

Hope in God's Word

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[0 : 00] This is Psalm 130. Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. O Lord, hear my voice.

! Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.! If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, therefore you are feared.

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I put my hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning.

O Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love, and with him is full redemption. He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.

Viktor Frankl was a leading psychiatrist in Europe, but because he was Jewish from 1942 to 1945, he was in prison in Auschwitz and three other Nazi concentration camps.

[1 : 10] And so he witnessed firsthand many men dying and many others surviving. And he noticed that the difference was not in their physical constitution, but rather the difference between living and dying was hope.

Hope. Hope. Those who held on to the hope of a future beyond the barbed wire had incredible endurance, while those who had lost all hope soon caved in to death.

They just lost the will to live. And what Frankl observed in the concentration camps, the Apostle Paul observed in the Thessalonian church, as they were undergoing great persecution and suffering, he writes to them, We always thank God for you, remembering your endurance, inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

So long as a man has hope, he can endure a lot. But pity the man whose hope is gone. So hope, it's a critical grace for the believer.

We simply don't do well without it. It's an inspiring, reviving, comforting, optimistic grace. It enables you to soar on wings like eagles and to run and not grow weary and to walk and not faint.

[2 : 35] But without hope, we do grow weary and tired, and we do give up and we do quit the fight. Therefore, hope is the helmet. It's an important part of the Christian armor, if we would persevere to the end.

Now in Psalm 119, this series that we're going through, David is full of praises and petitions to God for the Word of God. It's precious to him.

Seven times a day, he praises God for his Word. And I trust we're learning to make his prayers and praises our own, that we can pray right through these words and these verses as we draw near to God ourselves.

And we've seen the several reasons so far why the Word of God is so precious to David. We see another one this morning. Today we'll see he loves the Word of God because it is there that he finds hope, biblical hope.

It's not a wishy-washy, questionable thing, but a confident expectation of future good from God. So hope is a future-looking faith.

[3 : 47] As Hebrews 11 says, faith is being sure of what we hope for. So hope is critical to your joy, your peace, your perseverance in the way of Christ.

And we especially need hope when we're going through trials. Have you noticed that God's people are awaiting people? They wait for their best things while the world around them grabs for them here and now.

Think of Adam waiting. He lived to be 930 years old, but he waited the whole of his life, never seeing the promised Redeemer that God had said would come and crush the head of the serpent. It was the same with all the Old Testament saints. They had to wait for the promise of the coming Redeemer, Messiah. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob never received the promised land as long as they were alive.

The land promised to them they had to wait for. As a teenager, Joseph was sold into slavery and into a distant land, and he had to wait to see his doting father 22 years before he would see him again.

[5 : 09] The Apostle Paul had to wait his entire life before in death he finally got rid of that thorn in the flesh. We're all waiting. We are waiting for that glorious return of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

We're made to wait. And many of you are waiting through trials of many kinds. And the harder and the longer those trials are, the greater our need for hope is.

A hope that is sure and steadfast while we wait. So, the question is, where are you finding your hope? Well, over and over, David says, this is where I find my hope.

I put my hope in your word. In your word. So, this book is full of hope-building promises, words of God for severely tried believers.

Five times, if you'd have your Bibles open to Psalm 119, five times in this chapter, David says, I have put my hope in your word. We begin in verse 43.

[6 : 13] Do not snatch the word of truth from my mouth, for I have put my hope in your laws. Verse 74. May those who fear you rejoice when they see me, for I have put my hope in your word.

81. My soul faints with longing for your salvation, but I have put my hope in your word. 114. You are my refuge and my shield.

I have put my hope in your word. 147. I rise before dawn and cry for help, for I have put my hope in your word.

Several lessons from this repeated cry of David. The first is this. Hope is created and sustained by the word of God.

Hope is created initially and sustained ongoingly by the word of God. Verse 43 is our text here. Do not snatch the word of truth from my mouth, for I have put my hope in your laws.

[7 : 14] Notice God's word is in David's mouth. He's internalized it. He found the word of God to be food for his soul. Like Job, who said, I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

So just as my body stands in need of necessary food, so I find my soul stands in need of God's word. It's my meat. It's my drink.

It's what was in David's heart. His mouth. Are you starving your soul or feeding it like you feed your body?

Feeding it on the word of God. Now this idea of God's word being in the mouth finds support in other places. Jeremiah said it in chapter 15 and verse 16.

Your words were found and I did eat them and they became to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart. I ate them. And so David would say, your words are in my mouth.

