

Faith, [Hope](#) & Love_Part28

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

1 Timothy 4:10: “For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.”

I finished last week with this admonition: It is not enough to go to church. It is not enough to serve and do ministry. It is not enough to be good for God. It is not enough to worship and praise Him and sing songs to His glory. It is not enough! **You must fear the Lord**. You must be willing to bet your life on His name and trust in Him, you must be willing to let Him deliver your soul from death, then you can **HOPE**—or be absolutely confident—that His lovingkindness will keep you alive during times of famine and want. If you have been wrestling with the choice of pursuing the fire and letting God skim off the dross, this promise is intended to tilt the scale toward the pathway of death. It is worth it. You will come to know and experience another wonderful aspect of His lovingkindness—His promise of provision. With that said, let’s continue with our passage in ***Psalm 33:18-22***.

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.

What have we learned about Biblical HOPE? It is not a wish, it is not an aspiration, and it is not a cross your fingers in anticipation type of experience. Our hope is a confident assurance that God is who He says He is and will always do what He said He will do, it is just a matter of time. Since only time stands between God's promises and their fulfillment, waiting is a critical aspect of our learning to live in hope; in fact, I would say that the word "hope" implies waiting in confidence. "*Our soul waits for the Lord.*" In the *Hebrew*, this is posited as a perfect consequence of fearing the Lord and hoping in His lovingkindness; they are not separate ideas, but extensions of the same. Those who fear the Lord wait for Him because they hate anything else that is not God; they hate any cheap substitute. They want only the Lord, and so they wait. It is interesting that the root word for "wait" comes from the idea of adhering to something via piercing. It's as if the Psalmist is saying, "Our soul has been pierced and hooked on or sewed into the Lord and that is where we will stay" This word provides us a powerful picture of how we are to live—it's very similar to the command in **1 Timothy 4:10** to fix our hope on the Lord.

Waiting, as an extension of fearing the Lord, addresses our willingness to hate anything—whether that is within our soul or external to us—that brings any sort of indictment against God merely because there is a time gap between a promise and its fulfillment. Emotionally this is tuff stuff. When God has us in the fire and it does not "feel" that He is around, we are tempted to lose our grip; and the longer it takes the more our hold is put at risk. I know you know what I mean. We all have a love / hate relationship with time. Time can be both our best friend and our worst

enemy, it all just depends on what is happening in our lives. But our reaction to time is the true litmus test as to whether or not we have adhered our soul to the Lord. When Jesus is not the object of our hope and we have placed our hope in anyone or anything in this world (even ourselves), we easily become unhinged and begin to feel crazy as soon as the Lord starts to turn up the temperature in our lives. Our emotions regarding what we think is happening to us at any given time causes us to flip-flop back and forth and drives us literally batty. We become irrational, an ocean of fear floods our lives, and we loath our time of waiting. We want it all to stop; we want relief now. Sadly, far too often we go to find it instead of adhering ourselves to the Lord.

The Lord wants this to change. He wants us to trust in Him with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and stand on His word in **HOPE** because He is our BOULDER, our great Rock upon whom we can rely. And He has promised that the person who trusts in Him will not be disappointed (*Isaiah 28:16; Romans 9:33*). Thus, we must learn to walk by faith and not by sight, regardless of how much time passes by, because hope in the living God does not and will not disappoint (*2 Corinthians 5:7; Romans 5:5*). Accordingly, I want us to begin to understand hope through the lens of choosing to CONFIDENTLY wait on the Lord to fulfill His promises to us, trusting it is all just a matter of time.

“Our soul waits for the Lord.” First and foremost this means that we refuse to take action into our own hands to help God along with His promise—whatever that promise may be. If you find yourself in a difficult, maybe even a desperate situation, the temptation will be to go and handle things and to make them happen the best way that you know how. But that is a huge mistake and such decisions always come

with massive consequences. For example, in the story of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar, we saw what happens when a person tries to help God out with His plans. God promised Abraham a son (**Genesis 15:2**). At that time God made no mention of His plan to have Sarah bear the child, but merely said that Abraham would be the Father of a great nation. Abraham and his wife Sarah were getting very old and nothing was happening in the baby department (at that time Sarah was approximately 76 and Abraham 86). So Sarah concocted this idea that if Abraham would sleep with Sarah's servant and she got pregnant, it would be kind of the same thing as if Sarah had this child, since she owned this servant. It is an agency theory of ownership and responsibility. Abraham decided to give it a chance; and sure enough Hagar got pregnant and she gave birth to a son and named him Ismael. But unbeknownst to Abraham, Ismael was not the son of the promise.

