reason for **the hope** that is within us.* We are going to see today that our hope is not inferior to our faith, but is indeed an extension of our faith.

We will see that our hope is like a visible sign that illustrates something which cannot be seen.

And so we will begin by looking at our 1 Peter verse in context and then talk about 'The Hope' that we have, what it is; and why we need to be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks.

1Pe 3:10 For "He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit.

11 Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it.

12 For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil."

13 And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?

14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled."

*15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, **and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;***

16 ¶ having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.

17 For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

a) The first time I really took notice of verse 15 it challenged me, as I am sure it is meant to do to all of us. I wondered what exactly I would say, especially if I had only a few moments to explain the reason for the hope within me. Maybe the person asking would not want a 30 minute sermon but a \$1 answer to what is a million dollar question.

b) I remember in Kenya on our last visit that in answer to a lady's question I taught the Full Scope of Salvation in a nutshell in about 5 minutes from beginning to end, Genesis to Revelation. I don't know that I could do that again in a hurry but the circumstances dictated that that was what would best serve the lady's need and answer the question. Afterwards I remember thinking I wasn't ready for that and it's amazing how the Lord gave me the words

because I don't think I could have planned it that way if I tried. On reflection, although I might have struggled to condense the whole focus and thrust of the Bible into 5 minutes, I realized that I was ready because of the years of studying and having the word opened up to me by the Holy Spirit, that had preceded that moment. I was ready to give an account of the hope that was within me to the lady who had asked.

c) When looking at the context of verse 15 we can see that in verses 10 and 11 we are to refrain our tongue and lips from speaking evil and deceit. And instead we are to use it to pray and seek peace and righteousness and give an account of the hope within us.

d) Contextually we are to become followers of what is good or righteous and if need be, we are to suffer to that end. Should we have to suffer for doing what is right then verse 14 tells us we are blessed. Also we are not to be afraid or troubled by threats by those who would harm us, or defame us, or revile us because it could be the will of God for us to suffer for doing what is good.

e) When will we receive the blessing that verse 14 talks about? If we back up into verses 8 and 9 we will find out:

1Pe 3:8 ¶ Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; 9 not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.

The blessing is to be inherited. It is a future blessing, to be received at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

f) Now I am sure there are some of us listening today who can testify to having experienced reviling and defamation of character as a result of what we believe and espouse, but my thoughts also go to those who have been martyred as a result of their faith, especially those early Christian martyrs who knew that a gruesome death awaited them unless they would recant their beliefs. For those who had that awaiting them they were told to:

'sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;'

The fear is not of what man, or the lions, or the cross, or the burning stake, might do to them but:

Lu 12:4 "And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

5 *"But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!"*

2) This hope that we are to have is described in the very first chapter of 1st Peter as 'a lively hope' or 'a living hope' and is connected to an inheritance, a future salvation - the salvation of the soul; to glory and honor at the appearing of Christ. And all of this is made possible through the resurrection of Christ:

1Pe 1:3 ¶ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 ¶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,

7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

9 receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.

a) It is because of what is revealed here in these verses that we as Christians must be ready to give a reason for the hope that we have.

b) We have been begotten/born again to receive an incorruptible, undefiled inheritance which has been reserved in heaven.

c) It is our faith and the power of God that is going to keep us during our various trials that cause us grief.

d) And it is the trials and testings which will determine how genuine our faith, our hope, is. And if proved genuine then the end result will be the salvation of our souls.

e) Our hope is not a dead or inconsequential thing but is actually living, it is alive and it is all made possible and alive through Christ's resurrection from the dead. It is embodied in Christ Himself.

f) Our hope is not having 'an optimistic outlook' 'or wishful thinking' without any solid foundation. For example 'I hope it doesn't rain tomorrow.'

g) Hope is the Greek word ‘elpis’ and it means having a confident expectation based on solid certainty. Biblical hope rests on God’s promises, particularly to do with Christ’s return, judgment and rewards. We are to be so certain of these events that we too like Paul or Peter can speak of these future events as if they are past events. Which in some respects they already are.

3. I said earlier ‘hope is not inferior to faith but is an extension of faith’.
Heb 11:1 ¶ *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

‘Now faith [the assurance, moral conviction, truth, belief] is the substance [concrete support, confidence, assurance, lit. standing under] of things hoped for [confidently expected, trusted for], the evidence [proof, conviction] of things not seen.’

a) The Greek word translated *substance* literally means ‘a standing under’ and was used in the sense of “title deed”. The root idea is that of standing under the claim to the property to support its validity. Thus faith is the title deed of things hoped for. If you own a piece of land then you will have a title deed to that piece of land. The title deed is not the land but it is as good as the land. You have a solid basis on which to believe that you own that land because your name is on the document.

b) Hebrews chapter 11 then goes on to list the elders who obtained a good testimony of their faith: Abel and Enoch. Then as a result of Enoch pleasing God verse 6 tells us:

Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

c) I submit to you that without **the hope** it is impossible to please God. We must have the confident expectation and assurance that as a result of our faith/our hope that as we diligently seek the Lord He will reward us in that future day. This too is an act of righteousness, an act of right thinking upon which we are going to act, because we believe what God has said about it. It is not enough to have wishful thinking or an optimistic outlook that at the judgment seat everything will pan out good for us. ‘The Faith’ is also not wishful thinking - believing in something without a solid biblical foundation.

d) The words ‘diligently seek’ in verse 6 are a translation of the Greek word ‘*ekzeteo*’ which means ‘to search out, investigate, crave, demand, worship, seek after’. (Re-read Heb.11:6 with the definition of ‘diligently seek’ inserted.) This definition clearly shows there is nothing neutral or inactive in using our faith, our hope, to diligently seek Him and His reward.

4. Romans 8:24-25:

Ro 8:24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?

25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

a) We are to eagerly wait for what we do not see and we are to do it with perseverance.

b) The Perseverance, or 'Patience' as it is in the KJV, means: to be cheerfully enduring, as we fully expect.

5. Hebrews chapter 6 verses 11 and 12 tell us:

Heb 6:11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end,

12 that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

a) We see here in chapter 6 of Hebrews the same notion of diligence leading to the 'full assurance of hope'. This means to be entirely confident; to carry out fully (in evidence), completely assure or convince, entirely accomplish, most surely believe, make full proof of.

b) The word for patience in verse 12 comes from a compound word made up of "long" and "temper". It means lenience, forbearance, fortitude, patient endurance, longsuffering. Also included is the ability to endure persecution and ill-treatment. It also describes a person who has the power to exercise revenge but instead exercises restraint.

This takes us right back to what we were saying at the beginning whilst looking at persecution, ill-treatment and trials in 1st Peter in relation to our hope.

c) If we are diligent and faithful and patient, leading us to have the full assurance of our hope and we do not allow ourselves to become sluggish/lazy then we shall inherit the promises.

d) The inheritance is out ahead, a future time, and it is to be the object of our hope as we patiently endure 'until the end'. Just as faith and hope are inextricably linked so are faith and patient endurance.

e) Marathon story.....

6. Hebrews 10:23-25 tells us: *23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.*

*24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,
25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some,
but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day
approaching.*

a) We are to hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering. We are to be immovable and steadfast. In fact the KJV of the bible translates ‘*confession of our hope*’ as ‘*profession of our faith*’. It really is impossible to separate the hope from the faith.

b) If we are to hold fast and not be knocked off course then we need to realize that it is the hope which will anchor us and therefore we should lay hold of it.

c) *Heb 6:19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil,*

d) Back to Hebrew chapter 10: *24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,
25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some,
but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day
approaching.*

In order for us to not be moved away from the hope we have within us we must gather together to ‘consider one another’, to ‘provoke’ one another, or to stir each other up and to exhort one another that it might produce love and good works in us. And we are to do this ‘*so much the more*’ as we see the Day - in which our hope is to be realized - approaching.

e) Let me ask us a question or two:

Are we considering one another?

Are we gathering together a lot more than we did because we know and see the Day approaching?

Or are we actually doing less gathering together and exhorting and encouraging of others?

Can we actually see that the Day is approaching or is this present day/age all consuming?

If we neglect the coming together to study and discuss what lies out ahead we will eventually not ‘see’ what lies out ahead. So what would this coming together look like according to Heb. 11:24-25?.....

7. Let’s have a look briefly at some instances of ‘Hope’ in the OT.

a) In the OT one of the main words for ‘hope’ is the Hebrew word ‘*tiqvah*’ *Strong’s # 8615* which means: literally a cord, hope, expectation, something yearned for and anticipated eagerly; something for which one waits. *Tiqvah*

comes from the verb *qavah* meaning to hope for or to look hopefully in a particular direction.

Interestingly its original meaning was: 'to stretch like a rope' and the first 2 instances of its use are in Joshua chapter 2 verses 18 and 21 with respect to Rahab and her family's deliverance from destruction at the hands of Joshua and the 2nd Generation of Israel as they moved into the land to receive their inheritance:

Jos 2:17 So the men [the 2 spies] said to her: "We will be blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear,

18 "unless, when we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord [tiqvah] in the window through which you let us down, and unless you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father's household to your own home.

19 "So it shall be that whoever goes outside the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we will be guiltless. And whoever is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head if a hand is laid on him.

20 "And if you tell this business of ours, then we will be free from your oath which you made us swear."

21 Then she said, "According to your words, so be it." And she sent them away, and they departed. And she bound the scarlet cord [tiqvah] in the window.

b) Rahab was instructed to tie a scarlet tiqvah in her window as her hope of rescue. This promise of deliverance for her and her family was enforced with an oath that was sworn; and provided she did as she was instructed and did not tell anyone the plans of Israel, then her deliverance was assured. And that is exactly what happened - Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household and all that she had. (Josh.6:22-27)

c) You know we have an oath sworn by God. In fact Hebrews tells us we have 2 things by which we can be assured and confident of our hope for the future: *Heb 6:17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath,*

18 that by two immutable [unchangeable] things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.

