

## Overflowing with Hope

Air Dates: February 21-25, 2022

### Day One

No doubt you are familiar with the last verse of 1 Corinthians 13 which says, “And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.” Faith, hope and love are absolute essentials in our lives as Christians. They are the three qualities which always remain. They make us strong, and when the three join together—when we are full of faith, hope and love—then we are balanced and ready to go forward with what God has planned for us to do.

We talk more about faith and love than we do hope, as a rule, but honestly, life without hope is no life at all. Hope is mentioned in the Bible more than 167 times. But have you ever asked why hope is so important?

Well, first we need to understand the difference between our casual use of the word “hope,” and the Bible’s meaning. Often we talk about hope when something in the future is not certain. We say, *I hope it won’t rain today* or *I hope I’ll get a raise*. But when the Bible speaks of hope, it means that something in the future is certain. It means you can be confident because your hope in God is firm and secure. For example, when we are born from above through faith in Jesus Christ, we have the hope of eternal life. But that hope is certain and sure; there’s no uncertainty in that hope for our future.

Why is hope so important to us in our daily lives and in our hearts and minds? Well, for one reason, hope gives us an eternal perspective. Hope helps us to see beyond the present circumstances and believe that there are good days ahead. When we are at our lowest point, hope lifts our head, convinces us that we have a future and a hope, as we read in Jeremiah 29:11:

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*

Hope is what we’re focusing on here at The Christian Working Woman this month. God has plans for you if you are a Christ-follower, and those plans give you hope, even though you may not know exactly what they are right at this moment.

### Day Two

How is your hope? Paul wrote to the Romans, “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” (Romans 15:13). Would you say that you are “overflowing with hope”? And what would that look like?

Think about the times in your life when you are really struggling. Your faith is weak, the circumstances seem to get worse, you feel like quitting, you want to run away, things are just not good. What is missing in those times? It’s hope, isn’t it? You’ve lost hope that God is going to come through, or that those difficult people in your life will ever change, or that life will ever get easier. The loss of hope leads eventually to depression and at its extreme, to no longer wanting to live.

Hope is absolutely essential to your life. You cannot make it without hope. And in this passage Paul gives the secret—the pathway—that will give you overflowing hope. Two things: you must trust in the God of hope, and secondly, you must rely on the power of the Holy Spirit. So, if you want to overflow with hope and know the joy and peace that hope brings, you have to be intentional about trusting in God.

Putting your trust in God means that you deliberately choose to believe God loves you, God cares for you, and God has good plans for you. You trust when you cannot see or understand. Hope comes as you decide that you will trust God—and conversely, hope dies when you worry, when you are fearful, when you forget to trust God.

I know it's easy to say, "Just trust God" and it may seem trite when you're in the midst of despair. But, dear friends, trust is a choice you and I must make and it's not once and done. Most of the time it's a daily choice—sometimes several times a day—when you speak truth to yourself and choose hope. Here's the good news: if you are born again through faith in Jesus, you have the power to do this because you have the Holy Spirit. So, it's a matter of turning that power on and choosing hope.

### Day Three

At least three times in the Psalms we read: "Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God" (Psalm 42:5). Can't you see the Psalmist talking to himself—like he's looking himself in the eyes and reminding himself: *What's the matter with you? Why are you so down? Just put your hope in God.*

You see, when we lose hope it's because we've taken our minds off our Savior and we're focused on ourselves, our problem, our failures, our inability to make things right. So, if you need to nourish hope in your life, begin by quoting this verse from Psalm 42:5 – memorize it so it's right there ready when you need it. Then drive out all those wrong thoughts that are filling your mind with hopelessness by remembering the hope you have because of Jesus.

For example, suppose you've just given up hope that things are going to get better on your job, that the coworker who makes your life miserable will ever change, or that your boss will ever recognize and appreciate what you do. It just looks hopeless to you and therefore you are losing your motivation to work hard and do your work with excellence. You need hope! So what can you do?

Talk to yourself like the Psalmist did: Stop thinking about everything that is wrong. Think about what is right! Right there on the job, in the midst of the hopeless situation, put your hope in God. He is trustworthy; his word is true. You won't be disappointed. But you have to make the choice to pursue hope.

And quite simply, that means you have to spend time in God's Word and prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to give you hope. We have a God of hope—he has an inexhaustible supply of hope for you. Ask him for hope today. Choose hope today.

### Day Four

What is your hope quotient? Your hope quotient is more important than your IQ—your intelligence quotient. In his book, *The Hope Quotient*, Ray Johnston says that under every thriving person, every thriving marriage, kid and business is one factor: hope. And he points out that hope is so much more than a feeling; it is a decision you and I make regularly to do the things that build hope in our minds. In Hebrews 10:23 we read: "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful."

If you have professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, your hope is invested in his promises, right? But you must hold to that hope; you have to hang on when things look hopeless. Could it be true that life has thrown some tough circumstances at you lately? Is your job turning out to be full of strife and uncertainty?

Recently a friend was telling me how her company encourages strong competition between coworkers, actually causing disharmony as a way to motivate their workers to work harder and longer. As a result of that work environment, everyone is under lots of stress and they are always uncertain of when the next shoe is going to fall.

Does that sound somewhat familiar to you? Or maybe it's a relationship problem in your family, or financial stresses or you're just weary of the never-ending push and pull of life. What is stealing your hope? What is causing you to feel hopeless?

Let me please encourage you to hold unswervingly—without giving up—to the hope you have professed because the God of hope is faithful. Put this verse—Hebrews 10:23—on a card and take it with you every day. Then when those feelings of hopelessness start to move in (and keep in mind, they are feelings, not truth), then read or quote the verse and tell the Lord, "I'm holding unswervingly to my hope in you." Speak truth to yourself and trust the God of hope. He won't fail you.

## Day Five

Did you know that you were not designed to live without hope? The truth is, when you lose hope, you lose your motivation, your energy, indeed you can lose even your desire to live. But as Christians we have great hope because of Jesus, who died and rose again to purchase our redemption, so no longer are we destined to hopelessness.

But, many times we can forget that, as we live our daily lives and just live in the drudgery of life instead of in the glorious hope that we have in Jesus. It's really easy to lose hope in this sin-infested world, isn't it?

But God's Word is full of hope for you if you're a Christ-follower, and you can overflow with hope even in the midst of difficult circumstances. It begins as you learn to bring every thought into captivity and make it obey Christ. Hopelessness is in your mind, in your thought patterns. Negative thinking robs you of hope. Thoughts like: *This will never get better. Or I'll never be able to do this. Or Nobody cares. Or I might as well give up; nothing is working.* Or . . . and on and on. Pity parties swoop in and take over and you become mired in negative thoughts.

It is difficult—I would say it's pretty much impossible to have negative thoughts and be hopeful at the same time. So, how's your thought life these days? Negative thinking will steal your hope.

I love this passage about Abraham:

*Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be" (Romans 4:18).*

Against all hope—in spite of the hopelessness of his situation—Abraham in hope believed. How could he become the father of a nation? He had no idea how—but against all hope Abraham in hope believed.

Don't lose hope. Cling to the hope we have in Jesus and never give up.