As we know, Ismael became the father of the Arab nations and the prophecy spoken over him in **Genesis 16:12** still plays out today: "He will be a wild donkey of a man, his hand will be against everyone, and everyone's hand will be against him; and he will live to the east of all his brothers." The lesson: No matter how long you must wait, it is never ever a good thing to take matters into your own hands. God will always do what He promises; it is just a matter of time. Choose to wait.

Even though Abraham took matters into His own hands, He firmly believed the promise God gave Him that from His seed the Lord would produce a great nation. Abraham was just a little confused thinking that Ismael would fulfill this role. But 13 years later when Abraham was 100 years old (and Ismael was 13 and Sarah was 99, the Lord appeared to Him and reaffirmed His covenant to make from Abraham a great nation. In this conversation, He also confirmed that Sarah would have the

child of promise, even though her womb was as good as dead and his parts were not much better. When Abraham heard this, he thought it was incredulous and just laughed; he asked the Lord to let Ismael live before Him not believing that Sarah would be able to bear a child. But God said, “No, but Sarah you wife will bear a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him” (**Genesis 17:19**). Now, with this story in mind, consider **Romans 4:18-25**:

Romans 4:18-25

Even when there was no reason for hope, Abraham kept hoping—believing that he would become the father of many nations. For God had said to him, "That's how many descendants you will have!" And Abraham's faith did not weaken, even though, at about 100 years of age, he figured his body was as good as dead—and so was Sarah's womb. Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises. And because of Abraham's faith, God counted him as righteous. And when God counted him as righteous, it wasn't just for Abraham's benefit. It was recorded for our benefit, too, assuring us that God will also count us as righteous if we believe in him, the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God.

Even when it all seemed impossible and entirely hopeless, Abraham kept hoping

in the promise that God made to him that he would be the father of a great nation. And for this reason, God declared Him righteous even though he blew it by taking matters into his own hands. God, did not focus on Abraham's sin, but on the glory of the fact that Abraham actually believed. Clearly that choice to not wait on the Lord was painful, for by it Abraham panged all the descendants of Ishmael because God did exactly as He promised and the prophecy spoken over Ishmael's life was and is fulfilled in exacting detail. But with regard to Abraham's hope, he believed. Paul went so far as to say that he never waived in his belief. He fully trusted that God would do everything He said He would do. And it is because of Abraham's hope, because of Abraham's faith, he was counted as righteous. In the same way, we are also counted as righteous (despite the ways we try and fulfill God's promises for Him), if we believe in Him, the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

With that said, even though God is gracious and merciful to forgive our sin and declare us to be righteous, despite our taking matters into our own hands, there are often practical life consequences which flow from our choices to help God fulfill His promises. That is how things work. We may birth an Ismael, so to speak, and we may want that "child" to have life, but such decisions only bring trouble. That is why we are instructed to wait on the Lord and hope in His lovingkindness trusting that He will deliver us; it is just a matter of time. Believe me, there is a marked difference between the troubles that arise from our birthing an Ismael and the fires that come from the hand of the Lord. Don't try to help out God with His promises; don't take things into your own hands. Wait on Him.

"Our soul waits for the Lord." Second, it means we refuse to grab for any type of temporary pain relief from any source other than God. Now this is difficult; after

all, we are just mere humans and for the most part it seems that we will do anything to avoid pain. But God desires us, as mere humans, to learn what it is to have God relieve our pain and to have Him settle the terrors in our soul. He does not want us reaching out to anyone or anything in this world to be our medicine; that is akin to idolatry which He detests. Jesus is our answer to every sort of pain imaginable. You don't need your coping mechanisms and you don't need your worldly sources of comfort, you need Jesus. After all, He alone is **El Erekh Apayim avi ha-tanchumim**—the God of all patience and comfort. In addition He alone is **El Sali**, the God of your strength. If you wait on the Lord and only for Him, He will give you what you need to endure whatever it is that He has prescribed for your life.

