

THEREFORE WILL I HOPE IN HIM

LAMENTATIONS 3:22-26 • TV086B

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Lamentations 3:22-26

“It is of the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.”

I’m going to read from a book in God’s Word a portion of Scripture that very few people have ever read before, in fact, a book that most people do not even know is in the Word of God and that is the book of **Lamentations**.

Do you know where that is? Turn, if you will, to the book of **Lamentations chapter 3:24-26**. My subject today is: **“THEREFORE, I HAVE HOPE** or the **“BELIEVER’S HOPE** or **“IS MY HOPE A GOOD HOPE?”**

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You know, hope is a beautiful word. It's used often in the Word of God and especially in this passage of Scripture. This whole chapter, **chapter 3 of Lamentations** deals with hope. And he says in **verses 24-26**:

"The Lord is my portion." That word "portion" means inheritance. "The Lord is my inheritance saith my soul, therefore, I will hope in him. He's my portion, (He's my inheritance), therefore, I will hope in him."

"The Lord is good unto them that wait for him. The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh him. And he is my portion, therefore, I hope." Do you notice how often the Bible uses the word hope? Paul said, "Now abideth these three, faith, hope, and love. The greatest of these is love," but hope is one of the three.

And then in **Romans 8:24**, *"We are saved by hope."* And then in **Romans 5:5**, *"Hope maketh not ashamed."* And then in **1 Peter 1:3**, *"God hath begotten us to a living hope."* Then in **1 John 3:3**, *Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as God is pure."* And then in **1 Thessalonians 2:16**, *"God hath given us a good hope."*

Do you have hope? We are talking about eternal hope, hope of eternal life, hope of eternal heaven and glory. Is your hope a good hope? We are warned in the Scripture to *"examine our faith (our hope)."*

You know, somewhere between proud, religious presumption (and that's what we have so much of today); somewhere between proud, religious, presumption, and dead despair, is a believer's good hope. It is somewhere in between there.

I don't want this proud, religious, presumption, "I know I'm saved and if anybody makes it I will." But I don't want this dead, cold, lifeless despair which says: "Well, we don't know; we'll just have to wait until the smoke clears and the dust settles and find out if we end up in heaven or hell." I don't want to go that route do you?

But somewhere in between presumption and despair is the believer's hope. And somewhere between fleshly familiarities with God; I don't like that. I don't like this, "Jesus is my friend. Me and Jesus have got a good thing going and somebody up there likes me and build me a mansion next door to Jesus."

That's too familiar with deity. I don't like present-day familiarity with deity. I don't want to go that route. God is God. The Scripture says: *"The Lord is in his Holy temple; let all the earth keep silence."*

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The Scripture says: *“God is greatly to be feared. The ways of the Lord are past finding out. How unsearchable are his riches (His ways and the riches of His grace). And the secret things belong to God and the revealed things to us, (to whom God reveals them).”*

But, I don't want to go that fleshly familiarity route, but I don't want to go either to that route of slavish fear. A fear that will not let me come into God's presence and will not let me approach boldly the throne of grace. I'm told to, *“Come boldly unto (before) the throne of grace.”*

But now note this; note that it is a throne that we are approaching. We are invited, *“Come boldly before the throne of grace.”* You see, it's still a throne. It's not my, “buddy's place,” it's the throne of God.

And men who are wise look for these things in God's Word. Somewhere between this fleshly familiarity calling God “the man upstairs” and the Holy Son of God “superstar;” somewhere between that fleshly familiarity and this slavish fear that will not allow me to open my heart to God and walk with God as Enoch and Noah; somewhere in between there's a believer's good hope, a good hope through grace.

And somewhere between this modern decisionism where a fellow just walks down an aisle and shakes a preacher's hand and says he believes Christ died on the cross and that fixes him up; he's saved you know and he's all fixed up for heaven.

