

Hope as a Helmet



Hope (Part 9)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we continue with our theme for the week: Hope, a theme that can revolutionize your whole outlook on life.

In my previous talks this week I've spoken about hope in two successive phases of human experience. First, hope in this present life, and I've pointed out the scriptural basis for being a continual optimist in this life. I reminded you of the words of David, "I'm still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." And then the second phase, hope in death and beyond death. I pointed out that the hope that the gospel brings to us does not end with this life, it takes us through the portals of death and out into a glorious eternity.

Then in my talk yesterday I broadened the scope of this theme still further and I spoke about hope for creation. The creation that was blighted by Adam's fall will be restored by Adam's full and final redemption through the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we looked at those beautiful words of the psalmist in Psalm 96 in which he describes the intense wordless longing of all creation: the fields, the trees, the seas, the forests, the skies: all longing for this one glorious climax, the return of the Lord in glory. And we looked at the words of Paul in Romans 8 where he says that we who have the first fruits of the Spirit, we join with the creation in that groaning anticipation for full and final redemption.

Now, in my talk today I'm going to share on another aspect of hope, a somewhat more personal aspect. I'm going to speak about hope as a helmet, a vital piece of spiritual armor that protects our mind. First of all, we need to understand that as Christians we are involved in a tremendous spiritual conflict spanning heaven and earth. This is not something about which we have an option. If we become Christians, if we become followers of the Lord Jesus Christ we are automatically involved in this conflict with the powers of Satan and of darkness. Paul speaks about this in Ephesians 6:10-13:

> "Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. [Notice we are in direct conflict with the devil.] For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, [another

> translation says it's not against persons with bodies. We are struggling with unseen spiritual persons and forces. Paul goes on:] but against the rulers, against the power, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."

Notice it's not just on the earthly plane, it's on the heavenly plane. This conflict spans heaven and earth. Then Paul comes to the practical application in Ephesians 6:13:

> "Therefore, take up the full armor of God..."

And I want to point out to you that we aren't born with the armor on, even when we're born again. We are born with the potential for putting the armor on but we have to take it up, it doesn't just drop on us.

> "...take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm."

And notice, Paul doesn't say the evil day may come, he says you're going to experience the evil day. Every one of us at some point. Be ready for it. Be fully armed. Notice his emphasis on the full armor. And, in the verses that follow, Paul specifies the needed armor, verses 14-17:

> "Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace: in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

Notice the six pieces of armor. I'll briefly recapitulate them.

1. The girdle or belt of truth

2. The breastplate of righteousness

3. The shoes of the preparation for the gospel of peace

4. The shield of faith

5. The helmet of salvation

6. The sword of the Spirit, the word of God

Now, today I'm going to focus on that fifth item, the helmet of salvation. And I'm going to speak about that from my own personal experience.

A good many years ago I was pastoring a congregation in London, England and God was in many ways blessing my ministry but I had a tremendous internal ongoing struggle with depression. Other people didn't know what was going on inside me. But this awful sense of depression, this awful sort of gray mist that came down over me, this weight that weighed me down, was there almost night and day. The more successful I was in my ministry the worse the oppression was. And I struggled with it every way that I could. I prayed, I fasted, I reckoned myself dead, and nothing did any good. And then I had a revelation that I want to share very briefly with you.

One day, reading Isaiah 61:3 I read these words:

> "The garment of praise in place of the spirit of heaviness."

And, as I read those words, "the spirit of heaviness," the Holy Spirit indicated to me that's your problem. It's not you, it's not a mental or a psychological condition, it's a spirit, it's a person that hates you, that dogs you, he's unseen, he's a person without a body. But, he's followed you even from boyhood. He knows your weakness, he knows just when and how to attack you, you are fighting a person, an unseen demonic person, the spirit of heaviness. Or, in modern English, the spirit of depression.

And God, having showed me the problem, showed me the remedy which was in two phases. The first part of the remedy came by a deliverance from God. I found Joel 2:32:

> "It shall come to pass that whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered."

I said, "That's for me." It's as all inclusive as John 3:16. And so, very simply, acting on that promise in faith I called on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to deliver me from that spirit of heaviness, and do you know what happened? God delivered me. But God showed me that after that I had to protect my own mind against pessimism, morbidity, depression. That He'd delivered me, that was His part of the solution to the problem but I had to learn to protect my own mind. And as I considered how to protect my mind I remembered these words in Ephesians 6 that we read "the helmet of salvation." And I said to myself, "That's what I must have, the helmet of salvation."

