



“THE ANCHOR”

Dear friend,

So many have given up. Others are tempted to do such. Yet Hebrews 6:19 says, “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.” This hope is based on the historical fact that Jesus Christ died for our sins, rose from the dead and now offers us the hope of eternal life if we will but trust in Him. That is why Col. 1:5 refers to this hope as “the hope which is laid up for you in heaven.”

Even now, right here on earth in the midst of the loneliness, heartaches, and disappointments we can have hope, if we will but wait. For that reason we are told in Hab.2:3, “Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.” But along with the Psalmist I find myself crying out “How long O Lord.” To be honest I hate the waiting.

“Wait and hope for and expect the Lord; be brave and of good courage and your heart be stout and enduring. Yes, wait for and hope for and expect the Lord” (Psalm 27:14). It may seem hard to wait, but the wait is worthwhile because God is a God of compassion. Remember God’s delay is not God’s denial. Without hope, which is the anchor for our souls we will give in to despair, hopelessness and depression. Without hope we will feel adrift with one endless problem after another. So didn’t give up. “Wait and hope for and expect the Lord” for this hope is an anchor for your soul.

The reason we can experience hope is because God is a God of compassion. “For the needy shall not always be forgotten, and the expectation and hope of the meek and the poor shall not perish forever” (Psalm 9:18). When we feel forgotten, our expectations unmet and our hopes destroyed, we need to declare unto the Lord, “You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in Your word” (Psalm 119:114). The Word of God, commonly referred to as the Bible, could also be called the Book of Hope. In it we find the promises, power and presence of God affirmed over and over. We are told to, “trust in the Lord (commit yourself to Him, lean on Him, hope confidently in Him) forever; for the Lord God is an everlasting Rock (the Rock of Ages)” (Is. 26:4 Amplified Bible). To trust in the Lord means to have faith in God. Faith is the substance of hope. As Hebrews 11:1 says, “Faith is the substance of things hoped for.” Without faith Heb.11:6, also says “it is impossible to please God,” with the end result being hopelessness.

When everything inside of me cries out for the answer, I want results immediately. Like Jeremiah, I want the problem solved now! But frequently God's answer is the same to me as that He gave Jeremiah in chapter 12 verse 5. "If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses? If you stumble in safe country, how will you manage in the thickets by the Jordan?"

But what about those who have stumbled in the safe country or have become lost in the thickets of sin? The fact is the scriptures are full of hope for those who have fallen if they will but repent. Let me share but a few of them with you. "For you see, the steps of a good man (and a good woman) are ordered by the Lord; and He delights in his (or her) way. Though he (or she) fall, they will not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholds them with His hand" (Ps.37: 23, 24). "In fact, the Lord upholds all that fall and raises up all that be bowed down" (Ps.145:14). "Yes, rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness, and anxious not to punish you" (Joel 2:13). "And we know, that if we confess our sins. He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

It is easy to get down on ourselves, when day after day all we see are people who feel they are in hopeless situations. We try to help them, but it never seems to be enough. How easy it is to let depression creep into our lives until even our future seems to be one of hopelessness. That is why it is so critical that we immerse ourselves in scriptures like Jeremiah 29:11. "For I know the thoughts and plans that I have for you, says the Lord, thoughts and plans for welfare and peace and not for evil, to give you hope and a future." May God indeed awaken us in order that we can know and understand this hope that Eph.1:18 speaks of: "By having the eyes of your heart flooded with light, so that you can know and understand the hope to which He has called you, and how rich His glorious inheritance in the saints (His set-apart ones)." We have a living hope. As 1 Peter 1:3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead".

There is hope for Christ is Risen. Now we need to learn how to rest in this hope during this age of anxiety. "(Resting) in the hope of eternal life, (life) which the ever truthful God who cannot deceive, promised before the world or the ages of time began" (Titus 1:2). Paul, knowing that putting our minds on the reality of salvation is essential for resting in this hope, refers to this as putting on the helmet of the hope of salvation in 1 Thess.5:8: "Let us be sober and put on the breastplate of faith and love and for a helmet of the hope of salvation." We have this hope of salvation because Jesus Christ paid the price for our sins by dying on the cross. His resurrection following this death clearly shows that as we trust in Him we will be saved. "Through Him (Jesus) you believe in God, who

raised Him from the dead and glorified Him, and so your faith and hope are in God” (1 Peter 1:21).

