

Faith, Hope & Love_Part24

We are continuing our study on the Kingdom of God and its building blocks: faith, hope, and love. Last week we transitioned from our extended study on faith and are now diving deep into hope.

Psalm 131:3: “O Israel, hope in the Lord from this time forth and forevermore.”

As we learned, **1 Timothy 1:1** makes it clear that Jesus is our living hope. Therefore, let's restate ***Psalm 131:3*** with the fullness of what we learn from the New Testament. O true Israel of God, O people who choose to live by faith, **HOPE** in Jesus from this time forth and forevermore. “Fix your hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers” (**1 Timothy 4:10**). And since our hope is a person, hope extends beyond a mystical concept, beyond a feeling, beyond a mental exercise of personal discipline, and settles in the very personhood of the living God. We can hope because of who Jesus is as He has revealed Himself in the various names of God, all of which exposes to us His true character and nature. As we live by faith and bet our lives on all He is, we will have hope beyond hope for we will live in the assurance that He will always act according to His nature and He will always live up to His name; *it is always just a matter of time*. In this truth there is no variation or shifting shadow.

This concept of hope is exemplified in ***Psalm 33:18-22*** which brings to mind so much of what we learned about our God in our study of His names.

Psalm 33:18-22

Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His

lovingkindness, to deliver their soul from death and to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield. For our heart rejoices in Him, because we trust in His holy name. Let Your lovingkindness, O Lord, be upon us, according as we have hoped in You.

We are going to use this psalm as our overall outline for the next few weeks to study hope. So let's break it down in somewhat of an outline form and then we will go section by section and search out what else the scriptures speak about hope.

1) The eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His lovingkindness. Clearly, there is a close connection between the fear of the Lord and our hope in the Lord, and it is tied to the assurance of His lovingkindness.

2) We hope for His Lovingkindness to care for us in two very distinct ways: a) There is an eternal aspect to our hope (which is picked up in the phrase "to deliver their soul from death"); and b) There is a very practical and physical aspect to our hope (which is picked up in the phrase "to keep them alive in famine"). Thus, we hope for His lovingkindness to be our provision in both a metaphysical as well as a very practical and tangible way; hence, the statement in **2 Peter 1:3**, "His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness."

3) Our soul waits for the Lord because: a) He is our help, and b) He is our shield.

4) Our heart rejoices in Him, because we trust in His holy name. The expression of joy from our lives is a natural byproduct of faith.

5) Our great plea: let it be as we have hoped: "Let Your lovingkindness, O Lord, be upon us."

This psalm breaks down into these 5 segments: 4 statements and 1 great plea which just happens to capture the number of grace. Thus, this passage is ultimately about our supernatural enablement to live in these bodies of flesh, in this world of flesh, as a true son of God, which, after all, is the essence of hope. We will go through each segment in detail, but let's start at the beginning:

1) The eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His lovingkindness. **Proverbs 15:3** says that the eyes of the Lord are in every place, watching the evil and the good. This is clearly an anthropomorphism or the use of human attributes applied to God. But the Spirit utilizes this imagery to give us a clear picture of God's oversight on all of humanity. In Hebrew, *Ayin Adonai*, the one who is in control of all things, of every little tiny detail, is always watching. This is intended to bring us a level of deep comfort and assurance. He is not only the one who ordains all things, but He oversees how it all unfolds to ensure that everything goes according to His plan and His plan alone.

And according to **2 Chronicles 16:9**, "The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him." Thus, His eyes search with a purpose. He is not a detached observer; rather, He searches for those who fear Him, who hope for His lovingkindness in order that He might strengthen their hearts. But the Hebrew in this verse is fantastic. It literally says that His eyes search the whole world in order "to show Himself strong" to those whose hearts are fully committed to Him. Again, He is not a detached impersonal God just watching the world spin. He is very involved and He wants us to know Him personally. He wants us to see Him in action in order that we might be strengthened in our assurance of His personal interest and involvement in our lives and thereby

choose to continue to always fear Him.

This idea is stated a bit more emphatically in ***Psalm 34:15-16***: “The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and His ears are open to their cry. The face of the Lord is [continually] against evildoers (it’s a *participle*), to cut off the memory of them from the earth.” By the way, this is quoted in ***1 Peter 3:12***. So God wants to show Himself strong to us, while He turns His face against evildoers in order to cut them off. Thus, He has purposes for both those who hope and the hopeless. Reading this stirred up in me an interesting reaction which perhaps explains the way we tend to waffle back and forth in our hope. It brought to mind the reality that we rarely look at all the myriad of ways in which God has shown Himself strong to us; rather, we keep looking for the areas that we think He is not showing Himself at all. We kind of take for granted the goodness He brings into our lives; and the aroma or the flavor of His blessings do not tend to linger long in our human experience (which is why He asks us to never forget our rocks of remembrance). For some reason, we always focus on the areas where we don’t think we are getting what we want from Him. This is a sad but very, very human dynamic. It’s kind of pathetic, but it is how we are wired in the flesh. I believe that if we were to open our eyes to all that He has done, not a single one of us who has truly believed in Him could honestly say that he has not shown Himself to be strong to us. He has in so many innumerable ways been victorious for us over enemy after enemy, both internally as well as externally, as we have escaped from the clutches of those evildoers.

