

## **Hope Builders**

*As Presented by Lisa Bishop*

Air Dates: February 7 - 14, 2022

### **Day One**

What are some ways to build hope?

Proverbs 3:5-6 has this wisdom.

***Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.***

The Hebrew word for trust here means to be bold, confident, secure, and certain in who we put our confidence in. It means, make to hope. So when I trust God with all my heart the result is hope. I am confident and secure in putting my trust in him as he alone is my source of hope. Who or what we put our trust in, has a huge impact on our lives as followers of Christ.

The word *Lord* in these verses is translated *Yehovah* in Hebrew. Yehovah is the proper name of the one true God. Back in Old Testament times, much like today, people were putting their trust and hope in other gods—the god of money, fertility, the sun god, the god of fire, to name a few. They were depending on and placing their confidence in small gods, idols, but not the one true God. So here we are instructed to put our full confidence and hope in the one true God, Yehovah.

If we are honest, it can be tempting to put our trust and confidence in things, people, and circumstances and to not fully put our hope in Jesus. We too can look to things other than Jesus to provide hope: relationships, career, kids, our health, our wealth. But those things will not ultimately bring the satisfaction, the hope our hearts long for.

Trusting in the Lord with all my heart reminds me of the song *Solid Rock*.

***My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly trust in Jesus' name. On Christ the solid rock I stand all other ground is sinking sand, all other ground is sinking sand.***

Who or what are you putting your trust, your hope in? Confess to Jesus and ask him to help you properly place your confidence in him.

### **Day Two**

Lasting hope comes when we don't rely on our limited knowledge and wisdom.

Our next hope builder is found in Proverbs 3:5-6:

***Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.***

When we rely on our own perspective it can be easy to lose hope. All too often I can be prone to rely on my own understanding in life. And time and time again my knowledge has been so incredibly limited. We can never see the full picture but God does and so Proverbs reminds us to seek and lean on him and not our own limited view.

So many of the things that cause us the most difficulty and heartache in life, the source of so much of our anxiety, fear, doubt, despair, is the result of leaning on our own understanding. In exercising faith — we determine to trust fully in the Lord, to ask him to help us see his ways and to acknowledge and express our gratitude to him. To trust him because we know his character. And as we trust and hope in him, he will make our paths straight.

Do you trust God? Do you measure God's trustworthiness based on your circumstances? On whether or not things are going the way that you think they should in life?

Are you trusting in what you can see, leaning on your own limited and often flawed perception of reality? Or are you putting your confidence, hope, and trust in the unchanging character and wisdom of Jesus?

There have been times in my life where I have asked God *Why are you letting this happen to me? Or, Why are you withholding this dream or desire from me?* All the while, he knew if I got that thing or stayed in that relationship, it would not end well.

There have been times I have thoroughly convinced myself that I was right about something only to find out I was dead wrong. I took matters into my own hands because I did not think God cared or saw me and that led to unnecessary pain and suffering.

In Isaiah 55:9 God says, "My thoughts are higher than your thoughts, my ways are higher than your ways."

He is saying, "Will you trust me?" "Will you put your hope in me, even when, especially when life is not making sense?"

So when life does not seem to be making sense let's be wise, not leaning on our own understanding but acknowledging and putting our hope in Jesus.

### Day Three

Where does your hope come from? What do we do when we feel hopeless? Have a posture of praise.

When things in life are not going the way we want, it can be easy to be discouraged and fall into despair. We can forget God's faithfulness. Sometimes the last thing we feel like doing is praising God. But praising him is not something we do when we feel like it. Blessing God and worshiping him is a daily practice as a follower of Jesus. Not conditional, only when life is going the way we planned, but a daily discipline because God is faithful and worthy of all of our praise.

When we intentionally position ourselves in a posture of praise to God, we are reminded of the hope we have in Jesus.

My friend Becky, author of "The 30-Day Praise Challenge," says "Praise is your intentional offering of worship, strengthening your faith and unlocking the key to joy no matter what your life circumstance."