There's nothing to it, just walk down the aisle and shake the preacher's hand and join the church and pay them a little money every Sunday. And when you die they will give you a good send-off and you will wind up with God. Someone said, “You see, it's as easy as falling off a log somebody to get saved.”

Somewhere between that and medieval fatalism which says; “Well, there's nothing you can do about it. If you're going to heaven you're going to heaven. If you're going to hell you're going to hell, so just sit down in your rocking chair and wait and find out whether you are predestinated to heaven or predestinated to hell.”

Somewhere in between that modern decisionism, that easy believism, that walking the aisle and accepting Jesus and getting all fixed up for glory; somewhere between there and cold, dead, medieval fatalism is a good hope, a believer's hope.

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Someone said something that impressed me one time; he said: “God has hedged us about on one side with promises, precious promises, lest we despair.” And if we didn’t have the promises of God we would despair wouldn’t we?

“And he’s hedged us about on the other side with warnings, warnings of apostasy.” *“Take heed brethren, lest there be found in you and evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.”* “On the other side with warnings, lest we presume.” Somewhere in between there is the believer’s good hope.

You know, it’s not wise to take God’s mercy for granted. I just couldn’t go that route of joining the church and shaking the preacher’s hand and letting him tell me I’m saved and wait to find out if I am or not.

I don’t take God’s mercy for granted. It’s not wise; it’s not wise to hide in a religious profession that gives you no comfort, gives you no joy, gives you no peace, and gives you no fellowship with God.

You might pay somebody to pray for you now but you can’t pay somebody to stand in the Judgment for you. You might pay some preacher to study the Bible for you and now you say: “Well, I don’t know much about the Bible; I just believe what my preacher believes.”

You may pay a preacher to study for you now but he can’t stand for you in the Judgement. That Book you hold in your hand will judge you. It would be wise if you got acquainted with it. And that Lord Jesus Christ is going to be your Judge.

“God hath committed all judgment to the Son. The Father judges no man but the Son.” He’s going to judge you, not as the Lamb, but as the Lion of Judah. So, it would be wise if you didn’t take God’s mercy for granted.

I hear preachers say, “Everybody out there that doesn’t have a doubt or a fear; raise your hand.” Well, I don’t know; I read in the Scriptures of Enoch who walked with God but I also read of Judas who finally departed. They are both in there and he sold out.

I read in the Bible of Paul who endured to the end but also of Demas, Paul’s companion *“who departed having loved this present world.”*

I read in the Bible of the Eunuch who believed but also of Hymenaeus and Alexander who made a shipwreck of the faith. I read in the Bible of David, *“a man after God’s own heart,”* but also of Simon Magus *“whose heart was not right with God.”*

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I read of many who came in and I read also of many who “*went out from us because they never were of us.*” And I read in **John 6:66**: “*When they heard these sayings many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him.*”

God hath given us a good hope. Has He; do you have a good hope? It’s a hope. We are saved by hope: “*Hope maketh not ashamed. Now abideth faith and hope.*”

It’s not a wish; it’s a hope which a Scriptural, spiritual hope, is based upon expectancy. It’s not just desire but its desire with expectancy and with a promise which gives us that anticipation and expectancy.

But we’re warned as I said last Sunday morning, “*to examine our faith,*” to examine our hope, to examine our interest in Christ, to be sure that we are in the Redeemer. And I wouldn’t take it for granted.

You know, the Bible warns preachers about crying “*peace, peace, when there is no peace.*” We need to exhort, rebuke, encourage, and warn. We need to have people “*searching the Scriptures to see if these things be so.*”

We need to get serious about this thing. We need to be solemn in this day of apostasy and heresy.

So, I’m going to give you five marks of a believer’s hope. I believe I can give you five Scriptural evidences of a good hope. Is my hope a good hope?

