

Eternal Hope



Where to Find Security (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, as we continue with our theme which is of such vital importance for all of us: Where to Find Security.

In my talk yesterday I explained that total and permanent security comes from a direct, personal relationship with Christ. Described in one beautiful passage of Scripture amongst many, Psalm 23, verses 1 through 4, the well known "Shepherd's Psalm" where David says:

> "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall lack nothing."

I pointed out, that one verse expresses total security out of a relationship, a personal relationship, "The Lord is my shepherd, therefore, I shall lack nothing." Every need will be supplied in time and in eternity. David continues on:

> "He (the Lord) makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters, He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake."

I summed that up by saying when you commit your life to the Lord, He accepts total responsibility for every need in every situation and circumstance. And then David continues:

> "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." (NIV)

The security of this relationship does not end like all human security with time, but it passes with us from time into eternity. The Lord is with us. Each one that's committed to Him, when we come to that valley of the shadow of death, He's there to receive us and take us through in perfect security.

And then I also quoted the words of Paul that express this security with such beauty and power, in Romans 8, verses 38 and 39:

> "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (NIV)

That relationship is inviolable. There is no power in the universe that can disrupt the relationship between the Lord Jesus and the soul that's truly committed to Him.

Today I'm going to speak about the product of this relationship with Jesus: Eternal Hope. Hope is one of the most beautiful words in any language. Hope in the heart gives patience and strength to endure hardship, calamity, and all the other pressures that come against us in life. It does not give us a bypass around them, but it gives us the strength to go through them.

On the other hand, hopelessness saps initiative, strength, and the very will to live. To be without hope in this life is tragic, but to be without hope in death is the ultimate tragedy. But that's not the fate of the soul committed to Jesus. Listen to these words in Proverbs 14, verse 32:

> "When calamity comes, the wicked are brought down, but even in death the righteous have a refuge." (NIV)

The King James Version of that reads like this:

> "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death." (KJV)

The New International Version says, "...the righteous have a refuge." The King James says, "...the righteous hath hope in his death." So for the soul committed to the Lord even in the valley of the shadow of death, there is a refuge, there is hope.

We can contrast with those beautiful words in Proverbs what Paul says in Ephesians chapter 2, verse 12 about those who do not have that relationship with Christ. He's writing to Gentile believers who had never known the Lord until they heard the gospel. They had no background in the Scripture, no knowledge of the true God from the past, and this is what he says to them:

> "Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ [cut off from Him, not related to Him, and he goes on:] separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world." (NIV)

What sad and terrible words, "...without hope and without God in the world." The reason for that, separate from Christ. Actually the King James Version uses the word "without" three times, "without Christ... without hope... without God." A terrible picture where that relationship is lacking. For the soul that's building only on the sands of time, that has never made that commitment to the eternal rock, Jesus Christ, that soul is without Christ, without hope and without God. I trust that as you listen that you will give heed to those words. If you've never made that commitment, you'll resolve right now that you'll not continue another day without Christ, without hope, and without God.

I've spoken about the contrast in this life between the two kinds of person, the person whose related to Christ, the person whose not related to Christ, whose not committed to Christ. I've quoted the words of Paul in Ephesians 2:12:

> "...without Christ, without hope, without God in this world."

Now I want to take that picture a little further. I want to show you the contrast at death between the two kinds of persons; those who are united to Christ by faith, and those who are separate from Christ, who've never made that commitment, do not have that union in the spiritual realm with Christ. This is what Paul says in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, verses 13 through 18. He's writing to Christian believers who've just recently come to the Lord and he's explaining certain things. And he's explaining particularly the Christian response to the death of a fellow believer and he says it's sorrowful but it's a kind of sorrow that's totally different from the sorrow of this world. This is what he writes:

> "Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope."

Notice "...the rest of men..." those who are not united to Christ, have no hope in death. On the other hand, speaking about believers who have died, he uses a phrase which is common in the New Testament in such a context. He speaks about "falling asleep," He doesn't use the word "to die." Then he goes on to explain the basis for this hope:

> "We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have

> fallen asleep in him."