However, I think there is dark part of us that will never be satisfied in our flesh until we see Him actively turn against evildoers; specifically those who have recklessly and wantonly harmed us. If we are honest, we want justice; that is what

we really want. To us, seeing them suffer would be showing Himself strong. And that tends to be a stumbling block in our souls, which is why the Lord asks those who live for His Kingdom to forgive those who have hurt us and to love our enemies. The day will come when they will get their comeuppance; that is assured. But I have to tell you, we have no idea what terrors they experience in the dark night of their soul or what lurks down the dark pathways that they have chosen to walk. But we do know from **1 Peter 1:17** that the Father is even now continually impartially judging according to each man's work. He is the one who says in **Deuteronomy 32:35**, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." And according to **Hebrews 10:31**, "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Therefore, be confident and hopeful in the fact that His face is continually against them and they will come to know His terror; it is just a matter of time.

But He desires to show Himself strong to those of us who will fear Him, who hope for His lovingkindness—this is His desire. Let this truth strengthen you. *Ayin Adonai*, the Lord's eyes are upon you; you are not alone; and He has carefully and painstakingly determined everything you endure and experience; and it is all for His purpose and His eternal and temporal provision for your life. He will not let you down, which is why the scriptures say that all who believe in Him will not be disappointed—will not be shamed (**1 Peter 2:6**).

The eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His lovingkindness. The Spirit connects the concepts of the "fear of the Lord" and "hope for His lovingkindness" almost as if hope is a natural extension, or is birthed out, of those who fear Him. In this statement, "those who fear Him" is presented as a given not as an action. It is an *adjective*, which describes a person upon whom the eye of

the Lord sits in order to show Himself strong. It is a statement of fact; whereas **hope** is a *verb* and it is in the *Piel* and is a *participle*. The *Piel* has two understandings. Traditionally, it was purely thought to be used as an intensification of a word (bold, highlight, italic, exclamation mark); but more recently it has been understood to add the element of causation. In this instance, it is probably appropriate to understand the *Piel* both as causative and as an intensification. In other words, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who dig down deep into their soul and make the decision to HOPE and keep hoping (the *participle*) for His lovingkindness. Hope is therefore an active and continual aspect of one who fears the Lord. Hope and fear go hand-in-hand.

It is not surprising that the fear of the Lord is a given and that hope stems from that reality. The fear of the Lord is the starting place in terms of our walk into maturity with God. It is the beginning of the knowledge of God (***Proverbs 1:7; Proverbs 2:5-6***); and it is the beginning of wisdom (***Psalms 111:10; Proverbs 2:5-6; 9:10; 15:33***). Thus, if you don't live in the fear of the Lord, you will not live in hope; rather, hopelessness will mark your life. Hope is predicated upon both our true knowledge and active belief in the very character and nature of God.

The fear of the Lord is to hate all evil (***Proverbs 8:13***). And since only God is good (***Matthew 19:17***), to fear the Lord you must hate everything that does not derive from God. You must hate the evil that dwells deep within your soul as well as everything which derives from the kingdom of this world. ***Psalms 34:11-14*** says, "Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. Who is the man who desires life and loves length of days that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil and do good;

seek peace and pursue it.” The fear of the Lord requires a radical departure of all that is not of God. Evil and deceit dwell deep within our *Old Sinful Nature* and we must not participate in its evil deeds; this is an active decision we must make. We must depart or flee from all that is not of God and participate only in that which God, who is good, does in and through us. That is what it means to “do good.” Wow, this is all so reminiscent of the *Design Point*.

Isaiah 11:2-3 also gives us some keen insight on the fear of the Lord. It is a messianic passage that speaks of Jesus and His time on the earth. It says that “the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord (speaking of the Holy Spirit) will rest upon Him and *He will delight in the fear of the Lord*, and He will not judge by what His eyes see, nor make a decision by what His ears hear; but with righteousness He will judge.” Jesus set the example for us as this speaks of a total replacement theology or what we have called the “*Design Point*,” gleaned from **Galatians 2:20**: all that we are for all that God is; we are not able, but in us He is our complete provision for life and Godliness.