And I like you am seeking the Lord. “*I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection. I want to win Christ and be found in him.*” I don’t want to be among those who cry: “*Lord, Lord; did I not preach in your name and do many wonderful works and cast out the demons (of drugs and alcohol and so forth) and hear him say, I never knew you.*”

“You’re not among my own. You never had saving faith. You never had a good hope. You were in religion because of the possessions that you could gain, with the popularity you could acquire or the particular association you could adopt. You didn’t know me; do you know of the Lord?”

Let’s see; let’s look at the Bible now. Here are five marks of a good hope:

First of all: A good hope in Jesus Christ is a hope that a man can explain!

That's right; he can put it in words. Now listen to the Scripture; let's go to the Word of God. In **1 Peter chapter 3:15**, Peter wrote: *"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope which is in you, with humility and fear."*

Be ready. If you have a hope, *"Be ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason for the hope that is in you."*

Do you believe that your sins are forgiven? Give me a reason. Do you believe that you are a child of God; well give me a Scriptural reason. Do you believe that your name is in the Lamb's Book of Life? Well, give me a reason. Don't just say, "Well, it's so because it's so;" give me a reason.

Now, a good hope can give a reason. I'm not saying that a man must be a scholar or a theologian, quite the contrary. Actually, a man may be brilliant in many things and not know a thing about God.

He may be brilliant. He may be an intellectual. He may be a genius in the things of this world and not know anything about God almighty. And yet, another man may be scarcely able to read or write and know the mysteries of the Gospel and the secret of the Godhead and the beauty of Christ and the glory of redemption.

I'm not saying that you have to be a scholar or a theologian. I'm not saying that you have to be a public speaker. There are plenty of people that can't speak publically, quite the contrary. A man may have fine words on his lips and evil in his heart. That's right!

Christ said that of the Pharisees; *"On the outside you appear beautiful to men. On the inside you are full of dead men's bones, extortion and excess."* Well, what I'm saying is this and you know the Scripture also says; *"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love I'm a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal."*

So, I'm not saying that a man has to be a scholar, a genius, an intellectual, a theologian, or a public speaker; I'm simply saying this, if our hope is in Christ then we know it's in Christ and we can say it's in Christ.

If our hope is in the blood of the cross; we can say it's in the blood of the cross. If our sins are put away by the sacrifice of God's Son we can say they are put away by the sacrifice of God's Son.

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If we have come to Christ we can say we've come to Christ. You ask people, "Are you saved?" They say, "Well, I joined the church." Well now, they are telling you, "*Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*"

They don't say anything about Christ's substitution, the cross, the Gospel, redemption, righteousness, God's wrath, and God's judgment against sin. They talk about their affiliation with the church. Your affiliation with the church is not going to save you!

The thing that will save you is your relationship with Christ, your union with Christ. "*Christ in you; that's the hope of glory,*" not you in the Baptist Church or the Catholic Church. That's not the hope of glory; "*Christ in you.*" Paul said, "*I travail until Christ be formed in you.*"

So, the first mark of a good hope is to be able to express it. I like what old John Jasper said who use to pastor over in Richmond, Virginia back during the Civil War. He pastored one of the largest black churches in the South.

And somebody asked him one time, he said: "John Jasper do you hope to go to heaven?" He said, "I sure do." They said, "Well, what if you get up there to the gates of heaven and somebody stops you and says, "John Jasper, what right have you got to be here? What are you going to say?"

Well, old John Jasper looked at him and he said, "I'm going to say that I've got no right to be here at all. I'm not here on my rights; I'm here on the righteousness of Jesus Christ my Lord and Saviour. That's my hope."

Can you say that? Are you going to tell God that you preached and did many wonderful works and cast out demons and gave your tithe and quit your sins and these things and expect God to open the gates and roll out the red carpet?

He won't do it. He'll say: "*Depart from me; I never knew you.*" The key to heaven is Christ. The gate of heaven is Christ. Heaven is Christ. We are going to enjoy him forever. We are there on His rights and His merits and His blood, not on ours.

