

“Hope deferred makes the heart sick” Proverbs 13:12
“Be strong and take heart all you who hope in the Lord” Psalm 31:24
“My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness”

Christ has good news to offer to the world, news that brings hope. In this respect, the message and ministry of Christ is unique. For in our world today there is little hope. To some degree, there has always been a lack of hope. Some five centuries before Christ, Socrates wrote, “Not to be born at all – that is far the best fate. The second best is as soon as one is born with all speed to return thither whence one has come.” In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, hopelessness has reached new proportions. There is very little encouraging news. By contrast, I Peter 1:3 says, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy, we have been born anew to a **living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”* And the psalmist says, *“You, O Lord, are my hope.”* (Psalm 71:5)

The word “hope” is used 143 times in the Bible; “fear not” is used 240 times. Fear the future or trust and hope in God. The message of hope stretches far beyond our lives. It embraces God’s coming in Glory, his reign over the whole earth, the conversion of Israel and the world, the new covenant based on the forgiveness of sins. Hope, therefore, is a gift from God. *“My hope is from him.”* (Psalm 62:5) *“...to give you a future and a hope.”* (Jeremiah 29:11) The one who hopes, trusts God for his faithfulness, that he will not disappoint the hope of his Word. Therefore, for the one who loves the Lord, hope and the love of God are parallel in many ways. A future and a hope are promised. Through confidence in God and humility, hope becomes patient, persevering, and waiting, which can endure anxiety. Hope then, is based on God’s saving action and trustworthiness.

Hope is such a fundamental part of our Christian positioning. *“There are three things that will endure; faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love.”* (I Corinthians 13:13) None of them can exist without the others. There can be no hope without faith in Christ. Faith without hope would be empty and futile. *“Love never gives up, it always hopes.”* (I Corinthians 13:7) *“Faith and love that springs up from hope that is stored up for you in heaven.”* (Colossians 1:5) *“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. 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. You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.”* (Romans 5:1-6)

Hope does not rest on good works, but on the gracious work of Jesus Christ. He is therefore called our hope. *“The Lord Jesus Christ our hope.”* (I Timothy 1:1) Hope then

looks to a gracious God for the continuation of his love for us that is not based on how well we do, but on faith in his Word. The hope of faith is a genuine personal expectation. Despite everything in the present that runs counter, the one who trusts God finds hope.

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who by worrying can add a single hour to his life? And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow? I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” (Matthew 6:25-34) *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”* (Philippians 4:6-7) Clearly, the Lord calls us to put our trust in him!

Hope in the Lord