Psalm 119:49-50

Remember your promise to me; it is my only hope. Your promise revives me; it comforts me in all my troubles.

In the midst of our difficulties and the troubles which God brings us through, His promises are to be our remedy for pain. His promises can bring us comfort since they are guaranteed by His name. Thus, we can be confident, no matter how bad things might be, that what we are going through is necessary to our faith and will last only for a little while—until God accomplishes His purpose in our soul (**1 Peter 1:6-9**). This can give you hope and revive you in the midst of the darkest of days.

Personally, God made me a plethora of promises both before and during the terrible storm He took me through. Every one of His promises He spoke to me

through His Word and then later confirmed through a myriad of prophecies. These promises were meant to be a life-line to my soul during my time of travail. Not only did He promise me He would show me how much He loved me (which in-and-of-itself is a gigundus promise), He said He called me by name and put His words in my mouth and hidden me safely within His hand. He said I am His signet ring and I would be His spokesman, declaring that I am His witness and have been chosen to know Him, believe in Him, and understand that He alone is God. He said that I am His personal confirmation of His covenant with His people and that I would be a light to guide all nations to Him, I would open the eyes of the blind, free the captives from prison, and release those who sit in dark dungeons. He promised that He would fill me to overflowing and would even tell me the future before it happens.

He promised me that even though I would stagger around like a drunk man in agony and pain during the time of my affliction, He would not deal with me on the basis of my sin. Instead, He would use it to make me into a new threshing instrument with many sharp teeth enabling me to easily tear apart all my enemies making chaff of mountains. He promised to take the terrible cup of suffering and judgment from my hands and put it into the hands of those who tormented me. He promised to shatter my enemies swearing that I would look around for them in vain. He said He would make me to them like a fortified wall of bronze and though they fight against me they would not prevail. He even promised that He would trade the lives of others for me because I am precious to Him and I am honored.

He promised to care for my girls confirming that they would not just make it through the troubles, but they would call on His name. He promised to lead me to my desired haven. He even promised to plant all manner trees in the barren desert

(the trees would be you) and that everyone would see this miracle and understand it is the Lord who did it. He promised to release my captives—those who suffered with me through the storm—and that He would never again pour out His anger on me. He promised to rebuild my storm battered city with all manner of precious jewels and gems (which represents the beautiful work God has done in your lives), and that we would live in peace and the enemies would stay far from us and would always be defeated. And there are many more, I just grabbed the highlights.

The point of all of this is that in the midst of my pain and terror, I held to these promises and they got me through. They picked me up and revived when I thought I could not make it another day, another hour, and at times even another minute. Time was my mortal enemy, but these promises were my hope and I did not abandon them. Sometimes I relied on others to speak them to me and sometimes I would have just enough strength to speak them to myself, but they always revived me and comforted me. The Word of God does that to you. Moreover, I learned how the Word of God is living and active and able to cut so deep into my soul that it can separate out that which was dead and dying and needed to be removed from that which was alive in God and needed to be strengthened.

In ***Lamentations 3***, which describes Jeremiah's time of great suffering, it is clear that in the lowest of lows, Jeremiah remembered the promises of God and the Word of God gave Him hope and life.

Lamentations 3:19-33

The thought of my suffering and homelessness is bitter beyond words. I will

never forget this awful time, as I grieve over my loss. Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this: The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning. I say to myself, "The Lord is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him!" The Lord is good to those who depend on him, to those who search for him. So it is good to wait quietly for salvation from the Lord. And it is good for people to submit at an early age to the yoke of his discipline: Let them sit alone in silence beneath the Lord's demands. Let them lie face down in the dust, for there may be hope at last. Let them turn the other cheek to those who strike them and accept the insults of their enemies. For no one is abandoned by the Lord forever. Though he brings grief, he also shows compassion because of the greatness of his unfailing love. For he does not enjoy hurting people or causing them sorrow.

