

THE HOPE GOD WANTS YOU TO HAVE – July 12, 2020

Do you want to be all that God wants you to be? Do you want to be a growing and godly Christian? Do you want to be a positive, forward-looking person? Do you want more joy and peace? Do you want to love God more? If so, one thing that will help is having hope. Now many Christians are lacking in hope, and don't even know what they are missing. They are focused on the present, on what is happening today, but they are not thinking about the future God has planned out for them. And they don't see that having this hope, that being excited about God's plans for their future, will help them be more fruitful and successful in the present.

How do we define hope? Hope is not a present reality but an expectation of a future reality. Hope, as a noun, is what you need to know about your future and, as a verb, it's what you need to believe about your future. It's knowing and seeing, by faith, God's plans for your future. It's what you don't have now but are confident God will give you in the ages to come. It's believing that God will continually show you His great love after you go to heaven.

What is this hope?

- 1. It's being with Jesus Christ.** *"... thus we shall always be with the Lord"* (1 Thess. 4:17). Jesus, like no one else, has loved you and will always love you. He died for you and rose again, saving you from your sins, from the clutches of Satan, and from death itself. He's your Savior and Redeemer, Lord and King, Brother and Friend - and He can't wait to be with you, and show His love and glory to you, and in ways you could never imagine. It won't be long now before you are literally with Him in heaven. Just think what it will be like when you see Him, and He talks to you, and you talk to Him, and He tells you that He loves you. Job 19:25-27; John 14:3, 15:9, 17:24
- 2. It's not being affected by any fleshly, worldly, or devilish thing.** *"He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any crying, mourning or pain; the first things have passed away"* (Rev. 21:4). There will be no more sin, sorrow, sickness, death, trials, conflicts, worries, enemies or persecution - how freeing to not be affected by these things - how wonderful this will be! Life can be hard, stressful, and painful, but your hope is that everything and everyone in the future will be good, loving, and a blessing. Yes, there'll be sin and evil in the millennial kingdom, but it won't personally affect you. Rev. 7:15-17
- 3. It's having a brand-new body.** *"... the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory"* (Phil. 3:20-21). Your body is weak, sinful and mortal. Yes, it's sufficient for your life on earth, but it won't be sufficient for your life in heaven and for eternity. God will give every believer a new body, a powerful, immortal, glorious and spiritual body - and this will happen when Christ returns to rapture the church. Then you'll be physically saved, and your salvation will be complete, and you'll fully be able to eternally worship and serve the Lord, and give Him great glory. 1 Cor. 15:42-44, 2 Cor 5:1-8, 1 Thess. 5:23

4. It's perfectly loving God and Jesus Christ. *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength"* (Mark 12:30). This is the great commandment! But now your love for God is sporadic, it's not always wholehearted, it's interrupted by sin, it's definitely not what it should be. But not long from now you will be glorified, and with rapturous joy, you will more fully know and be filled up with His love for you. Then and forever, you will perfectly and continually love the Lord - how God-glorifying and soul-satisfying that will be. Psalm 145:1-2, 1 John 4:19, Revelation 5:13

5. It's having a heavenly home. *"In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you"* (John 14:2). You now live in an earthly dwelling. It may be small or big, plain or lavish, cluttered or neat, but it's temporal and wears out, and has to be cleaned, kept and maintained. But Jesus has made a home perfectly suited for you. It's beautiful, spotless, furnished, practical, the most comfortable and relaxing place you could ever imagine. There you will be able to worship the Lord, fellowship with the saints, have a meal, and live forever. Your home will be part of the new city, the heavenly city, one that will bring eternal glory to God and Jesus. Psalm 84:1-4, Heb. 12:22-24, Rev. 21:10-23

6. It's being with loved ones and other believers. *"For who is our hope or joy or crown of exaltation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?"* (1 Thess. 2:19). One of the great blessings on earth is being with other Christians, especially ones you love and who love you. And one of the great blessings of heaven is being with them again, and for all eternity. And so, don't grieve too much when loved ones and friends leave this earth and go to heaven, for you will soon see them again. Your relationships with believers on earth continue in heaven, and then they will be perfect, with perfect love, communication, and fellowship, and all centered around Christ. You will also meet and enjoy the company of millions and millions of believers, saints like Moses, David, Esther, Nehemiah, Mary, Paul, Luther, Edwards, Spurgeon, etc. How wonderful and encouraging this will be! 2 Sam. 12:22-23, 2 Cor. 4:14, 1 Thess. 4:13-14

7. It's receiving an incredible inheritance. *"... to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and will not fade away..."* (1 Peter 1:3-4). None of us can fathom how much God wants to bless us in the future. Good parents give good things to their children, but that's nothing compared to what God will give you in the future. Money, land, jewelry, and keepsakes are earthly inheritances, but our heavenly inheritance is infinitely better (1 Cor. 2:9). This inheritance, guaranteed to all God's children, cannot be destroyed, is perfect, and will never lose its magnificence. We don't know the exact nature of our inheritance, but it will be an expression of God's gracious and perfect love for us. Not only that, but it's *"reserved in heaven for you."* Our inheritance, now kept safely in heaven, will be given to us at Christ's coming. What a kind and generous Father we have!