[8 : 20] They've been the source and ground of my hope. What God says there gives me hope here and therefore my hope is sustained. Now we'll see and we need to give a whole sermon to the fact that David meditated on God's word.

But just look at verse 97. Oh how I love your law. I meditate on it all day long. Now the Hebrews did this aloud with God's word in their mouths.

Reciting it from memory. The word for meditate in Hebrew also means to speak or to mutter or to ruminate. And so as they meditated on God's word mulling it over in their minds, they were muttering the words in their mouth.

Like chewing it over and over as they ate it. And that's why scripture can speak of eating the word of God. getting the nutrients out of it.

Like a cow chewing the cud. Chewing, chewing, chewing. Getting it inside. All that God has put in the word.

[9 : 33] Getting it inside our inner being. And so that's where David found hope as he meditated on God's word.

the confident expectation of future good. So think of Abram. In Genesis 15, God spoke to Abram and promised a son to him.

Indeed, a great offspring. And then he took him outside and said, look up at the sky. It was nighttime. Look up to the heavens and count the stars if indeed you can count them.

And then God said to him, so shall your offspring be. And Abraham believed the Lord and it was counted to him for righteousness. Now Abraham had to wait 25 years before the son of the promise

arrived.

And there were a few odds against him. Sarah was barren, number one. She could not conceive and bear children and month after month reminded them of that fact.

[10:38] Secondly, they both were getting older, beyond the age of child-producing children.

Romans 4.19 comments on this hopeless situation this way. Abraham faced the fact that his body was as good as dead since he was about 100 years old and that Sarah's womb was also dead.

It was a double dead with nothing in their circumstances to encourage hope, only things that kill hope. And yet, Romans 4.18 says, against all hope, Abraham, in hope, believed.

Against all hope of anything seen, of anything possible with men, Abraham, nevertheless, in hope, believed. In hope of the promise that, yes, is impossible with men, but not impossible with God.

And so he became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him. against hope, Abraham believed in hope. Nothing felt, nothing seemed to encourage hope.

All he had was a bare promise from a faithful God. And that was enough. That was enough to sustain his hope as he waited.

[11:56] He was fully persuaded that God had power to do all that he had promised. He was convinced that he who promised is faithful. So what are you waiting for?

All of God's people are awaiting people. Maybe things difficult or even impossible to men. Maybe you're waiting for wisdom and guidance.

You don't know what to do in a situation. You're waiting on the Lord. Maybe it's relief from pain and sickness and ill health. You're waiting for the return of good health, if it will ever come in this life.

Maybe you're waiting for comfort from grief and sadness and the loss of a loved one or an estranged prodigal child. Maybe you're waiting for help from some trouble, financial, work-related, a relationship broken.

Is your hope shriveling and dying? Do you have any promises of God in your mouth that you're muttering and talking to yourself, reminding yourself of what God has promised you?

[13:10] There are great many and great promises here for the very things that you are waiting for. Faithful words of God to chew on that you might put your hope in God like Abraham did, like David did.

Hope is created and sustained. by the word of God. So feed that hope. This was true for David. Look at verse 114 where he says, you are my refuge and my shield.

I have put my hope in your word. Now where did David learn that God was his refuge and his shield? Well, he learned it from God's word. He himself was a prophet and God gave his word to David.

David. And he knew that his God was a refuge and a shield because God had spoken those words to David. He says, you're my refuge, first of all.

That means my hiding place, a secret, safe place in time of trouble. And let's not forget that David had to wait and wait long for the crown and the kingdom to be his.

[14:19] He had been, just as a young boy, he had been anointed by Samuel to be the next king of Israel, but it would be many years before he would have the crown on his head and sitting upon the throne.

He was waiting and waiting in intense danger. For some ten years of David's life, it was continual hide and seek, but kids, not the kind you play, where everybody goes and hides and one seeks. And it's a lot of fun, isn't it? Well, David was hiding because King Saul and his spies and his whole army was out to kill him.

And that takes all the fun out of hide and seek. Think how important it was for David to find a good hiding place, where Saul wouldn't find him, where he could continue to live.

His life depended upon it. In Psalm 57, it's a Psalm of David, and the heading says when David had fled from Saul into a cave.

[15:27] Now, in one sense, the cave was his hiding place, but in another sense, God was his hiding place. And that's what he says in the very first verse of Psalm 57.

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for in you my soul takes refuge. Yes, I'm here in this cave, but it's in you that my soul is hiding.