There are many who claim to have their faith and hope in God but yet their lives reflect hopelessness, despair, and frustration. The problem is God’s message of hope is blocked by misplaced faith that believe hope can only spring forth from monetary wealth. Such misunderstanding provides the seed bed for hopelessness. This is the result of not understanding that hope doesn’t involve getting rich but living richly. Such rich living is a result of faith which is the substance of hope planted deep within which, in turn, provides an anchor for our souls even as we journey through the storms of life. “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul” (Heb.6:19). In order to secure such an anchor we must ask God to help us develop an attitude of gratitude for all that has been given to us, rather than constantly desiring more and more. This means placing our hope and faith in God and not in money. Such hope involves self-control and working to place our minds on the hope God provided through His love and not the three thousand marketing messages that we are bombarded with each day. As 1 Peter 1:13 says, “Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.” Setting our hope fully on the grace of Jesus Christ is possible only as we “flee idols” as Paul told us in 1 Cor.10:14. If we have our hope in the idols of this world, it won’t be long and these idols will soon rob us of all hope. When Jesus told the rich ruler in Mark 10:17-31 and Luke 18:18-30 to sell all and give it to the poor, Jesus was challenging the man to transfer his hope based on his wealth to God the Giver and Source of all life. The man “went sadly away because he had many possessions” (Mark 10:22). He was possessed by his possessions. “As for the rich in this world, charge them not to be proud and arrogant and contemptuous of others, nor to set their hope on uncertain riches, but on God. Who richly and ceaselessly provides us with everything for (our) enjoyment” (1 Tim. 6:17).

Those walking in darkness see no hope but only despair and loneliness. The miracles of creation can be taking place all around them, but they do not recognize them as such. Everything is formless, empty and filled with the darkness of discouragement and negativism. In Genesis 1:2, 3 we read, “Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.” For there to be light and order in our lives, we need the Spirit of God to hover over the troubled waters of our lives. Then we need the Word of God to proclaim light and hope in the midst of our darkness and hopelessness.

In order for the music of creation to bring peace to our inner being, we need Jesus, the Word of Life, to remove the darkness of sin from us and bring forth the light of His forgiveness. In order for this to happen, we must respond to the movement of the Spirit and repent of our sins and declare in word and deed “Now I Surrender to You, O Lord.”

This surrender means that I give God my actions, my words and all that I am and own. I desire for all things to be brought into full harmony with His divine order of creation. As I surrender my life to the Holy Triune God, I desire the same harmony to exist between us that now exist between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In order for this to happen I must let go of my own habitually disordered behavior, along with my runaway passions, desires and emotions. I want the grace of Jesus Christ and His power of forgiveness to turn the power of sin around in my life to the extent that the word “sin” is now spelled “nis” for “now I surrender.” This means that I desire every moment to not do my will, but to surrender my innermost spirit to God’s gentle guiding hands. I make myself vulnerable to His love and peace. I want the false self to pass away and the new self created in Christ to come forth.

There is hope because Christ is Risen. This is not a false hope but a real historical reality witnessed by over 500 people (1 Cor.15) that is an anchor for your soul. It is a hope available to everyone including those whose lives have been held for years by the grip of hopelessness that sin and addiction can bring. As we have read in 1Peter 1:13-15 we see not only hope offered for freedom in every area of our lives but also practical advise on how to experience this hope and the freedom it provides. “Therefore, prepare yours minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’”

We are told in these verses that if we really want to experience this eternal hope its time we straightened out, prepared our minds for action, and got some self-control. In a materialistic system that thrives on people who are out of control and continues to perpetuate the theory that one needs more and more to be happy it is not easy to exercise self-control. Yet without such self-control we will continue to put our confidence in the false hopes that more things and other people offer, only to continue to experience more frustration and hopelessness. Self-control is the first step in experiencing real hope. With self control you are able to” set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.”