In Psalm 103 King David, who experienced all kinds of trials, tribulations, betrayals, disappointments and despair in his life instructs his heart to praise. He says "Bless the Lord, O my soul and **all** that is within me, bless his holy name!" (ESV)

To bless means to kneel, to praise. It gives us a visual of David's posture of praise. David is not giving God a holy high five. He is not giving God a half-hearted blessing. He is saying, with my whole heart, with my whole life, and with my innermost being, I bow in wonder and love before you, the holy God! David speaks directly to his heart.

It reminds me of Psalm 150:6: "Let everything that has breath praise The Lord."

Did you know that God in his magnificence actually wired us for worship? God designed us so that worship literally impacts our brains, our minds. Studies have shown that worship induces happiness and joy, it boosts our immune system. We often wait to worship until we feel like it but we are actually wired to worship.

God knows when we worship him our lives are transformed, even if our circumstances don't change. Worship changes us.

So if you want to experience more hope in your life, praise the source of your hope, Jesus. Ask him to bring to mind all of the ways he has been faithful. Ask him to draw your heart close to him. Get on your knees and pray, bowing down in adoration and wonder to the Lord. Turn on some praise music. Put yourself in a posture of praise and let hope arise.

You are wired for worship.

## Day Four

The next hope builder is preaching the truth to yourself.

I don't know of a better way to be reminded of the hope we have in Jesus than to spend time in his Word, meditating on it and letting truth wash over our minds and purify our hearts.

Psalm 1:2-3a reminds us that, "Those whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither...."

As we anchor ourselves in hope today let's look to Psalm 23 which reminds us of the truth of who Jesus is. Our Shepherd. And who we are. The flock under his care.

Psalm 23:1-6

*The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, He refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness, mercy and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

As followers of Jesus it can be easy to get preoccupied, overwhelmed, and distracted and take our focus off of our true hope, Jesus. We can easily fall into the trap of forgetting who God is.

Consider memorizing Psalm 23. A few years ago I read a book about Psalm 23 and the author encouraged his readers to commit it to memory. I memorized these words several years ago and let me tell you, being able to quickly rehearse these truths has been a lifesaver time and time again. In fact, Psalm 119:11 instructs us to store up God's Word in our heart. Memorizing scripture is an important practice as we love and follow Jesus.

Remember that Jesus is your Shepherd. He watches closely over you.

## Day Five

Twenty-five years ago there was a marketing campaign called “Got Milk?” Remember that? Now you may not be old enough to remember it, but it was a campaign to get people to drink more milk. You would see pictures of celebrities with big smiles on their faces along with a very pronounced milk mustache making it obvious that they had been drinking the white dairy drink.

The Got Milk? Campaign showed consumers what could happen if they ever ran out of milk: everything from cookies to cereal to peanut butter and jelly sandwiches would be ruined without it.

When I think of that catchy and memorable slogan (that I recall 25 years later!), I am inclined to change it to, “Got Hope?”

Running out of milk is one thing—it can make your cereal dry and boring but don’t run out of hope. Hope is as necessary to life as the air we breathe. It’s what sustains us and keeps us alive.

Hope never runs out because Jesus is constant. He never fails. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. But if we are not careful, mindful and intentional about focusing our hope in Jesus we will run out.

And I just want to clarify something. When we have hope we are not saying we will avoid pain, suffering and loss in our lives. When we’ve “Got Hope” it does not mean we’ll never be disappointed. Hope and disappointment, hope and suffering can coexist. In fact, for followers of Jesus they do coexist because Jesus is our hope and we do not put hope in anything else. Not a pain free life or a perfect marriage.

Hope, Jesus, keeps us going through painful experiences and fear of what the future may hold.

Hope is not simply optimism. It is assurance—trust, faith, and belief in the promises of God. In John 16:33 Jesus said, “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” When you are confronted with the questions, Got Hope?, respond with a resounding Yes! I have Jesus and he is my living hope.

When people see you living with hope, especially when life is chaotic and unpredictable (kind of like the last two years) we point to Jesus when we respond with faith, with peace, with hope.