I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster passes by. Like a little chick would take refuge in the wing of mother hen until the hawk passes by.

David says, in you I take refuge. In Psalm 32, 7, he says, you are my hiding place. You will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.

David put his hope on the faithful and true words of God. But he said, you're not only my refuge, my hiding place from danger, but you're my shield to protect me when I'm in danger.

[16:31] A shield, kids, is something that comes between you and the danger. Again, from David, Psalm 18, verses 1 and 2, I love you, O Lord, my strength.

The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer. My God is my rock in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. He's my shield.

He comes between me and all of my enemies. You see, he's finding his hope in God and what he has said. He's said to be his shield as well as his refuge.

And then down in verse 30 of Psalm 18, he says he's a shield for all who take refuge in him. That means you and me. Have you taken refuge in God through Jesus Christ?

He's a shield. Nothing gets to you but what must come through him. And that gives you hope, you see, the confident assurance of good from God.

[17:36] So as you are finding temptation to a besetting sin to be too strong, God and that keeps getting the better of you, ask God to shield you from its power, to enable you to stand.

Maybe it's fears and worries that you just can't shake. There's no button you can push to say, stomach, stop tightening up. Call on the Lord as your shield.

Recognize his promise to be your shield and hiding place. the name of the Lord is a strong tower.

The righteous run into it and they're safe. So are you making use of your refuge, your shield?

That's where David found hope. Hope is created and sustained by the word of God. You remember when Christian in Pilgrim's Progress had found hopeful his friend and they were going along the narrow path and then they looked over the wall and they saw that it was smoother on the other side and so they climbed over the stile into Bypass Meadow and it wasn't long before they fell asleep over there and they woke up to find themselves sleeping in the property of giant despair in his cheery wife Gloom.

And they're awakened by giant despair and he grabs them and said, what are you doing trespassing my property? And he takes them back to his castle and he throws them down into a dark stinking dungeon.

[19:15] They're there from Wednesday night to Saturday, Wednesday to Saturday night. And the next day he just beats them mercilessly with a club and leaves them groaning in agony.

the next morning he says, I'm not going to let you out of here alive. I'm not giving you any food or water, you'll die, so I counsel you to kill yourself so you don't have to go through this suffering.

They refused to kill themselves, so he beat them again. Then that evening giant despair came back to see if they had thought better and decided to kill themselves and they still refused, so he threatened even worse treatment the next day.

they're barely breathing now and Christians wondering, would it be better for us to take our own lives? But hopeful reminded him of God's commandment, you shall not murder and that goes for yourself too.

Well, the next day giant despair took them into the castle yard and he showed them the bones and skulls of all the other pilgrims he had torn to pieces and said, that's what I'm going to do to you in ten days.

[20:33] And he beat them all the way back down into their dungeon where they lay all day in misery. And then about midnight they began to pray and they prayed right through till dawn.

And just before dawn Christians suddenly broke out in amazement, oh what a fool I am to lie here in this stinking dungeon when I might be walking free.

I have the key in my bosom called promise that I am sure will open any door in Doubting Castle. Hopeful says that's good news brother.

Take it out and try it. And indeed he did and found it opened every door in Doubting Castle.

Bunyan's lesson is how often are we found in Doubting Castle stinking dark dungeon under the power of despair and gloom when we could be breathing the fresh air of freedom.

Walking in confident assurance of God's goodness. Oh that we would make better use of the key of promise.

[21:41] That our faith, that our hope might be built up. So the second lesson then, hope giving promises are to be pleaded in prayer.

Verse 49, this is his prayer, David's prayer, remember your word to your servant for you have given me hope. How did God give David hope?

Well by the promises made to him. And so David pleads the promise, remember your word to your servant because you've given me hope. Remember what you said Lord and act upon it, that's what he means.

Do what you said you would do because you've raised my hopes in your word. And God gave us his word not to mock us.

He doesn't lift us up to let us down. He doesn't raise our expectations of good from his hand only to dash those hopes and to disappoint them. No, you have given me hope, therefore remember your word to your servant.

[22 : 46] Dad, you know the power of that. When your children come to you and ask you for something and then they add those words that kill you every time. You said, you said, and that carries the day with you.

They are honoring your word. They're putting their hope in your word. Now are you going to let them down? And that's multiplied infinitely with our heavenly father. His word is trustworthy.

It's sure. It's true. And when he sees his child coming and said, you said, father, remember your word to your servant because I've put my hope in your word.

