

[Faith, Hope & Love_Part29](#)

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.”

We are studying **hope** and its connection to waiting on the Lord and the fear of the Lord. Last week we studied that it is never good to try and help God out with the fulfillment of His promises by taking matters into your own hands. It always produces the worst kind of fruit in our lives. We also discussed the reality that God wants to be the ointment to soothe both our pain and the terror within our soul. He is the one who detailed out and prescribed the trials and tribulations that we go through; thus, He is the one most perfectly suited to be our help. And the Lord has equipped us with various promises to be our provision during our time of waiting. The Lord said that His promises will always revive us and strengthen us; we therefore need to dig into the promises of God. Some of these are what He has spoken in the Word and some are things He has spoken personally to you, to me, and to us. Hold to them, read them, memorize them, keep them fresh on your mind; they will comfort you in all your trouble.

With that said, I want to take a moment to speak about the promises which God gave me, which we talked about last week, and consider them in light of God asking each person in this body to take responsibility for the role He has assigned to them. Many, if not most, of those promises are not just my promises, they are extended

to you as a consequence of the role we have in each other's lives. He may have given them to me even before I knew you, but His promise to fulfill them in my life, by definition of the unity He has brought us into, is His promise to fulfill them in your life. Even the ones that seem to be exclusive to me (like the signet ring or the new threshing instrument) will be played out in your life as a consequence of your relationship with me and my role in your life. Those promises have been powerful and a source of great hope and expectation. They were my life-line during times of distress; and, the Lord wants you to not just stand behind me, but to hold to these promises as I do. Some of these promises are already coming to fruition: the whole thing about the trees and the jewels. But there is so much more. We are only scratching the surface of God setting things in to motion to fulfill these promises to me, to you, to us. Now, with the responsibility God has asked you to take in this body, I want you to own them.

For instance, I want you to understand that along with me you are His personal confirmation of His covenant with His people. You are a light to guide all nations to Him, you are to open the eyes of the blind, free the captives from prison, and release those who sit in dark dungeons. He promised to fill me to overflowing and would even tell me the future before it happens; and He will do the same for you. We already know He tells us the future before it happens; with that promise there is no question. He told us about the flood, and the flood happened. And next is the fire, you just wait and see.

God makes promises and He has made us many. I want you to please take the responsibility and know them, own them, and let those promises comfort you—no matter how ostentatious they may be (and some of them are pretty out there). Let

His promises be the ointment to soothe the pain and the terror in your soul while He takes you through your time of preparation to fulfill these promises. And this is an important point I want to make. God always has to prepare us to be the men or the women who can live out the promises He made. It is part of the deal. He gives you an amazing and awesome promise and then He has to prepare you to be able to handle its fulfillment in your life—just like He did with David through those long years where he was transformed from a shepherd to a king. And that is why so many of you are in the fire right now. It is how He is preparing you for all the amazing things we have ahead of us.

Press into the fire and let Him scrape off the dross. Press into the knife and let Him finish cutting out what is dead and dying so you can find life in Him. When it is done, not only will you experience more of Him and understand more deeply His lovingkindness, you will be able to be the man or woman through whom He can fulfill His amazing promises. And that is when the promises turn from your HOPE and your life-line during troubles to your joy and satisfaction. Hold to the promises, take responsibility for them, read them, memorize them, keep them fresh on your mind; and they will comfort you in all your trouble and ultimately be an incredible source of joy as you come realize that God always does everything He says, it is just a matter of time. And with that let's pick up again 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.

Those who fear the Lord and hope in His lovingkindness can confidently say: “**Our soul waits for the Lord.**” As we studied last week, this means that, having our souls pierced in order that we might adhere to the Lord, we will not take matters in to our own hands. We will hate and despise anything and anyone (including ourselves) that tempt us to make any accusation against the Lord’s lovingkindness. In addition, we will refuse to reach out to this world to find comfort. Instead, we will cling to His promises and wait on the Lord to fulfill each and every one of them—for He always does, it is just a matter of time. And in this truth we can always hope.

Accordingly, I want to spend some more time on this concept of waiting. There is real substance to “why” we should wait and “why” it is good to attach your hope onto the Lord. Let’s turn to ***Psalm 130*** which we touched on last week.

Psalm 130:5-7

I wait for the Lord, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than the watchmen for the morning; indeed, more than the watchmen for the morning. O Israel, hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is lovingkindness, and with Him is abundant redemption.

Waiting on the Lord’s lovingkindness to deliver our soul from death and to keep us alive during times of want more often than not “feels” horrible; and the

temptation to grab for something, anything, to relieve the pain is enticing; but it is not worth it. The Psalmist has clearly learned his lessons from the mistakes of his past. That is why he says, I bind myself to the Lord, my soul does twist itself together with the Lord, and in His Word do I hope. A different Hebrew word for “wait” is used in this passage than is used in ***Psalm 33:20***. This word is very similar in concept; but, instead of being pierced through in order to adhere to the Lord, it means to bind oneself to the Lord or to adhere as in twisting together and wrapping around. The Psalmist declares: my soul is twisted and bound to the Lord. In fact, he is so committed to this that he compares it to a watchman who has been up all night and is just fixated on the horizon waiting and waiting for the sun to break through the darkness so he can be relived. Yes, the Psalmist yearns for the Lord even more than the watchman for the morning.