Jesus was first revealed when He rose from the dead. His full revelation will take place when He returns once again to earth. This fact offers each of us the hope that we can be changed and that we are not finished yet. This is true for the alcoholic, drug addict, prostitute, ego addict, or anyone else who has been awoken to the miserable state of their hopeless existence. The reality that this does not have to be their final state gives them the will to go on living. This is possible through the new life provided through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

I realize that as we live this new life in Christ, many in the world will consider us foolish or even crazy. Leonard Sweet, in his book Jesus Drives Me Crazy, uses the word “nuts” as an acronym for Never Underestimate The Spirit. “Let the unbelievers consider us nuts! We have learned to never underestimate the Spirit. As the Holy Spirit works in our lives, we learn that the more status that Jesus has in our lives, the more we find ourselves confronting the status quo. The more Jesus becomes the Prince of Peace, the more we recognize the social injustices and frequently disturb the peace of the rich and powerful”.

We are able to confront these social injustices because we have hope which is an anchor for our souls and we know that “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man (and woman) availeth much” (James 5:16). The Word of God not only tells us that the prayers of those abiding in the light and never underestimating the power of the Spirit of God accomplishes much, but it also shows us such. Joshua prayed and the sun stood still. Ninevah’s inhabitants prayed and God reversed His death sentence upon them. Hezekiah prayed and God let him live fifteen years longer. Samson prayed and God restored his lost power. Joseph prayed in prison, was given an interpretation to Pharaoh’s dream, was made second in command of Egypt and saved his family from starvation. Daniel prayed and God shut the lion’s mouth. Elisha, Peter and Paul prayed and the dead were raised to life. As you move from darkness and hopelessness into light and life, you will discover you are “more than a conqueror through Him (Jesus) who loves us.” (Romans 8:38) After all, Jesus said in John 12:46, “I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.” As the late Adrian Rogers said, “Never doubt in the dark what God has shown you in the light.”

As we remain in the light, love, and presence of Jesus Christ daily, He promises, “If you remain in Me and my Words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you” (John 15:7). That is God’s promise to us at this hour spoken through Jesus who said, “If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer” (Matt.21:22).

Each of us has been given a calling, a purpose in life. It may not appear easy and often we may be tempted to despair. Instead of giving up, give that need to God, and trust Him. Abraham Lincoln once said, “I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live up to what light I have.” We are to let God’s creative power go to work in your lives as we choose to abide in the Light and Love of Jesus Christ. Don’t take it personal if the world thinks you’re nuts. Just let this reaction spell out for you that you will never underestimate the power of the Spirit. After all, if you are abiding in Christ, remember that greater is He (Jesus) who is abiding in you than he (the devil) who abides in the world.

Hope placed in the Living God does not disappoint us: “And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit,

whom He has given us” (Romans 5:5). It’s a fact hope centered in God and His promises is hope that endures and is an anchor for our souls. He will meet all of our needs as reflected in Psalm 25:3, 20-21. The reason this hope does not disappoint is that God has poured out His love into our hearts. (1 John 4:8, 16). This love of God poured out into our hearts provides hope in the most difficult and seemingly impossible situations because we know that God is love. He is our Healer, Deliverer, Savior, Comforter, Provider and Sustainer. What a mighty God we serve!

Even the trials, tribulations and afflictions we suffer on a day-by-day basis can serve to build character and hope within us as we look to our Risen Savior. “For our light, momentary affliction (this slight distress of the passing hour) is ever more and more abundantly preparing and producing and achieving for us an everlasting weight of glory (beyond all measure, excessively surpassing all comparisons and all calculations, a vast and transcendent glory and blessedness never to cease). Since we consider and look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are visible are temporal (brief and fleeting), but the things that are invisible are deathless and everlasting” (2 Cor.4:17, 18). Glory be to God! Because of His infinite love, mercy and grace we are people who can live in hope both now and for all eternity. Yes, there may be financial pressures but we are reminded that we are to “wait and hope for and expect the Lord; be brave and of good courage and let your heart be stout and enduring. Yes, wait for and hope for and expect the Lord” (Ps.27:14). Look at how Romans 15:13, calls Him the God of hope as it declares, “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” The key to experiencing all joy and peace is to trust in the God of hope. This is the anchor for our souls. As you trust in Him remember you will overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Hope involves faith. “For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has?”(Romans 8:24).

Hope is the anchor for your soul. Continue to trust in the God of hope and let His hope flow into the essence of your being at this moment. As this happens you will see Him do exceedingly far beyond what you can ask or think.

Remember at every moment that there is hope for Christ is Risen. Live in the reality of this fact and discover the joy of overflowing with hope.

Yours in Christ,

Larry Rice