He's not about to go back on his word. The Puritan Richard Sibb said, when we hear any promise in the word of God, let us turn it into a prayer.

That's what David's doing here. Remember your word to your servant for you've given me hope in your word. Send it right back to heaven.

[23 : 45] You find a promise, send it back to heaven expecting to see it fulfilled in the very best way at the very best time. So pleading the promise is the proper use of a promise.

They're there for you to plead in your prayers to God. One guy spoke of it as speaking to God in his own language, using his own words as you approach him.

And David does this at least 10 times in this chapter where he prays the promises. Are you in need of reviving? Psalm verse 37 and verse 38.

Revive me according to your word. Fulfill your promise to your servants so that you may be feared. Is it salvation or deliverance that you need? Verse 41. May your unfailing love come to me, O Lord, your salvation according to your promise.

Is it grace from God you need? Verse 58. Be gracious to me according to your promise. You need of comfort, encouragement. Verse 76.

[24 : 56] May your unfailing love be my comfort according to your promise to your servant. You need help for something? Verse 147.

I rise before dawn and cry for help. I put my hope in your word. Now do we not have promises of God's help?

Where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. Psalm 121. Psalm 145, 146 and verse 5. Blessed is the man whose help is from the Lord, whose hope is in the Lord his God.

Yes, he has promised to help us. Well then, bring that promise right back to God as you cry for help. Hebrews chapter 6 calls hope an anchor for the soul.

William Gurnall said, hope without a promise is like an anchor without ground to grip. So you let down the anchor hoping that one of those prongs will dig into the ground and it will serve its purpose.

[26 : 10] But when there's no ground and maybe your rope's not long enough, it's just floating through water. It's not doing anything. And so hope without a promise is like an anchor without ground to grip.

What do you ground your prayer on, your hope in? You need something sure and steadfast like a promise of God or an attribute of God that does not change in order to make you to be full of expectation.

So a promise from God puts us on praying ground then. As we ask for things that he has promised to do for us. And that sometimes is the only difference between hopeless and hopeful praying.

sadly too much of our praying and I say that including myself is hopeless praying. Praying without hope.

Why do I say that? Because I'm not expecting to see the answer to my prayer. Can I even remember what I prayed for yesterday or last week? Am I expecting to see it?
[27 : 25] David in Psalm 5 and verse 3, In the morning, O Lord, you hear my voice. In the morning, I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation.

Isn't that a wonderful way to live? Lay your prayer before him in the morning and then spend the rest of the day waiting and looking for what you asked. That's hope.

Expecting future good from the Lord. That's hopeful praying. Waiting in expectation for the answer because of what God has promised. 400 years ago, an Englishman by the name of Thomas Goodwin wrote a book on prayer called The Return of Prayers.

And in it, he's thinking of an English merchant man with a few ships that he loads with goods to make a long voyage to other lands where he trades and sells for profit and brings back other things back to England.

And so he sends off his ships and he's calculated from other trips just how long it will take that ship to return. And as that date draws near, he goes down to the sea and he's looking.

[28 : 40] He's looking for the return of his ships. I mean, he didn't send them off just thinking, well, that's the end of my ships. No, he's expecting them to come back laden with goods.

Sometimes he's expecting his ships to return more than I'm expecting my prayers to heaven to be returning with the answer.

That's the point of his book and it's humbling, isn't it? Brothers and sisters, let's not forget what a promise is. We get so familiar with biblical terms, but do we really understand what a promise is from God?

Our God is sovereign. He does whatever pleases him in heaven and on the earth. He's most free to give or to withhold. That's his prerogative as the sovereign king of the universe.

universe. And there's nothing that we can do to put him in our debt to say, if I do this or if I give you that, then you owe me, God, because I never give to God anything that he hasn't first given to me.

[29 : 47] What do you have that you've not received? In Romans chapter 11, verses 35 and 36, for who is first given to him that he might be repaid?

Come on. Since from him and through him and to him are all things. So we cannot make God our debtor where he owes us.

But once the almighty has promised something to us, he voluntarily obligates himself. He makes himself a voluntary debtor by his promises, and he's no longer free to withhold what he has promised.

It's owed to you. He made it such. His own truth and faithfulness will not allow him to do anything else. He's bound himself by his own word so that by that you might know he will keep that promise. He loves to pay his debts, and especially those debts, the only kind of debts there are where he voluntarily becomes a debtor. And sometimes he even adds an oath to his promise, doesn't he?