In accordance with **Isaiah 11:2-3**, Jesus said in **John 5:19** that He does nothing of Himself unless He sees His Father doing it. In **John 5:30** He said He does nothing on His own initiative, but as He hears (from the Father) He judges and His judgment is just because He does not seek His own will but the will of the Father. Then in **John 8:28-29** Jesus says He speaks only the things the Father has taught Him for He always does the things that are pleasing to the Father. Thus, it is clear that to *delight in the fear of the Lord (Isaiah 11:2-3)* is to fundamentally live out the *Design Point*. Jesus said the Father lived in Him, made His abode in Him, and it was the Father’s works which Jesus did and the works themselves proved that the Father is in Him

(**John 14:10-11**). This is our pattern, this is our example. The fear of the Lord is to hate all evil and embrace all that is from God as He lives in and through our lives. Therefore, like Jesus we are to not live by our own wisdom or by what we think and feel, but only by that which is given to us by our Father. This *Design Point* is captured in the following statement: “I have been crucified with Christ (I have hated the evil in my life and have put it to death); and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live *by faith* in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (**Galatians 2:20**). This is the fear of the Lord and His eyes are upon those who fear Him to show Himself strong on their behalf. Thus living by faith (a New Testament concept) and living in the fear of the Lord (an Old Testament concept) are in effect synonymous. The fear of the Lord approaches the same truth through a negative (hating that which is not Jesus) while living by faith through a positive (betting your life on Jesus).

So how does the fear of the Lord tie to our hope for His lovingkindness? **Proverbs 23:17-18** says, “Do not let your heart envy sinners, but live in the fear of the Lord always. Surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off.” The first part of this sentence “Do not let your heart envy sinners” is in the *Piel, imperfect, jussive*. It is an intensified command as to how we are to live. **DO NOT LET YOUR HEART ENVY SINNERS!** This is an Old Testament way of saying, “Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever” (**1 John 2:15-17**). When we are envious of those in the world, and envious of what

they have in this world, we in effect love the kingdom of this world, we love what is evil, and the love of the Father is not in us. So don't envy sinners; don't live that way!

The next clause: "but live in the fear of the Lord always" is a series of nouns and does not contain a single verb. In other words, this is not an admonition; rather, it is a statement regarding the lives of those upon whom the eyes of the Lord sit. The fear of the Lord is to be your very existence; it is not something you go and do but it defines your reality. Much like the statement which reads: "the life which I now live in the flesh I live *by faith* in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me." Again, this line: "but live in the fear of the Lord always," is not something we try to do; it is the expression of the decision we have made to bet our lives on the name of the living God.

The next clause concludes that if you live in the fear of the Lord always, then "Surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off." But what is interesting is that "cut off" is in the Hebrew *Niphil*—essentially the *middle* voice. In other words, if you do not let your heart envy sinners and you live in the fear of the Lord always, then there is a future, for you will not cut yourself off from hope. Hope comes from the Lord, it comes from our complete confidence in His character and nature, trusting in His name knowing He will always be who He says He is. Thus, we can choose to cut ourselves off from hope by choosing to envy sinners and not live in the fear of the Lord—when we don't truly believe in His name.

This makes sense. If our Hope is the Lord and this hope comes from believing in His name, then our experience of Hope is going to be directly tied to our choices of faith and our fear of the Lord. Let's say it this way: if you predominately live a

hopeless life (depressed, disillusioned, and in despair), then it is clear that you keep seeking your fulfillment, your identity, and your purpose in the things of this world; and you keep waiting for this world to lift you up and honor you and do it right for you. That choice to put your faith in this world is tantamount to taking a knife and cutting off the chord of your hope leaving you without a future; and it is a choice you make. Remember, this world is passing away, and so are its lusts; thus, it cannot guarantee you a single thing. Mark my word, if you stubbornly turn to this world instead of to God, you will know the deep dark caverns of hopelessness; this darkness will be your dwelling place. There is no future in that kind of living; if you can call that living at all.

Proverbs 24:13-14 says, “Wisdom to your soul (which assumes you live in the fear of the Lord, since it is the beginning of wisdom) is like the sweet honey from the comb to your taste; if you find it then there will be a future and your **hope** will not be cut off.” Again, living in the fear of the Lord, living by faith, will produce in your life both the sweetness of wisdom and according to **Proverbs 1:7** the beauty of knowledge; and it will satisfy. You will not be found wanting. And it is not just about being full; the picture which the Spirit gives us is of sweet deliciousness. These two things, wisdom and knowledge, together are what sustain **hope** because if you live in the fear of the Lord and live by faith you will come to have the true knowledge of God, you will come to know how to apply that knowledge, and you will, according to **2 Peter 1:3-5**, become a partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. In other words, you will be able to declare: “It is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me.” And what, pray tell, can be more tasty and delicious than God in us?