8. It's being greatly rewarded. *"He who plants and he who waters are one, but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor"* (1 Cor. 3:8). God gives each believer an inheritance just because he is His child. But your reward is more than an inheritance, for it relates to your work for Him. Jesus tells us the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30), that God gives you money and abilities you are to use to serve Him. This reward in heaven, your heavenly pay, relates directly to the quality of your work on earth, and how you faithfully used what God gave you. Do not forget, God will reward you for everything you say or do for Him. Now part of this reward is the actual work you will be doing in the future. Hear what the master told his slave - *"Do business with this until I come back... Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing - be in authority over ten cities."* Luke 19:13-17, Col. 3:23, Rev. 22:12

9. It's having a satisfying and God-glorifying purpose. *"We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand"* (Eph. 2:10). You won't be just sitting in heaven playing a harp. God has specific plans for your life in the ages to come. You will be working for God, serving Him, doing what He wants you to do, and what you will love to do. During the millennial kingdom, your work will directly relate to reigning with Jesus Christ over this world. Exactly what this work will look like, we don't know, but it will be perfect, satisfying, and effortless, and that which will be good for others and a glory to God. Rev. 2:26, 5:10, 20:6

10. It's seeing the glory of God displayed on earth. *"The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord"* (Habakkuk 2:14). We now live in an evil world controlled by the evil one. But the next age, the millennial kingdom age, Jesus Christ will be reigning over the world. Then, with great satisfaction and joy, you will see the righteousness, peace, and glory of God. *"God is the King of all the earth... God reigns over the nations"* (Ps. 47:7-8). *"Let the nations be glad and sing for joy; for Thou will judge the nations with uprightness, and guide the nations on the earth"* (Ps. 67:4). *"In His days may the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace till the moon is no more"* (Ps. 72:7). *"Let the rivers clap their hands; let the mountains sing together for joy"* (Ps. 98:8). This is a small sampling of what the future, and your future, will look like. Just think - we will soon be reigning with Christ, and seeing His glory on earth! Psalm 96, Psalm 150, Isaiah 6:3

11. It's having fulness of joy and pleasures forever. *"In Thy presence is fulness of joy; in Thy right hand there are pleasures forever"* (Psalm 16:11). Your heavenly Father will make sure you are always full of joy and gladness. Every day, and for all eternity, you will experience God's goodness, be with Jesus, see His glory, have sweet fellowship, and enjoy the beauty and pleasures of the world. You will never feel sad or down or lonely. Every day will be a good day, a great day, a perfect day, a most wonderful day. Jesus said, *"I came that you might have life, and might have it abundantly"* (John 10:10). In the future, you will always experience Jesus' life to the full - and you will be rejoicing with gladness, exulting before God, and giving Him the glory He deserves. Ps. 68:3-4, John 7:38, 1 Thess. 5:16

12. It's knowing God more fully. *"This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent"* (John 17:3). Eternal life is knowing God, having an eternal relationship with Him. In the future, you will keep growing in your knowledge of an infinite God, for He will continue to reveal Himself to you. You will increasingly know more about His love, wisdom, power, goodness, holiness, sovereignty, etc. You will learn more from God's word, the word we have now, but don't fully understand. You will learn more about Jesus, more about the angels and saints, and more about the world we live in. You will never grow tired of spending time with Jesus and seeing His glory, for your soul will be fully and always satisfied by Him. As a result, you will grow in your love and affection for Jesus, your Lover. John 17:24, Rom. 11:33

This is a detailed summary of your hope, of God's great and glorious plans for your life, which will begin at Christ's return and continue for all eternity. Your life on earth is usually just 70, 80, 90 years or so, but eternity is forever and ever. It's critically important for you to see this big picture, and that God's hope for you will be fulfilled during your eternally long life, during the millions and millions and millions and millions of years, etc., after your time on this earth. We spend so much time thinking about this life, but you must understand and think about the details of your incredible future, this eternal life that God will give you. 1 Thess. 1:1:9-10 says, *"serve a living and true God,"* and *"wait for His Son,"* that is, we are to be working for God and waiting for Jesus, looking forward to seeing Jesus and the unfolding of the wonderful future God has planned out for us.

"Now 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" (Rom. 15:13). *"You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the righteous men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant"* (Heb. 12:22-24). *"How lovely are Thy dwelling places, O Lord of hosts! My soul longed and even yearned for the courts of the Lord... How blessed are those who dwell in Thy house! They are ever praising Thee."* Psalm 84:1-2, 4