Jeremiah had hope because God is a God of promises and He is a God who fulfills every single promise He makes; it is just a matter of time. The promises of the Lord's love, mercy, faithfulness, salvation, and goodness carried Jeremiah through the the fires of purification. Jeremiah was absolutely convinced that there would be an end to his suffering and he would once again know the Lord's compassion because of the greatness of His unfailing love. He understood the Lord had purpose in his suffering and therefore said it is good for a person to wait quietly for the Lord's salvation and to sit in silence and submit to the Lord's yoke of discipline. As a body, we have been somewhat awful at handling this part. We have not sat silent and submitted during much of our affliction. Rather, we have complained, kvetched, cursed, and fought the Lord all the way; but like Jeremiah we are learning to sit and

wait in confidence, and it is a beautiful thing.

Paul is another man who came to understand this truth. He found that not only were God's promises medicine for his pain, they were actually the elixir that brought him great joy in the midst of his trials and tribulations (and his troubles were many). I know it sounds crazy, but this is how God desires us to live in hope.

Romans 5:1-5

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

This is glorious and reveals God's magnificent purpose in taking us through trials and tribulations: that the love of God may be poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit. As the fire burns off the dross, there is more and more room for the Spirit to live in and through our lives fulfilling the ultimate *Design Point*: it is no longer I who live but Christ that lives in me. And the evidence of His life in ours is the outflow of His divine *agape* love. But, for that to be our reality, we must go through tribulations and wait on the Lord trusting ourselves to the promises of God. In fact, Paul says we can exult, revel, gloat, and glory in our tribulations confident

in what they will produce: perseverance, proven character, hope (which does not disappoint) and love. That is why I keep telling you to embrace the fire, ask for it, and dive into God's purposes for your life; the result will be glorious. Besides, life on this earth without the divine love of God is absolutely futile and selfish. Therefore, don't fear the pathway of death. Walk forward confident that on this pathway He will fully provision you with His promises; and, if you cling to them, if you adhere your soul to the Lord, you will not just endure, but you will grow and exult in His marvelous wisdom for your life and it will be proven out in your love.

In order to fully embrace this perspective, it brings us back to the three basic things that you must believe—just three things. If you believe these three things, with all their implications, then you will live in hope and know the love of God and be able to withstand anything and everything and be able to wait in confidence. 1) Jesus is Lord. He is in control of every tiny detail of your life, without exception. He has been behind every wound and every source of joy. He is it and there is no other. The buck stops with Him. 2) God is good and there is no other who can make this claim. God alone is good; thus, everything He allows, permits, and directs in your life is good whether or not it feels good. 3) You do not belong to this world; you are an alien and a stranger. Therefore, if you do not belong to this world, then you should not be so upset when the Lord cuts you away from this world and circumcises your soul from all its connections to this earthly kingdom. Hold to these three truths and you will know hope. It will fill you and flow from your life and you will exult as you wait on the Lord to fulfill His promises in your life.

King David was a man well accustomed to pain as well as to waiting on God to fulfill His promises. In fact, he waited many years from the day God promised that

he would be king until the day the promise was fulfilled. Between these two time periods, David went through many tribulations through which God built into his soul endurance, proven character, and hope—a hope that does not disappoint. For example, in a time of great suffering David wrote *Psalm 130*. I want you to get a hold of the depth of his confidence in the character and nature of God. David feared the Lord. His faith was strong, and this faith produced in him a powerful hope.

Psalm 130

From the depths of despair, O Lord, I call for your help. Hear my cry, O Lord. Pay attention to my prayer. Lord, if you kept a record of our sins, who, O Lord, could ever survive? But you offer forgiveness that we might learn to fear you. I am counting on the Lord; yes, I am counting on him. I have put my hope in his word. I long for the Lord more than sentries long for the dawn, yes, more than sentries long for the dawn. O Israel, hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is unfailing love. His redemption overflows. He himself will redeem Israel from every kind of sin.

Wow, this is incredible. What confidence, trust, and desire in and for the Lord. David said he was counting on Him and put his hope in His Word. In other words, He was willing to wait on the Lord. This is how we are to live—this is it. He knew God was dependable, reliable, and completely trustworthy (David believed in His name). And what did this trust birth in David's heart? He longed for the Lord. He just wanted Him and wanted more of His unfailing love. This desire, this yearning,

is a beautiful result of trusting in His name, fearing Him, and waiting on Him. I know for me that is exactly what my trials and tribulations have birthed in my soul, a desire for more of Him. That is what He wants to birth in your soul as well.

