

7. Indestructible Hope

Biblical material: Job 38-41, Isa. 41:8-14, Jer. 29:1-10, Hab. 1:1-4, Heb. 12:1-13.

Quotes

- If you lose hope, somehow you lose the vitality that keeps life moving, you lose that courage to be, that quality that helps you go on in spite of it all. And so today I still have a dream. *Martin Luther King, Jr.*
- To eat bread without hope is still slowly to starve to death. *Pearl S. Buck*
- Nothing worth doing is completed in our lifetime,
Therefore, we are saved by hope.
Nothing true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history;
Therefore, we are saved by faith.
Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone.
Therefore, we are saved by love. *Reinhold Niebuhr*
- We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars. *Oscar Wilde*
- Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. *Albert Einstein*

Questions

In what way does hope help while “in the crucible”? Can hope mislead? On what is hope based? How are we “saved by hope”? What kind of God provides real hope, and how do we relate? While we certainly do not know everything, and cannot foresee the future, what can we be sure of? Is hope just about us, or is it far more than this?

Discussion/ Comment

“Even though we don’t always understand God and He seems to do unpredictable things, that doesn’t mean that God is against us. It simply means that we don’t have the full picture yet. But we struggle with the idea that for us to have peace, confidence, and hope, God must be understandable and predictable. He needs to be, in our thinking, “safe.” As such, we set ourselves up for disappointment.” (Lesson, Sab pm).

These are some of the saddest comments I have ever read in a lesson quarterly. I think I understand what the writer was trying to say—that we don’t know everything—but what comes out is a picture of a fickle and capricious God who is volatile, changeable, erratic—random even. Thinking of the pagan gods who had to be appeased and placated, that was exactly the problem. They were dangerous and unpredictable, so they had to be bought off, sacrificed to, and in generally “kept on side”. Is that really the same as the Heavenly Father we know?

Our God is most definitely “safe.” He is absolutely trustworthy. We can place our complete confidence in him, without any reservation as to his attitude towards us. He has totally demonstrated his nature through the person of Jesus, and having seen the way Jesus thought and acted, how can we still have questions about the Father?

No, we do not set ourselves up for disappointment when we know God as he truly is—the safest pair of hands into which we can place ourselves. Just as Jesus trusted completely in his loving Father when at death he cried, “Unto your hands I commit my spirit,” so can we commit ourselves to the safest and most trustworthy Being in the universe.

Quite the contrary: our hope is based on the God we already know. That is why our hope is indestructible—because it is based on the promises of a God we know can be trusted. Hope sure and certain is founded on a God we have found to be sure and certain. Otherwise hope is no hope at all.

Habakkuk's complaint was not based on his fear that God was not "safe," but that he appeared to be unjust and tolerant of evil. He knew the character of God, and was surprised that things were not working out as he expected. That is certainly true—that we do need to see the big picture. Even if we cannot, we can remain confident of God, while we ask our questions. Notice that Habakkuk is confident enough to ask God his questions...

Similarly Job didn't just keep quiet. He put his situation before God, often with much emotion! He trusted in God, and knew he would not be summarily rejected, but that God would want to explain what was happening. He speaks with God, reverently to be sure, but as friend to friend. Because he knows and trusts God.

The Jeremiah passage cited for the lesson seems to be missing the punchline: "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" (Jer. 29:11 NIV). That's the hope! Because it is based on God, and what he plans for us will happen as we allow him. He wants to give us hope and a future, when all we see around us is hopelessness, and pointless, and death. No future if we are left to ourselves. But with God, then...

Ellen White Comments

Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry. The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God. {DA 761}

The understanding of the people of God has been blinded, for Satan has misrepresented the character of God. Our good and gracious Lord has been presented before the people clothed in the attributes of Satan, and men and women who have been seeking for truth have so long regarded God in a false light that it is difficult to dispel the cloud that obscures His glory from their view. Many have been living in an atmosphere of doubt, and it seems almost impossible for them to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel of Christ. . . . {FW 81}

Just so has God given us the precious promises throughout His Word. The Scriptures are open to us as the garden of God, and their promises are as fragrant flowers blooming all over that garden. God especially calls our attention to the very ones that are appropriate for us. In these promises we may discern the character of God and read His love to us. They are the ground upon which our faith rests, the support and strength of our faith and hope, and through these we are to delight our souls in God and breathe in the fragrance of heaven. Through the precious promises He withdraws the veil from the future and gives us glimpses of the things which He has prepared for those who love Him.... {TMK 213}

In order to exercise intelligent faith we should study the word of God. The Bible, and the Bible alone, communicates a correct knowledge of the character of God and his will concerning us. The duty and the destiny of man are defined in its pages. The conditions on which we may hope for eternal life are explicitly stated, and the doom of those who neglect so great a salvation is foretold in the most forcible language. {RH, January 10, 1888}

