

The Function of Hope

Introduction

1. **Romans 15:13** – God is the God of hope and wants to make us abound in hope. All He does is to grant us hope and secure us hope.
 2. Hope is vitally important to the Christian. We need to understand it:
 - a. Object of hope – a glorified body to inherit the kingdom of God – **1 Corinthians 15:50-52**
 - b. Conditions of hope – being begotten again – **1 Peter 1:3; John 3:3, 5** – baptism.
 - c. Price paid for hope – Christ’s death – **1 Timothy 1:1; Colossians 1:19-20, 27**
 3. We know what we hope for, and we have such hope due to the price paid, and the conditions met, but what is the function of this important hope in our lives?
 4. Hope permeates the entire Christian existence. Without it, Christianity would be a sham, and Christians would be the most pitiable men – **1 Corinthians 15:16-19**
 5. Hope is why we live the way we live. Hope leads us to will to do for His good pleasure (**cf. Philippians 2:13**).
- I. Joy
- A. **Romans 5:1-2** – we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.
 - B. Christians are to be a joyous people – **Romans 12:1, 12** – part of the response to the mercies of God.
 - a. From beginning – **Acts 8:39** – consider the change of spiritual condition.
 - b. Always – **Philippians 4:4, 13** – concerning the relationship in Christ.
 - c. To the end – **1 Thessalonians 4:13** – not sorrowful even when death is involved.
 - i. **1 Corinthians 15:19-20** – we are NOT the most pitied among men.
 - C. Those who are struggling to maintain joy:
 - a. Know they don’t have hope – **Hebrews 10:26-31**
 - i. **“sin”** – present active verb – **“For if we go on sinning willfully” (NASB)**
 1. Idea of continuing to sin after conviction and neglecting to repent.
 2. Staying in the sinful state.
 - ii. Some know they’re in a separate state from God, and instead of doing what is necessary to get out of that they wallow in their sin – **2 Corinthians 2:6-7, 11** – swallowed with sorrow a device of Satan.
 - b. Aren’t meditating on their hope – **Matthew 13:20-21** – focusing on negative instead of growing in joy.
- II. Stability
- A. **Hebrews 6:19-20** – hope is an anchor of the soul.
 - a. NOTE: hope does not erase turmoil of life but stabilizes the soul in it.
 - i. Anchors don’t calm the storm but keep the boat in place.
 - ii. The storm of life will rage on, but the Christian’s hope stabilizes his soul.

- b. **Hebrews 6:13-18** – sure and steadfast as it rests on God’s promise.
 - i. **(vv. 16-18)** – immutability of God’s counsel, confirmed by 2 immutable things (promise/oath).
 - c. Since God gave us the promise, and we have a forerunner who has paved the way for us, and made it Himself, we are stabilized in this life.
 - B. Hope is our anchor as it is attached to Jesus beyond the veil:
 - a. The presence, i.e. fellowship, of Jesus is stabilizing.
 - b. **Mark 4:35-41** – Jesus calmed the storm for the disciples.
 - C. **Isaiah 26:1-4** – those who are redeemed are kept in peace and granted strength.
 - D. Christians are those who possess a calm demeanor during a life of turmoil. The world may not understand, but IT IS BECAUSE OUR SOUL IS ANCHORED.
 - a. **John 14:27; 16:33** – Jesus left us with peace despite tribulation because of His victory.
 - E. Those who have no hope are frantically and vainly seeking to navigate through the storm of life with no reason to expect things to get better:
 - a. **Isaiah 57:19-21** – no rest/peace for the wicked.
 - F. Those who have hope, and meditate on it are calmed by the God of peace – **Philippians 4:8-9**
- III. Focus
- A. **1 Peter 1:3, 6, 13-16** – Having hope of salvation, Christians tighten up their thoughts in focus on that hope, think clearly, and live the life they know they have to live to realize that hope.
 - a. **(v. 13)** – thought of focusing on the goal of hope’s realization.
 - b. **(v. 14)** – the reason for focusing – acting in obedience.
 - c. **(vv. 15-16)** – the reason for focusing – the great standard of holiness we’re called to.
 - B. Hope is beyond – **2 Corinthians 5:6-8** – not yet realized.
 - a. Those who have hope look forward – it causes them to focus, and not be distracted.
 - b. Otherwise looking back – **Luke 9:62**
 - i. Guilt of sin – **Hebrews 9:14** – conscience cleansed to serve God. If the conscience is guilty then you will be hindered.
 - ii. Longing for the world – **James 4:4; Romans 6:1-2** – died to sin.
 - C. Hope brings focus to the task at hand we must accomplish to realize our hope – **2 Peter 1:5-11** – NOTE: **(v. 9)** – forgotten cleansed from sin, i.e. lost focus.
 - a. Must narrow our vision and choose the good part – **Luke 10:38-42**
- IV. Purity
- A. **1 John 3:2-3** – we have hope of being in the image of Christ, and that motivates us to purity.
 - a. It is not that we will be in an impure state at the coming of Jesus, and then made pure, BUT WE WILL ALREADY BE PURE WHEN HE COMES.
 - b. **1 John 1:7** – blood of Jesus cleanses us, and we stay pure by walking in the light.
 - B. Free from all darkness – **Ephesians 5:8-13**

- a. NOTE: **(v. 12)** – shameful to even speak of those things.
 - b. Pure in heart – **Matthew 5:8** – the pure shall see God. Such motivates us to live pure lives.
 - i. **Proverbs 4:23** – proceed issues of life.
 - ii. **Matthew 15:18-20** – all evil starts in the heart.
 - c. Pure in conduct and even speech – **Ephesians 5:3-7**
 - C. Those who lead impure lives do so in part because they aren't focused on the eternal hope, which is pure in nature, but on the temporal world full of lust – **1 John 2:17**
 - D. Those who have hope seek to perfect holiness – **2 Corinthians 7:1** (promises of fellowship with God)
- V. Perseverance
- A. **Romans 8:24-25** – because we long for hope, but do not have it, we persevere to receive it.
 - a. **1 Corinthians 15:58** – the hope of the resurrection body causes one to be steadfast, and always abounding.
 - B. Hope affords joy even in trials – **Romans 5:2-5** – which produces perseverance and results in a strengthening of hope.
 - a. Count it joy – **James 1:2-4, 12** – trials make us mature, and prepare us for the crown of life.
 - C. What is the point of persevering in doing God's will and abstaining from sin if we have no hope? – **1 Corinthians 15:32-34**
 - D. Hope provokes diligence and patience as we long to inherit the promise – **Hebrews 6:11-12**
 - E. Those who fall back into sin are not holding fast their hope – **Hebrews 3:6-14**
 - a. We must work to enter the rest – **Hebrews 4:6-10**
 - i. NOTE: **(v. 7)** – after such a LONG time.
 - ii. The time is still ticking, and as long as time continues we must persevere in doing God's work.
 - F. Those with hope will refuse sin, and endure the most difficult trials and tribulations – **1 Peter 2:21-24; Hebrews 12:1-2** – like Jesus.

Conclusion

1. Hope is incredibly important to the Christian.
2. It is a practical matter which performs various functions in our lives.
3. We need to gain a greater understanding of our hope and know that it is meant to provoke a certain life of activity before God.