Secondly: A good hope in Christ is a hope that is based on the Word of God!

Listen to this Scripture, **Psalm 119:49:** "*Remember thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.*" Now, you think about that a moment. David's writing here and he says: "*Remember thy word to thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.*"

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Now, you are going to get in trouble if you base your hope on your feelings; you are going to get in trouble. You are going to get in trouble if you try to base your hope on your experiences and on your works, and on your church affiliation.

But, if your hope is born of a promise and of the Word of God; if that's where you got it in God's Word, then it will hold, it will stay, and it sure will. *"The flesh is as the grass of the field and the flower of the field, the glory of man is the flower of the field: the grass withereth and the flower fadeth but the word of God endureth forever."* It can't be shaken.

And if my hope is based upon the Word of God; God said it; *"that you were a sinner."* Lord I know it. God said, "I love sinners and I sent Christ to die for sinners." And all sinners who call on Him in truth and sincerity and believe on Him and receive Him, He will save.

Now that's my hope. I believe God can't lie, *"in hope of eternal life which God who cannot lie promised before the world began;"* that was my text last Sunday, do you remember, *"in hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ from God who cannot lie, promised before the world began?"*

Why do I believe it? God promised it. He won't break His promise. Listen to this Scripture **Romans 15:4:** *"Whatsoever things were written afore time were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."*

Do you get that? *"These things were written afore time for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."* Everything we believe about God has to come from the Word of God. Our relationship with God, our fellowship with God, must be based on the Scriptures. We must not put any confidence in the flesh, mine, yours, or anybody else's.

I hear people say, "Well, I sure have confidence in that preacher." Well, the sooner you take your confidence out of him and put it in Christ the better off you will be. "Well boy, I sure had confidence in brother so and so. He sure did, he sure did let me down." If he was down there where he belongs in your estimation he couldn't let you down at all. You're down as far as you can get. Your confidence is to be in the Word of God and in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Nothing is true because I think it, only because God says it. Nothing is true because I feel it. In fact, actually, my thoughts are not God's thoughts, neither are yours. My ways are not God's ways.

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Nothing's true because I believe it. I believe it because it's true. Now, that's so! "*Let God be true and every man a liar.*" That's Scripture, **Proverbs 28:26**; listen to this: "*He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.*" It's tough to call a man a fool but that's what God says.

If you are trusting in your feelings and your emotions in your own hearts; "*the heart's deceitful and desperately wicked; who can know it,*" Jeremiah said. But you're a fool to trust self.

When we consider our hope of eternal life, when we talk to others of our hope of eternal life; let our words be saturated with the Scriptures. Become familiar with the Word of God. Be able to quote the Scriptures. God will fulfill His Word, He will. He said, "*Not one jot or one tittle, shall pass from my word till all be fulfilled.*" A good hope will be based on the Word of God; that's so.

Thirdly: A good hope rests entirely and completely on Christ!

Now, I can't emphasize this too much. Paul said in **Colossians 1:27**: "*Christ in you, the hope of glory.*" In **1 Timothy 1:1**: "*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, who is my hope.*"

Paul, what is your hope of eternal life? You founded some churches and ordained some elders and deacons and you were the first missionary. You were shipwrecked and stoned and beaten with rods and scourged.

No sir, Christ is my hope, "*O wretched man that I am. Who shall deliver me from this body of death?*" I thank God; the victory's already mine in Christ. "*Christ Jesus came into the world, to save sinners of whom I am chief.*" Christ is our hope! Our hope is based entirely:

**“On Jesus’ blood and his righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly lean on Jesus’ name.**

**On Christ the solid rock I stand
All other ground is sinking sand
All other ground, I say, is sinking sand.”**

Now, I've got to have a perfect righteousness before the law. Somehow, some way, if I'm going to be redeemed I've got to have a perfect righteousness before God's law. That's what the Scripture says, the Scripture says in **Romans 3:19**, "*What the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped and all the world become guilty before God.*"

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I'm guilty, you're guilty, and the whole world's guilty. In order for God to receive us and accept us and fellowship with us we've got to have a perfect righteousness before the law.