Notice that vital phrase "in him." In that relationship to Christ, they have fallen asleep, they have died, but they're united by faith to the one who Himself died and rose again from the dead. And that union guarantees to them a similar resurrection in God's appointed hour. And Paul then goes on to explain what lies ahead:

> "According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words." (NIV)

These are words of encouragement. We are not to grieve as others who have no hope. We miss the loss of the loved one, there is real pain in our hearts, but it's not a hopeless pain. We have the assurance that when Jesus returns we will meet them again and we will be forever with the Lord, and so we are to encourage one another with these words.

My mind goes back to two scenes, both of which I witnessed in Africa. The one was in Egypt. I was at the pyramids at Giza and while I was looking at the pyramids a Moslem funeral was taking place just about a quarter of a mile away at a Moslem cemetery. And there was a whole group of women, all clothed in black, making the most terrible wailing noise of grief, of absolutely hopeless grief. And it just pierced my heart and I said to myself, "God, thank you that you've delivered us from that hopelessness at death." And a cry went up out of my heart for the millions of people who do not know this hope at death.

And then I remember another scene earlier in East Africa where I'd been the principal of a college for training African teachers, both men and women. And one of our women students had acquired typhoid and was in the hospital and was in a coma. And my first wife, Lydia, and I went to visit her. She lay there in a coma, unable to respond. And I prayed, "Lord, just let her come out of that coma long enough for me to ask her the one vital question." And immediately I prayed that prayer, she opened her eyes and looked up at me. Her name was Agneta. I said, "Agneta, do you know for sure that your soul is safe in the Lord's keeping?" She looked me full in the eyes, said "Yes," and lapsed back into that coma. But I knew all I needed to know. I knew that she was related to Jesus with that bond that can never be broken in time or eternity.

Listen to these beautiful words from Proverbs 4:18, one of my favorite Scriptures:

> "The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining every brighter till the full light of day." (NIV)

Once you've put your foot on that path of righteousness through a commitment to the Lord, then each step you take is getting brighter and the full brightness of the noon day will be that personal reunion with the Lord when you step out of time into eternity. When you've made it through that long dark valley of the shadow and you're in the full brightness and radiance of the Lord's presence forever.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this same time. Tomorrow I'll be sharing with you two beautiful pictures of hope: hope as a refuge and hope as an anchor.

Radio Program

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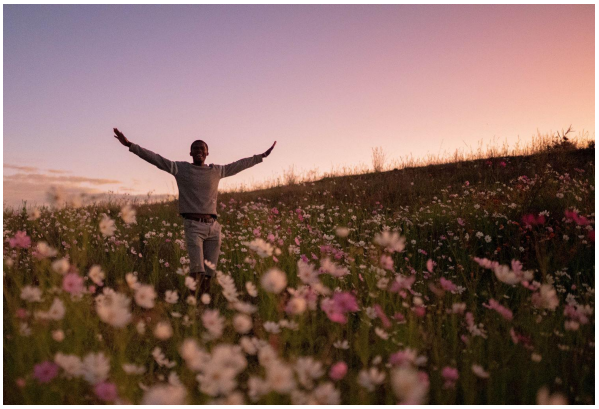

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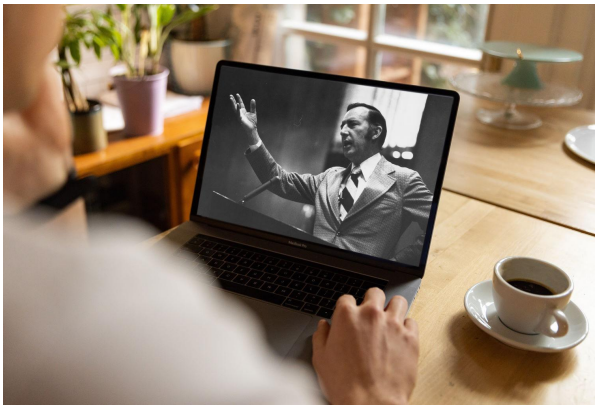

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