

Hope in This Life



Hope (Part 6)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week sharing with you Keys to Successful Living which God has placed in my hand through many years of personal experience and Christian ministry. This week I'll be continuing with the theme which I commenced last week: Hope, a theme that can revolutionize your whole outlook on life.

But first, let me say thank you to those of you who've been writing to me. Before I finish this talk we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. It means a great deal to me to hear how this radio ministry of mine has been helping you and blessing you. So, please take time to write, even if it's only a brief note.

Now, back to our theme, hope. In my talks last week I shared certain important facts about hope which I'll briefly recapitulate to start my talks again this week. Actually there are eight such facts.

1. There are three abiding realities in the Christian life: faith, hope and love.

2. Hope is produced by the new birth.

3. Hope is based on Christ's resurrection.

4. It looks forward to Christ's return.

5. Its source is God's love.

6. It motivates us to holy living.

7. It produces radiant Christians.

8. It's an essential part of salvation.

I'll just point out to you that the kind of hope we're talking about is not the kind of hope that's often spoken of in this world which is merely wishful thinking but it's God centered! It's Christ-centered. It looks back to Christ's death and resurrection, it looks forward to Christ's coming. And it sees every intervening situation in the light of those two great events.

Now in my talk today I'm going to share about hope in this life, that is, within the time framework of life on this earth. I

said earlier that all true hope is based on faith and all true faith, in turn, is based on scripture. So, if we're going to have real hope in this life we need a scriptural basis for that hope and there's one scriptural basis which is really sufficient for every situation and every need. If I search the scriptures I could find many such but I'd rather focus in this talk today just on this one scriptural basis for persistent optimism. It's Romans 8:20:

> "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purposes."

The most important question we need to ask ourselves at the beginning is, Do we really know that? Paul says, "we know." Do you know that? Do you know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God? So there is no event, there is no situation, there is no disaster in which we need to despair because God causes everything, even apparent disasters, to work together for good to those who love Him. God is in supreme control. He sits on the throne of the universe, He's never abdicated, He's never going to abdicate. All power in heaven and in earth has been given to the Lord Jesus Christ. God the Father and God the Son are on our side. If God be for us, who can be against us?

However, before we settle for this as the basis for our Christian optimism we need to make sure that we're fulfilling the conditions stated. The scripture says, "God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purposes." So, there are two requirements before we can say, "Well, this is my basis for optimism." We have to be sure that we really love God and that we are walking in the purpose to which he has called us. That's very important. You see, God has a purpose for each life and all that he does in our lives is for the fulfillment of that purpose. But if we are rejecting God's purpose or walking contrary to God's purpose, if God has called us to one thing and we're seeking to do another thing, then that Scripture doesn't really apply to us. We have to repent. We have to turn back and get in line with God's purpose for our lives before we can claim that scripture. However, for those who do truly love God and who are sincerely walking in the purpose to which God has called them, then that Scripture gives a base for total never failing optimism. Nothing can ever happen that should cause us to despair because God is working everything together for our good.

I think also of the beautiful words of David in Psalm 27. I love these words. Psalm 27:13:

> "I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

There's an alternative translation of that verse which I'd like to read also.

> "I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

You can really take your choice. The one translation says, "I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." The other one says, I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." Personally, I like to take both translations. I decline to despair because I do believe that I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living and I'm very confident that I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. So, every situation that arises I can meet with this strong buoyant hope: God is working it together for my good. It may not appear that way. Believe me, in the course of my many years as a Christian I've encountered many situations and passed through many circumstances where it seemed that everything was against us. But thank God, by experience I learned not to despair, not to give way, not just to look at the outward appearance of a situation but to see it in the eyes of God, to see it in the light of scripture, to know that somewhere behind those dark clouds is the hand of Almighty God working everything together for my good, shaping me, molding me. Not primarily for my enjoyment, you understand, but for my good. God is more concerned that I be good than I be happy. If my happiness is consistent with my goodness, that's fine. But, if at any time it's necessary for me to be unhappy that it might produce goodness in me, well then, God will always go for the goodness and sacrifice temporarily the happiness because the happiness will come back later when God's purposes have been accomplished.

As we continue with his theme of hope for this life there's one thing we always need to bear in mind which makes all the difference and that is that the center of God's provision for his people is the cross. If we get away from the cross then we get away from that sure, unfailing certainty which gives us the kind of hope that the scripture speaks about. This is what Paul says in Romans 8:32 of God:

> "He who did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how will he not also with him freely give us all things?"

That's the measure of God's love, that's the measure of God's commitment to us, that he did not spare his own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And Paul says very logically, "If God didn't spare Jesus then there's nothing good that he will withhold from us." And he uses such beautiful language: "How will he not also with him [notice it has to be with him] freely give us all things." Everything is included. And if we keep the cross central then we can go on and affirm what follows in the rest of that chapter, Romans 8:35-39. Listen to these glorious words:

> "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, For thy sake we are being put to death all day long: we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered. But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

What a wonderful confidence that is. And notice, it does not depend on everything going right. Paul talks about tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril and sword. He says we're counted as sheep for the slaughter. But in all of that he still says we overwhelmingly conquer all these things because we know no matter what the appearances, no matter what the situation, God is working all things together for good to those who love him, to those who are called according to his purpose. It's important that we don't let our eyes wander from the cross and from the purpose of God in our lives. We mustn't let the pressures of life distract us from the things that are basic, that are fundamental, that are central, the cross, the love of God, the commitment of God, the faithfulness of God, the fact that he has called us, that he has a special purpose in the life of each one of us. And if we're walking in line with that purpose, God is going to see that purpose is totally fulfilled. We can say with David, "I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." Or, we can say the other version, "I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." But the fact is I do have hope, I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this same time. Tomorrow I'll be taking this theme of hope one step further. I'll be speaking about hope in death.

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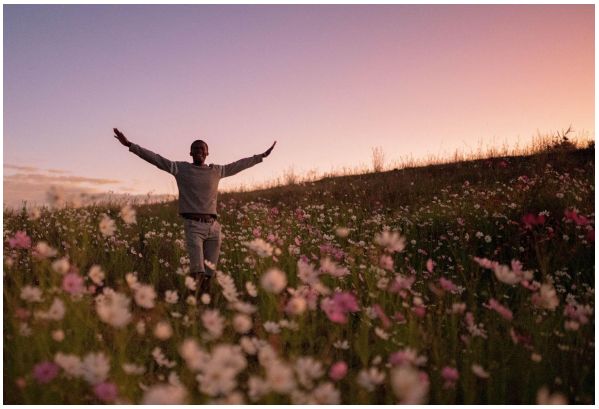

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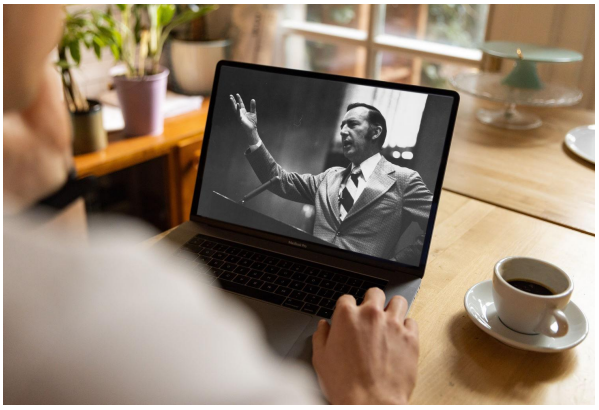

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