
One from the Heart

Faith and Hope

What is required to live in such a way that the kingdom of heaven comes to earth or is displayed through us? What does it mean to be a Christian, living out our spirituality? What elements of the kingdom of God were important to Jesus, are vital to us, and will remain for eternity?

Paul speaks of three important elements for a life lived towards eternity that makes a difference now. It is a life rooted in faith, hope and love (1 Corinthians 13:13).

Faith: Believing in God based on who He is and what He has said.

At some levels the faith we have, to believe in God, is a gift from Him (Ephesians 2:8, John 6:44).

Informed Faith (Romans 10:17) At its essence – faith is trusting in God based on what we know of His character and word. This type of faith is derived from embracing the word and intent of God and relying on His divine nature.

Our salvation is obtained when we understand what God has done for us, and embrace the forgiveness, redemption, love and Lordship of Christ. We continue to live by faith in this way too, learning of God's nature through His word, and our experience of grace and love. We continue to grow in faith, believing His word and trusting His heart. Faith leads to obedience and action.

Faith Opposed

Satan opposes our faith by bending it slightly off course by tempting us to trust God for those things He has never promised to provide. Satan wants us to not live lives of faith.

Three Ways in Which We Use the Word “Hope”

We use the word “hope” in at least three different ways.

1. A desire for something good in the future
2. The thing in the future that we desire
3. The basis or reason for thinking that our desire may indeed be fulfilled

The Biblical Meaning of Hope

A confident expectation and desire for something good in the future

Biblical hope not only desires something good for the future; it expects it to happen. And it not only expects it to happen; it is confident that it will happen.

Faith and Hope Linked (Colossians 1:5)

Hope is like the precursor to faith. It leads the way and opens the door to faith.

Hope and faith are almost synonymous. Pursue hope so that you can be like men and women of faith (Hebrews 6:11-12).

Hope is something that should not waver, because it is rooted in the faithfulness of God (Hebrews 10:22-23).

A Picture of Hope: Mooring Lines – Messenger Lines – faith and hope.

Hope is like a line, connecting us to the things we are in faith for. Hope becomes the means by which we access faith to bring the kingdom of heaven to earth.

Because we have the Bible, we have something outside ourselves that we can truly expect to come about. We can look at those promises, trusting that God is true to His own word, and get excited about actually seeing them come to be in our own lives. Hope gives us the certainty of these things.

Hope Opposed

The enemy wants to oppose your hope. In fact if he can destroy your hope, you won't act in faith! Satan diverts our mind off the eternal and on to the temporal.

But God says His kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). In fact, the things of this world do not provide a firm foundation for our lives (Colossians 2:8). Only when we look to the truly firm foundation for living -- Jesus Christ -- will we find a hope that can anchor our souls (Hebrews 6:19).

If your heart is discouraged by the difficult circumstances you face OR if it only seeks to find joy in the moment (not recognising that even the difficult circumstances of life produce faith and hope - Romans 5:1-5), you will miss the joy of planning with expectancy.

Problems and difficulties that exist in the present are invitations to bring heavenly solutions.

Building a Foundation of Hope Leading to Faith

Here are four practical steps you can take every day to build a sure foundation of hope that will help you shift your current culture to a kingdom culture:

1. **Submit Yourself to God.** God is the source of our hope. Come to Him in humility and He will restore you (1 Peter 5:6-7).

2. **Build the Testimony.** Allow God's previously fulfilled promises to renew your hope. God has given us written record of countless ways He has provided hope for believers in centuries past (1 Chronicles 16:11-21).

3. **Trust God's Timing.** Sometimes God answers our prayers and fulfils our hopes quickly. At other times, for His own divine reasons, He allows us to wait. Remember – biblical hope is a confident expectation and desire for something good in the future.

4. **Thank God Today.** Though it's hard to rejoice as we wait for hopes to be fulfilled, rejoicing enables God to perfect us in ways we are unable to see at the time. And this kind of hope, purified in the crucible of waiting, and sometimes suffering, "does not disappoint" (Romans 5:1-5).

Discussion Questions

1. Where is it in your life that you have been substituting the hope as defined by the world instead of Biblical hope?
2. What would change for you if you started to see hope as defined in the Bible?
3. How can you see faith and hope being linked in real ways in your life?
4. Share together testimonies of where hope has led to faith. How does this build your faith?
5. Romans 5:1-5 talks about the struggle to attain hope. How can the difficult situations you currently face be an opportunity for you to build hope? What practical things can you do to continue to keep your eyes on the eternal and everlasting hope Jesus' kingdom offers?
6. Discuss each other's prayer needs, then gather around each other and ask for God's intervention.