

Relationship Between Faith and Hope



Hope (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, sharing with you precious insights out of Scripture that have made the difference between success and failure in my life and can do the same in yours.

The theme for my talks this week is expressed in just one word, "Hope." It's a theme which can give you a completely new outlook on life.

In my introductory talk yesterday, I pointed out that in the Christian life there are three abiding realities, three things that always remain: faith, hope and love. And I pointed out certain characteristics of each. Faith produces work, action. Faith without action is a dead faith. So, it's characteristic of faith that it acts. Love produces labor; that is, hard, sacrificial, self-giving work on behalf of others. Love does not just lounge around and use polite religious cliche's, love rolls up its sleeves and gets to work where the work is hardest; that's characteristic of love. And hope produces steadfastness, or, alternatively you can say endurance or perseverance. So those are the three characteristics of those three abiding realities. Faith produces action; love produces labor; and hope produces steadfastness or endurance or perseverance. And if you don't have that perseverance, you're very liable to lose the benefits of the other two, of faith and love.

Then I pointed out yesterday that hope is the direct outcome of the new birth. Peter says this in 1 Peter, chapter 1, verse 3:

> "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

So, notice that it's the new birth that brings us into this living hope, not just dead theology or theory but a living, vibrating anticipation. And it's all based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. That's where hope triumphed. When Jesus rose from the dead, that was the victory of hope over hopelessness.

Then I also pointed out yesterday that hope must continue complete until the consummation of our salvation. I quoted

Peter again, 1 Peter 1:13:

> "Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

So, we have to keep on hoping steadily, firmly, completely until our hope is consummated by the revelation, the appearing of Jesus Christ. That is the focus of our hope.

In my talk today, I'm going to explain the relationship between faith and hope. And this is something very important. I've discovered in experience through ministering to many people that many Christians confuse faith with hope and hope with faith.

Let me just say, by way of introduction, this: faith is in the present, hope is in the future. If you have a faith which is only in the future, you really don't have faith. You have hope but not faith. I say to people, "Do you believe God can do this?" And they say, "I believe He will." But something in their voice tells me they're really hoping. The results that are promised to faith do not follow from hope. Each is important but neither is a substitute for the other.

Now, let's look at the definition of faith, which also includes hope in Hebrews 11, verses 1-3:

> "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval. [That is, the Old Testament saints.] By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible."

Now, there's a lot of very important statements there. First of all, notice that faith is a substance; it's not just a theory; it's not just theology; it's not just doctrine. You can have all those without having faith. But faith is a substance. The Greek word means the underlying basis or foundation of something. "...Faith is the substance of things hoped for." So, hope, to be real, has to be built on faith. And then notice that faith is based on that which is not seen. Faith is ultimately based on the Word of God and faith appropriates the fact that the whole universe was brought into being by the Word of God so that things which we can see were not made out of things which can be seen. And so faith is based in the unseen, eternal reality of God's Word. And hope, in turn, is based on faith. And then, as I said already, but it never does any harm to say it again because it's so important, faith is here and now; faith is a substance; faith is something we really have right now but hope, based on that faith, looks to the future. Don't confuse them because God has promised results to faith which are not promised to hope. It's very important to see, also, that hope is only valid when it's based on faith. And faith, in turn, is based on the Word of God. So, the ultimate basis of both faith and hope is the Word of God.

A lot of people think they have hope and they may justifiably use the word, but it's not in line with the scriptural use of the word "hope." We are only entitled to use the word "hope" if we are talking in terms of Scripture; when our hope is based on a real present substance of faith. Any other kind of hope is mere wishful thinking. It's possible it may be fulfilled but there's no guarantee. The only hope that has guaranteed its fulfillment is that hope which is based on genuine faith. So, bear in mind again, faith is in the present; faith is a substance; faith is here and now; faith is based on the unseen reality of the Word of God. Hope, in turn, is based on that faith. The kind of hope that's based on genuine faith is guaranteed fulfillment but any other kind of hope is no better than wishful thinking.