So I came to realize my need of this helmet of salvation to protect my mind. But then I said to myself, "What is the helmet of salvation? I know I'm saved, does that mean I have the helmet of salvation already?" But then I said to myself, "No." Because the people to whom Paul wrote in Ephesians 6 were saved, they'd received the Holy Spirit. But he still told them to put on the helmet of salvation. So, the fact that a person is saved does not mean that he's wearing the armor. It's the saved people that have to identify and put on the armor. So then I said to myself, "What is the helmet of salvation?" Fortunately I had a Bible with marginal references and there was a reference to that verse in Ephesians and the reference was 1 Thessalonians 5:8. So I turned to that and this is what I found:

> "But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation."

I saw there two of the pieces of armor that were mentioned in Ephesians 6. The first was the breastplate. Now it was very obvious that the breastplate protects the heart and the breastplate was faith and love. And I came to see there that as I've said earlier in these talks, faith is in the heart. And so, the breastplate of faith and love protects the heart.

But then, as I continued that same verse, it said, "and as a helmet, the hope of salvation." And when I read those words, the currents of divine electricity went right through me! And I said to myself, "That's the helmet, it's hope." Faith is in the heart, that protects the heart; but hope is in the mind, that protects the mind. And I saw how all through my life I'd been a habitual pessimist. I could say that the whole of my family background was a background of pessimism. I respect my parents and I'm grateful for their memory but I'd have to say that in my family if you weren't worrying, you ought to be worrying about the fact that you weren't worrying. And I was totally imbued with this spirit of worrying and pessimism. God showed me that this was a denial of my faith, that if I believed the gospel I couldn't be a pessimist. And I've quoted earlier in this week scriptures that show you that very clearly, especially Romans 8:28.

Well now, God said in effect, "I've delivered you from that spirit of depression. It's up to you to put on the helmet of salvation, the helmet of hope." And so I began a process of retraining my mind. Every time a negative or pessimistic thought would come to my mind I'd refuse to yield to it. And I quoted scripture and I gave myself a scriptural base for not being a pessimist but for being an optimist. Now, this didn't happen overnight, it didn't happen in a period of months, it happened in a period of years. But I can tell you today that I am a totally different person from what I was before this experience. I am a scriptural, Bible believing optimist. And, praise God, I keep my helmet on day and night. I never take that helmet off. The helmet of optimistic hope, faith in God and hope in Him that protects my mind against all these dark forces of pessimism and depression.

Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this same time. Tomorrow I'll be presenting another beautiful picture of hope as an anchor of the soul.

Radio Program

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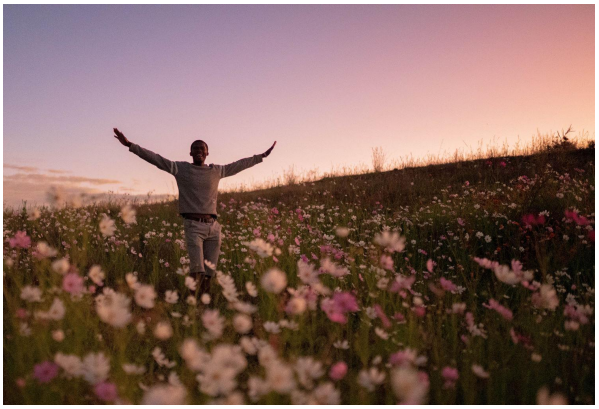

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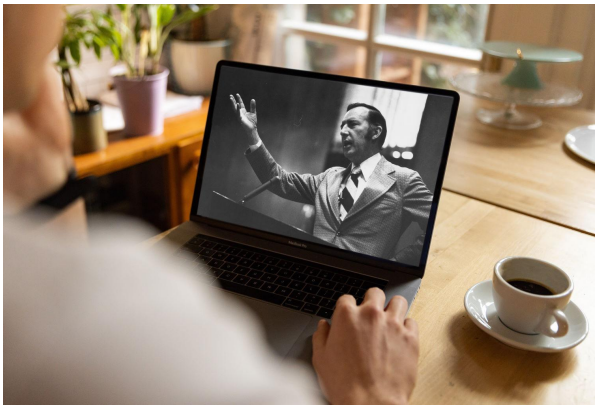

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