

Hope

Hoping Is Basic to the Christian Outlook

*For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have **hope**.*

Romans 15:4

Hope: a confident expectation of future blessings to be received from God.

Living between the two comings of Christ, Christians are to look backward and forward: back to the manger, the cross, and the empty tomb, whereby salvation was won for them; forward to their meeting with Christ beyond this world, their personal resurrection, and the joy of being with their Savior in glory forever. New Testament devotion is consistently oriented to this hope; Christ is "our hope" and we serve "the God of hope".

1 Timothy 1:1

*¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our **hope**,*

Faith itself is defined in Scripture as "being sure of what we **hope** for" (Hebrews 11:1), and Christian commitment is defined as having "fled to take hold of... this **hope** as an anchor for the soul" (Hebrews 6:18-19).

When Jesus said this...

Matthew 6:20-21

²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

he was essentially saying the same thing Peter would later say.

1 Peter 1:13

*¹³ Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your **hope** fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

An ethic of hope pervades the New Testament.

It is an ethic of pilgrimage.

One should see oneself in this world as a stranger traveling home.

Hebrews 11:13

¹³ All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.

It is an ethic of purity.

Everyone who really hopes to be like Jesus when He appears “purifies himself, just as He is pure.”

1 John 3:3

*³ All who have this **hope** in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.*

It is an ethic of preparedness.

We should be ready to leave this world for a closer relationship with Christ our Lord at any time when the summons comes.

2 Corinthians 5:6-8

⁶ Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. ⁷ For we live by faith, not by sight. ⁸ We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

It is an ethic of patience.

Romans 8:25

*²⁵ But if we **hope** for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.*

This is a stubborn persistence in the face of pressures.

It is an ethic of power.

This hope gives strength and confidence, energizing effort for running the race, fighting the good fight, and enduring the “light and momentary troubles” (2 Cor. 4:17) that still remain before we go home.

Romans 15:13

¹³ *May the God of **hope** fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with **hope** by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Though the Christian life is regularly marked more by suffering than by triumph, our hope is sure and our mood should be one of unquenchable confidence: we are on the victory side.

Hebrews 10:23

²³ *Let us hold unswervingly to the **hope** we profess, for he who promised is faithful.*

The gospel not only cuts across all racial, social, economic, and educational barriers, but also spans the centuries of time. It is a message which does not become obsolete (Jude 3) and is the church's sacred trust today. In an age in which most ideas and systems of thought, as well as techniques and commodities, are of a throwaway variety, the church has an infallible and enduring resource—a message which is the only means of salvation.

The Church has good news to offer the world, news which brings hope. In this respect the message and ministry of the church are unique. For in our world today there is little hope. Of course, to varying degrees there has always been a lack of hope. In the 21st century, however, hopelessness has reached new proportions. There is little encouraging news, whether social, economic, or political, in the newspapers. By contrast, the church says with Peter...

1 Peter 1:3

³ *Praise be to 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,*

There is hope, and it comes to fulfillment when we believe and receive the gospel. This too is God's doing. It's His work in us.

Romans 5:5

⁵ *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.*

Simeon had long hoped for the Christ. His hope was fulfilled!

Luke 2:25-32

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

²⁹ "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you now dismiss your servant in peace.
³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation,
³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all people,
³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel."

This fulfilled hope of Simeon's is the One who provides us with hope for tomorrow and for all eternity!

**O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight**

According to the hope which Christ has given us, there will be final victory, and the struggles of this world will be followed by the glories of heaven. That hope runs all through the Christian life; Christianity is not engrossed by this transitory world, but measures all things by the thought of eternity!

*Most of the foregoing material was taken from "Concise Theology" by J.I. Packer, "Christian Theology" by Millard Erickson, and Christianity & Liberalism by J. Gresham Machen.