[31 : 01] Hebrews 6 tells us, so that by two unchangeable things, not only his promise, but by his oath as well, in which it's impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.

In other words, a promise ought to greatly encourage your hope. Because it's impossible for God to lie. It's God, a promise is God stooping to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to us that we might know just how willing he is to give all that he's promised.

He cannot deny himself. He cannot withhold what he's promised or he would have to ungod himself. He would cease to be God and he cannot deny himself. So he does remain faithful.

Oh, let us remember the certainty of God's promises. Every word of God is true and faithful. Let's plead them before the throne.

And then lastly, the lesson is hope in God makes you a makes you joyful company to your brothers and sisters. Listen to David praying in verse 74.

[32 : 16] May those who fear you rejoice when they see me for I have put my hope in your word. May those who fear you, God, rejoice when they see me because I put my hope in your word.

Hope is a joy producing grace. Proverbs 10, 28 says the hope of the righteous brings joy, but the expectation of the wicked will perish.

And so for the righteous, he has a double joy. He has the joy of expecting good from God, just expecting the good that brings him joy and then receiving the good that has been promised.

He's doubly joyful. In two places in the book of Romans, we're told to be joyful in hope. Hope is a joy producing grace.

As he comes to the end, he says, may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. You know it.

[33 : 19] A hopeful man is a joyful man. It's not hard to see why hope is that confident expectation in future good and that makes him glad. There's a there's a song that goes, I just feel like something good is about to happen.

I just feel like something good is on its way. David sings a better song with better theology.

Whatever we feel, David could sing. I just know that something good is on its way.

How do you know that? I have a promise that surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life. I wake up to that promise. That's this day and the next day.

I just know something. God is up to something good in my life. That brings joy, doesn't it? What's there not to be glad about that? And then when my days are over here, I will dwell in the house of the Lord.

That's the hope of heaven. It's a joy producing grace. And this joy of hope is contagious.

[34 : 26] The hopeful man brings sunshine with him wherever he goes. He spreads hope and gladness, not gloom and despair.

And I find this interesting, that David is concerned about the effect that he has upon his brothers and sisters in Christ, in God. He wants to bring the sunshine of hope to them, not the clouds of despair.

And so he prays in verse 74, may those who fear you rejoice when they see me. When they see me coming, I don't want them to say, oh no, here comes Mr. Gloom. And then they make themselves scarce.

No, I want them when they see me to rejoice because I put my hope in you. So David starts out crying to God in the depths, Psalm 130.

But then he says, in your word, I have put my hope. And then he turns to Israel and says, oh, Israel, put your hope in the Lord. I found my hope there. Now you put your hope in the Lord. That's David here.

[35 : 31] He wants to bring the sunshine of hope to others. And Peter expects that that's the reason why some people will ask you when you're going through your trials, what's the reason for your joyful hope?

Most people get down in the mouth when they're going through trials. And you just plow on with joy. Where does that come from? And that's why we need to be ready at all times to get a reason, to give a reason for the hope that we have in us.

But do we have the hope in us? That's where we start, you see. Peter assumes it. How do believers respond when they see you coming? Are you lifting them up with hope?

Are you dragging them down with discouragement and despair? What influence are you leaving behind? Hope in God makes you joyful company for the saints.

Because hope is contagious. And I just close by challenging you to be sure that your hope is a well-grounded hope. You know there are false hopes.

[36 : 38] We saw it in the Sunday school class in our lesson today. There are false hopes. There are people who put the whole weight of their soul hoping on heaven when it's an ill-gotten hope.

And so that hope will be dashed. David prays in Psalm 19, verse 116, Don't let my hopes be dashed.

There's a way to not let your hopes be dashed, and that's to get them built upon something solid. My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

That's hope enough for me. All other ground is sinking sand. You build your hope for heaven on what you've done? Sinking sand. Build it on what Christ has done?

Solid ground. Be sure your hope is a solid hope that will not disappoint. Be sure you're born again.

[37 : 38] You're not the man you were born like. You're not the little girl you were born into this world with your lies and all your deception. No, now you've received a new heart that loves Jesus and wants to obey Jesus.

That's a well-grounded hope. And it will never disappoint you. So be sure that your hope is built on Christ. Have you fled for refuge to take hold of the hope offered to you in Jesus Christ?

That's a hope that will never let you down. Not in time. Not in eternity. Get into Christ, and every promise is certified through the blood of Jesus to you.
And now 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. Amen.
Amen.