19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil,

20 where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

d) As we look at this scripture and if we were to study all of chapter 6 we would find that the 2 unchangeable things which are to give us strong consolation, are (i) the counsel of God, the word of God, in particular, the word

in reference to the promise made to Abraham and to his descendants, whose seed we are because we are in Christ; and (ii) the oath that God swore, the covenant He made with Abraham and his descendants.

e) We are also to *lay hold of the hope set before us*. To 'lay hold' means: to use strength i.e. seize or retain, hold fast, keep, lay hand hold on, obtain, retain, take (by).

8. The 3rd use of *tiqvah*, which is also the first time in English that 'hope' is found in the OT is in the Book of Ruth:

*Ru 1:12 "Turn back, my daughters, go-for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have **hope**, if I should have a husband tonight and should also bear sons,*

a) Here in the 1st chapter of Ruth we see that 'hope' is intimately connected to sons and by extension, inheritance. We know that the Book of Ruth is all about the redemption of the inheritance by Boaz, who is a type of Christ redeeming the inheritance for those who would be part of the Bride of Christ who would also be adopted as firstborn sons and so receive the inheritance.

8. I would like to finish with something of a history lesson about bank notes but its parallels with 'Our Hope' and how it causes us to have a strong confidence in the promise of an inheritance which we cannot see but is reserved in heaven for us I hope will become obvious.

a) I have here a bank note from the Federal Reserve of the USA on which it says "This note is legal tender for all debts, public and private." And it is signed by the then Secretary of the Treasury. I also have a UK bank note issued by the Bank of England on which it says "I promise to pay the Bearer on demand the sum of twenty pounds." And it is signed by the Chief Cashier of the Bank of England.

Bank notes are very interesting as to how they have evolved over the centuries but basically they began as promissory notes, IOUs, to pay whoever was bearing the piece of paper a certain amount as payment of a debt.

In the 16th Century the goldsmith-bankers began to accept deposits, to make loans and to transfer funds. They also gave 'receipts' for cash - that is to say gold coins, deposited with them. These receipts, known as 'running cash notes', were made out in the name of the depositor and promised to pay him on demand. Many also carried the words "or bearer" after the name of the depositor which thereby allowed them to circulate in a limited way. ("I promise to pay John Smith, or the bearer of this note, 20 pounds on demand.")

In 1694 the Bank of England was established and immediately began to issue notes in return for gold deposits. Like the earlier 'running cash notes', the bank notes were a means of exchange because they promised to pay the bearer the sum of the note on demand. This meant that the note could be redeemed at the Bank for gold or coinage by anyone presenting it for payment. Eventually there was a gradual move towards fixed amount denomination notes like I have here for 20 pounds.

This is what was known as the 'Gold Standard'. For every note in circulation there was a corresponding amount of gold held in reserve by the Bank. So although the note was not the money, it was as good as the money. And if you presented your note at the bank or the goldsmith who issued the note, you knew you would get what was promised to you. This would be the same as if you were given the title deed to a piece of property - you would have possession of the property.

b) Now the whole business of bank notes and federal government holding corresponding amounts of gold in reserve no longer applies today. Britain left the gold standard in 1931. The bank note issue today is entirely fiduciary, meaning it is based on trust and confidence and is backed by securities instead of gold. But the point that I want to make with regards to bank notes which promise to pay the bearer on demand is that - we too may put our trust, our hope, our faith, our confidence in a written promise - the word of God. And not only can we have great confidence in it, but God also swore an oath by Himself because He could swear by nothing greater and it was sealed with His blood.

c) He has given us great and precious promises **if** we '*hold fast our confidence and rejoicing* [taking pride in something; having something to boast about] *of the hope firm until the end without wavering*' (Heb.10:23).

d) **If** we 'rest our hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ' (1 Pet.1:13); **if** our hope is a confident expectation based on solid certainty then those promises sworn by an oath and sealed in Christ's blood, may be ours in the age to come.

e) Without having hope, or faith, in a substance which we cannot see, then we cannot please God. We must believe that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him and we are to be according to Paul's word to Titus: *Tit 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.*

9. Finally to bring us back to where we began:

1Pe 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

a) Not only are we to be ready to give an account but Hebrews 10:23 implies we have something with which to boast about although we are to do it with meekness, with humility and fear.

b) When you are going through difficult times or trials and your faith does not waver, but makes you more determined than ever to run in such a way as you can receive the prize at the judgment seat, then people will ask you *the reason why you hope against all hope*. You will be ready to give that defense, because your hope is not an inconsequential thing, it is a 'sure-fire' thing. In fact you can take your hope to the bank - it just happens to be in heaven!