Don't cut yourself off from hope by looking to this world to be your provision. Jesus has given us everything we need for life and godliness, in this we can fully hope. Nothing is missing; but it is all found in the *Design Point*. From the Old Testament to the New Testament, it is all wonderfully consistent. It may use different words and different pictures to communicate, since we are clearly very slow at picking up and adopting these truths, but it is the same message. Christ is our hope and when that hope is living in us, we abide in the hope of His lovingkindness and we will have a future.

2) We are to hope for His lovingkindness to care for us in two very distinct ways. a) There is an eternal aspect to our hope (which is picked up in the phrase "to deliver their soul from death"); and b) There is a very practical and physical aspect to our hope (which is picked up in the phrase "to keep them alive in famine"). Thus, we hope that His lovingkindness will care for us and be our provision in both a metaphysical as well as a very practical and tangible way. Hope is about our having a future both in this life and in the life to come.

Let me clarify something about hope that might be bothering some of you. Because hope is tied to a person—to the character and nature of God—it is not the same thing as a wish, a desire, or an aspiration. It is not about crossing your fingers at the possibility of His lovingkindness being poured out in your life. Biblically, hope is a reality which describes our willingness to wait on the Lord to bring that reality into fruition (which is the third concept in *Psalm 33:18-22*). As I said last week, if faith is betting your lives on the truth, hope is about waiting and waiting and waiting for that truth to be fully realized and expressed in your life; hope is about endurance and patience to wait for what actually is, whether it is the practical

provision of His lovingkindness or the eternal metaphysical provision of His lovingkindness. This is where we get our famed statement from **Hebrews 11:1**, “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

The Lord’s lovingkindness towards our lives is a thing, it is reality, it is a fact, and faith is the assurance that it will come to fruition, it is only a matter of time. We may not yet see His lovingkindness or feel it; for example, when I was in the midst of my storm being beaten and beaten by wave after wave, it seemed to be so far away. But faith is the firm conviction that His lovingkindness is ours and so we move forward waiting and trusting that before long we will come to know it—we will see Him in action. It took me years to admit it, but I can now say that the horrible storm was His lovingkindness and His provision for my life. You see, I desired to live by faith; but even though I didn’t fully understand it, that meant I had to die. It meant that I had to choose put to death the deeds of the body and the evildoers in my life. I had to be crucified with Christ and let Him circumcise me or cut me away from this world. My storm was His total lovingkindness and He was acting according to His character and nature. I could not see it, I would not see it, because I was in pain and I hated to live in such pain and torment. But His lovingkindness in my life accomplished its perfect work

And there was no other way than the pathway of death. If there was any other way, if it was possible to let this cup pass, the Father would have granted Jesus’ request as He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground as He interceded for me as my High Priest (**Matthew 26:36-42; Luke 22:44-45, Hebrews 5:7-10**). But the Father was clear, there was only the pathway of death. I would have to drink the cup of death from which Jesus

drank (**Matthew 20:22-23**). I had to die to live and I now have to live in hope in order to love.

Thus, His lovingkindness in my life is a reality and through it all, through the entire ordeal of my storm, He met me at both a metaphysical and a very, very practical level. Faith is the assurance that His lovingkindness is my reality (and yours) in the now; it is the conviction that this is true regardless of what we might otherwise think or feel. This is the fear of the Lord.

I find it interesting that in **Hebrews 11:1**, the “things hoped for” and the “things not seen” are both rendered in the *present passive participle*. In other words, faith is the assurance of the things which God continually does in our now—that which is hoped for—(like the pouring out of His lovingkindness); and faith is the conviction of things which we may not see but is our present reality nonetheless; it is just a matter of time for it to be realized and experienced. His lovingkindness is a reality of your life; and, hopefully (in the crossing my fingers way), very soon you will come to realize it as I did. Again, regardless of what you are going through, it is just a matter of time for it to be realized in your day-in-and-day-out life experience; but it is guaranteed.

Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His lovingkindness. We will stop here and pick up next with both the eternal and the practical or physical aspects of our living hope.

If you do not live by faith in the fear of the Lord, then that is the first thing you need to tackle. The rest of this instruction on hope will be nonsense until you truly decide to bet your life on the character and nature of your God. You have the knowledge, you have been taught more thoroughly than most people, now you just

have to dig down deep into your soul and decide what you love. Do you love this world that is passing away? Do you actually love the darkness of your hopelessness so much that you will stubbornly choose to continue to abide in it? I think it is a far better thing to love the God who gave His life for you so that you might know and experience His lovingkindness. Sure it requires death, sure it requires circumcision, but all that is short lived; and after death comes the resurrection and the supernatural ability to live in the power of His life. And that is like the sweetness of the honey comb. Those who have tasted of it know what I mean and they will testify to its goodness. It is time to dig down deep in your soul and decide once and for all.

Romans 15:13, “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Let's Pray