Where are we going to get it? In Christ, He is our righteousness. *"He is made unto us righteousness."* The Scripture says over in **Romans 5:19**: *"By one man's disobedience many, (the many), were made sinners. So by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."*

In **2 Corinthians 5:21** *"He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* So, in Christ I have that righteousness before the law.

All right; I need a sin-offering, I need a sacrifice before the mercy seat. I've got to have it. Where am I going to get a sacrifice that God will accept? The Scripture says, all the blood of bulls and goats on Jewish altars slain cannot remove our guilt, our sin, or our sinful stains.

It tells us *"that the blood of bulls and goats and sacrifices cannot put away sin."* Those were pictures and types and symbols. Where are we going to get an effectual sacrifice that can remove sin?

Here it is, *"By one offering, (now one offering), he entered into the holiest not with the blood of bulls and goats but with his own precious blood. By one offering he perfected forever them that are sanctified,"* by one offering, His blood.

All right; I need a ransom before God's justice. Where am I going to get one? Christ is my ransom. Christ enabled God *"to be just and justifier of the ungodly."* God can forgive our sins and still be God because He has an effectual ransom.

Believers of all ages have disagreed on matters of church government. They have disagreed on matters of dress, discipline, custom, and these things. But believers of all ages have agreed on one thing; *"He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him and by his stripes we are healed."* They agree on that. *"The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin."* They agree on that.

Fourthly: A good hope; it's felt in the heart!

Listen to this Scripture, **Romans 5:5**: *"Hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit."*

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Now, salvation is not an aisle work. It's not a flesh work; it's a heart work. Now many people saw Christ with the natural eye that never saw Him with the eyes of faith. Many people touched Him with the natural hand like shaking hands that never touched Him with their hearts.

When that woman came behind him and touched the hem of His garment He said: "*Who touched me?*" Well, the disciples were amazed; they said, "*Lots of folks touched you.*" He said, "*Somebody touched me.*"

It was a heart contact. And this is where salvation takes place. And if a man's regenerated by the Holy Ghost and brought to a genuine repentance toward God and faith in Christ it will bring forth fruit in His heart.

It will change Him. He will have peace in His heart. He will have rest in His conscience. He'll have love in His soul. Those things are real.

Let me ask you a question, can a weary man lie down and not feel rested? Can a hungry man eat and not be satisfied? Can a thirsty man drink and not be refreshed? Can a naked man be clothed and not be warmed? Can a sick man be healed and not rejoice?

You say, "Well no." And neither can a dead sinner be quickened and awakened and not have joy in his heart. Neither can a guilty sinner be brought to forgiveness nor can a repented sinner be brought to faith and not be joyful in his heart. Christ is real!

Religion is not a burden; it's a joy. That's right; it's not a burden, it's not just a duty. It's not just meeting some requirements. It's under new management. Did you ever drive down the street and see a restaurant sign there, "Under new management?"

That means things are better; that's what they mean, things are better. They're not worse. People talk about what they gave up for God. I've received everything. I haven't given up anything that wasn't bad for me. It's felt in the heart.

And last of all: A good hope will be manifested in the outward life!

I don't care what anyone says; the Bible's clear on this: "*If any man be in Christ he's a new creature.*" He's a new person, he has a new attitude, he has new motives, he has a new direction, he has new manners, and he has a new Master. "*All things have become new. Old things have passed away. All things become new.*"

James says, "*Show me your faith without your works. I will show you my faith by my works.*"

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You see, our souls are justified by faith and our faith is justified by works.

That's what the book of **James** is teaching, that a man who does not have a godly life and the bent of his will and the tenor of his life in the direction of holiness doesn't know God because God is Holy and the fruit of the Spirit will be manifested!