Think of that root word for “wait” – to adhere through piercing. It’s as if the troubles the Lord brings pierce our soul giving us the opportunity, through them, to be like David and adhere to the Lord. In other words, the pain is a prerequisite to our desire. The pain births intimacy. But when we take matters in to our own hands or seek out our own form of comfort during our tribulations, then we never come to know the Lord in this way. Intimacy with God is built through waiting in confidence on the Lord. It brings forth desire and yearning, and expectation. Again, that is why Jeremiah said:

Lamentations 3:24-32

“The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, therefore I have hope in Him. The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him. It is good that he waits silently for the salvation of the Lord. It is good for a man that he should bear the yoke in his youth. Let him sit alone and be silent since He has laid it on him. Let him put his mouth in the dust, perhaps there is hope. Let him give his cheek to the smiter, let him be filled with reproach. For the Lord will not reject forever, for if He causes grief, then He will have compassion according to His abundant lovingkindness.

Press in to the fire, press into the knife and the work that God is doing in your

soul. And confidently wait on Him for He is good to those who wait for Him to the person who seeks Him. Don't take a short cut. Don't press into your flesh. Don't surrender to your emotions. Don't seek comfort in the places that will only cause you more pain. Great is His faithfulness. This I recall to mind, therefore I have hope. The Lord's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassion never fail. They are new every morning. Bet your life on this truth. This is a promise God will always fulfill. Wait on Him; for He does not enjoy hurting us or causing us sorrow, it is just a necessary part His extracting what is dead and dying in order that we might live. It is how He builds intimacy, trust, and joy.

When David was in the wilderness of Judah being hunted down like a dog by his own king, he wrote *Psalm 62*. By the way, David refused to help God fulfill His promise to tear the kingdom from Saul and give it to David, though he had ample opportunity. Instead, David chose to fear the Lord and to wait.

Psalm 62:5-8

Let all that I am wait quietly before God, for my hope is in him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will not be shaken. My victory and honor come from God alone. He is my refuge, a rock where no enemy can reach me. O my people, trust in him at all times. Pour out your heart to him, for God is our refuge.

There is that instruction again: wait quietly before God. David could do this despite the terror of being hunted by the King, because he had made his decision

to adhere his soul to the Lord. He was pierced through for the Lord; and from that decision he would not relent, no matter what he was going through. He chose to fear the Lord and place his hope in God despite the difficulty of the pathway which God prescribed for David. As a young boy, David decided that God was the only ground upon which he would stand. He knew that with his hope fixed on God, he would always be safe and secure knowing God would fulfill his word to David, it was just a matter of time. This is how we should live. Jeremiah, Paul, and David have given us the example to follow; and so did Abraham. That is why God says:

Isaiah 51:1-2

Listen to me, all who hope for deliverance—all who seek the Lord! Consider the rock from which you were cut, the quarry from which you were mined. Yes, think about Abraham, your ancestor, and Sarah, who gave birth to your nation. Abraham was only one man when I called him. But when I blessed him, he became a great nation.

God will fulfill every promise He has ever made; it is just a matter of time. You can wait on the Lord. Let yourself be pierced and adhere to Him alone. Make the decision to follow in the footsteps of Abraham, Jeremiah, David, and Paul. You have been cut from a magnificent quarry. As it says in ***Hebrews 6:11-12***, “And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you will not be sluggish, ***but imitators*** of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” Accordingly, don’t take matters

into your own hands. Don't grab for temporary relief from your pain. Let your pain have its perfect work in your soul. Let it produce in you endurance, proven character, hope that does not disappoint, and the divine love of the Lord.

Let the Lord's promises be your comfort. Turn to them; turn to His Word, and let them ease the terror, the tension, the anxiety, the fear, and all the turmoil that you feel when you think things are so out of control. "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (*Romans 15:4-5*). Therefore, rest in His promises, be hopeful, fully confident, that as one of the chosen **beloved** nothing is ever out of control. Jesus is Lord; He is good; and, because you do not belong to this world, you must be detached and cut away from its grip. You must be pierced and attached into the Lord. It is necessary, but your suffering will be only for a little time; in this you can hope. And you will find that if you wait on the Lord it will birth deep intimacy and desire—a yearning for more and more of Him. As I said before, let the fire do its work. You will not regret it.

We will stop here and pick up again with this concept of waiting in hope.

Let's pray.