Now, let me just add to that a personal definition of hope. This is how I understand hope as it's used in the Bible. Hope is a serene, confident expectation of good. I'll say that again: Hope is a serene, confident expectation of good. Hope is both serene and confident.

Now I want to emphasize something about hope which I have already touched on but I want to bring it out more clearly and more fully and it is this: the ultimate focus of all true hope is the return of Jesus Christ in glory. Listen to what Paul says in Titus, chapter 2, verses 11-13:

> "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, Instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus..."

So the last verse is what you might call "the punch line." That's the explanation of all that goes before. We are looking for the blessed hope, the blessed hope, the ultimate hope of all Christians that stretches beyond time and out into eternity. What is that blessed hope? It's the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus. Notice that Paul calls Jesus "...our great God."

Now, let's look at the results of this hope of the appearing of Jesus Christ as they are manifested in our lives in this present age. Let's go back to the previous words of Paul:

"...the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us..." Notice, grace instructs us; grace has authority. What does it instruct us to do? "To deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age." Why do we live that way? Because we're looking forward to a new age; we're looking forward to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ; we want to be ready when He comes; we don't want to be ashamed before His presence. So this hope motivates us to godly living. It's the greatest single motivation presented in the New Testament to godly living. The apostle John says, in his first epistle, "everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself even as He [Jesus Christ] is pure." This hope leads to self-purifying. It affects the way we live, if it's real; if it's based on a substance of real faith. So there's evidence in the life of every person who really has this hope. He's purifying himself; he's denying ungodliness and worldly desires; he's living sensibly; righteously and godly in the present age. That's the first effect of this hope of the appearing of the glory of Jesus Christ.

The second is related to it: having this hope releases us from the bondage of time. We're no longer slaves of just a few years of life; we are looking forward to eternity; we don't get affected by the disasters and the troubles of things in time as other people do because they have no where else to look; they're circumscribed; they're shut up in just the few years that God gives us in this life. For us who have this glorious hope, these few years are just a period of preparation for eternity. So, having this hope has a tremendous effect on the way we live. In fact, when we look at people who say they have the hope, we have a right to question whether they really have it unless they live this way.

Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this same time. In my talk tomorrow, I'll be sharing the source of all hope, the love of God.

Radio Program

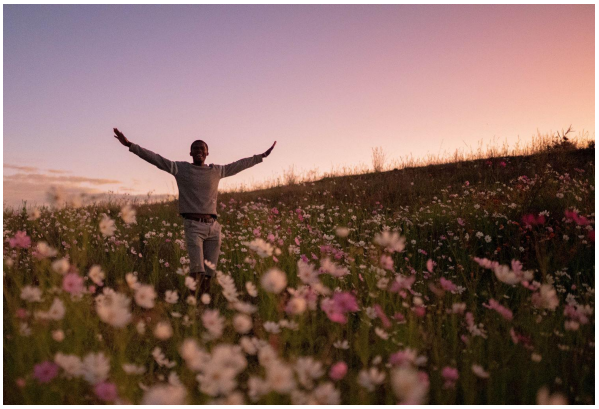
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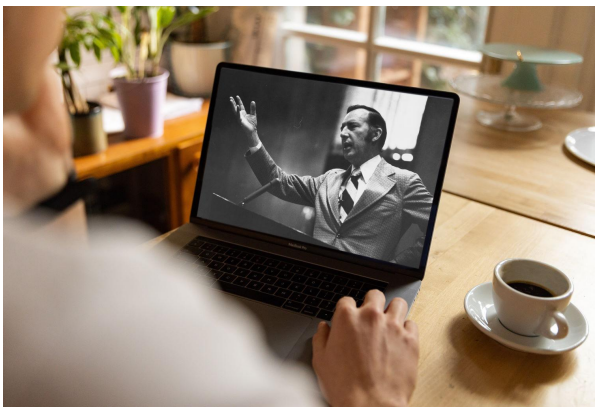
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