

# Discipleship

## Study 6: The Hope

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### The Message

*“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>1</sup>*

We now want to complete our series of studies on Discipleship by looking together at the Biblical concept of hope which can be summed up in the person and character of Jesus. Jesus, the Servant of the Lord, the Davidic King, the Suffering Servant, the Son of Man, the Son of God, an eschatological prophet. When we look at hope measured by the world’s values and hope measured biblically we see some profound differences:

### The World’s Hope

- Man in control
- Human strength
- International peace
- Riches and wealth
- Human wisdom
- Personal righteousness
- ‘Utopia’

*“The war horse is a vain hope for victory, and by its great might it cannot save.” (Psalm 33:17)*

*“Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen?” (Romans 8:24b)*

### Biblical Hope

- God in control
- God’s sustaining strength
- A gift from God
- A sign to the world
- Constant in crisis or blessing
- Expectation that CAN be counted on
- Shalom

*“Though he kill me, yet I will trust in him.” (Job 13:15)*

*“Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame; let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.” (Psalm 25:3)*

### Whose Hope?

*“Hope in God.”<sup>2</sup> “For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him.”<sup>3</sup>* While hope is something we can experience personally and continually it is not about feelings, it is about truth. *“...the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love.”<sup>4</sup>* Hope is a gift that God has given us and with that comes responsibility and obedience. There was, for example, nothing in the situation in which Abraham found himself to justify the hope that Sarah would give birth to a son, but because he believed in God, he could ‘in hope’ believe “Hoping against

<sup>1</sup> Romans 15:13

<sup>2</sup> Psalm 42:5

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 62:5

<sup>4</sup> Psalm 147:11

hope.”<sup>5</sup> Like Abraham and Sarah we need to grow in hope, just as we need to grow in faith and love. Biblical hope is filled with a sense of expectation & longing, determined patience, and trust, confidence and faith.

### What’s it all about?

With hope comes confidence and an increase in faith “...*faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*”<sup>6</sup> Because of what God has done in the past, particularly in preparing for the coming of Christ, and because of what God has done and is now doing through Christ, the Christian dares to expect future blessings that are at present invisible (2 Corinthians 1:10). Our hope is increased then when we consider ‘Salvation history’, and reflect on the activities of God in the Scriptures (Romans 12:12; 15:4). Christ in us is the hope of future glory (Colossians 1:27). Our final salvation rests on such hope (Romans 8:24).

Because we enjoy a hope that is founded in God, it demonstrates love and is unselfish. “*O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem.*”<sup>7</sup> “*Surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off.*”<sup>8</sup> As our hope grows with confidence and joy in worship to a merciful God, so we cannot help but share and witness that hope to the world as a testimony. “...*but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.*”<sup>9</sup>

Because of the resurrection, we are saved from the miserable condition of having our hope in Christ limited to this world only (1 Corinthians 15:19). Jesus is our hope for time and eternity (1 Timothy 1:1).

The existence of hope makes it impossible for us to be satisfied with passing joys or fancies (Hebrews 13:14); it also acts as a stimulus to purity of life (1 John 3:2-3) and enables us to suffer cheerfully. Note how often hope is so often associated with ‘patience’ and ‘steadfastness’.

Hope helps us to carry on when we collide with the brokenness of the world.

### Hallmarks of Hope

- **Confidence** – faith and certainty
- **Watchfulness** – never taken by surprise
- **Action** – growth, fruitfulness
- **Holiness** – adorning the character of God
- **Love** – sacrificial giving of oneself
- **Prayer** – ‘Your Kingdom come, Your will be done!’
- **Joy** – praise, worship
- **Hope** – faith in action

We look at hope in more detail in a further study on hope (BH017-HOP).

### Questions

1. In what ways can we express the hope that God has given us? (1 Corinthians 11:17-34, Matthew 28:19-20)  
The gifts of the Spirit.

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<sup>5</sup> Romans 4:18

<sup>6</sup> Hebrews 11:1

<sup>7</sup> Psalm 130:7

<sup>8</sup> Proverbs 23:18

<sup>9</sup> Isaiah 40:31

2. How does our understanding of biblical hope affect our motives for outreach and mission?
3. What is the fruit of hope?
4. How ought the Church to live in the 'end times'?