Clearly, for the Psalmist, this issue of waiting is not just about choice, but is an emotional issue; it is about desire. Waiting produced in him a deep desire for the Lord. And he explains why: “for with the Lord there is lovingkindness, and with Him is abundant redemption.” Did you notice that he said “with the Lord” and not “from the Lord?” This speaks of a deep relationship and intimacy. He knows God and he understands these beautiful parts of the Lord’s character and nature. The Psalmist is not just wanting what the Lord gives him, but he wants the Lord Himself. To him God is not just a “Jeanie in a bottle” who gives him his three wishes. No, God is His desire; God is His objective; God is His end and not just a means to an end. Yet, all the while he is also convinced of the inherent goodness of the Lord. With the Lord comes His lovingkindness or the personal commitment to deliver your soul from death (to free you from slavery to your *flesh*) and to keep you alive in famine. With

the Lord also comes abundant redemption, or the deliverance from your trials and tribulations and the restoration of loss. He never takes away without giving you back more in abundance. That is who He is; He abundantly redeems what we have messed up. This is a promise, and God always sticks to His promises; you just have to be willing, like the Psalmist, to adhere yourself to Him, let your soul be twisted around Him, and wait for Him to act instead of taking matters into your own hands or seeking comfort from this world.

“I wait for the Lord, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope.” The Psalmist is counting on all that he learned in the Word of God. He is counting on the Lord’s promise of redemption, deliverance, restoration, and so on. He is confident that as he turns to the Word he will find comfort and will be revived in the midst of his deepest darkness. He has become convinced of this truth, which is why he commands in an intensified way: **“O Israel, hope in the Lord.”** Wait in full confidence and assurance that everything God has said about Himself is true and every promise He has ever made to us will come to its full and complete fulfillment. This is why we must know the Word of God and we must wrap ourselves in the promises of God. “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***).

Study His Word, understand all the ways in which He speaks and then fulfills, in exacting detail, everything He said. Ask the Lord to open your eyes, and I am confident His faithfulness will overwhelm you. Over and over again the Biblical narrative is replete with stories about our God who promises (one way or another) and always fulfills. If you add to your studies of the Word, perseverance (the refusal

to take things into your own hands and help God fulfill His promises to you; and the refusal look to anyone or anywhere else for your comfort and solace), you will have hope. And with hope will come yearning and a desire for more and more intimacy with God. Like the Psalmist you will cry, my soul longs for thee.

Next I want to turn to ***Psalm 31*** where David once again addresses the hope he has in the Lord. This Psalm gives us a good picture of how one can adhere to the Lord in the midst of terror and both trust in and wait on the Lord to provide. It is also a very honest expression of David's thoughts and emotions. It shows that, as a man of great faith, David still had emotional freak-outs. For a brief moment he acts as if God abandoned him and the enemy was going to prevail. Then it is clear he shook off that foolishness and once again regained his confidence or his hope in the Lord. This Psalm gives us a picture of a man who was not afraid of God but who clearly feared the Lord. He was willing to come before the Lord with His feelings and speak honestly about them, but then he let the presence of the Lord and what he knew to be true about God naturally correct those feelings so they were submitted to the truth and not the other way around.

As we go through this Psalm, take note of David's amazing declarations about God. These declarations demonstrate that he had made the choice to fear the Lord; but he still came to God with intense emotional requests. For example, David declared that he took refuge in the Lord and then he asked the Lord to be a stronghold to save Him. The first statement is a declaration of faith while the second is a declaration of David's humanity and the practical and emotional desire we all have for God to come into the midst of our circumstances and help us. Even though he had confidence in God and trusted that God would deliver him, he still

related to God as a man in the midst of terror. He did not act as if he was above the fear or the freak-outs; nevertheless, he always settled on the truth he knew about God and the truth is what stabilized David and allowed him to utter some of the most powerful words of worship. I will highlight some of this as we go through it.

Psalm 31:1-5

In You, O Lord, **I have taken refuge**; Let me never be ashamed; in Your righteousness deliver me. Incline Your ear to me, rescue me quickly; be to me a rock of strength, a stronghold to save me. For **You are my rock and my fortress**; for Your name's sake **You will lead me and guide me**. You will pull me out of the net which they have secretly laid for me, for **You are my strength. Into Your hand I commit my spirit; you have ransomed me**, O Lord, God of truth.

As this passage demonstrates, you can have a firm unwavering trust in the Lord while at the same time emotionally connecting to God in the midst of great trouble. This is such an important part of a relationship with God. Don't think that you are just supposed to be above the pain and terror; that is not normal. Besides, such reactive emotions like when he cries out, "never let me be ashamed," "deliver me" and "rescue me quickly" are not inconsistent with confidence and hope; in fact, more often than not they coexist. What would be inconsistent is if because of the pain and terror you chose to help God out with the fulfillment of His promises or if you sought relief from the pain in someone or something in this world which God has not authorized. But feeling the pain and the craziness associated with your trials

it is perfectly normal.

I also want you to notice that David actually took refuge in God, which is different than just asking God to be his refuge. David was not passive; he chose to run to God instead of to anything else and bet His life on the name of the Lord. When he says, “You are my rock and my fortress,” “You will lead me and guide me,” and “You will pull me out of the net,” David is expressing what is—not what he hopes to be. There is no question that the Lord had shown Himself strong to David because David chose to fear Him; accordingly, David’s full confidence is in the Lord (he knows he will be rescued) yet he feels safe and secure enough in the relationship to communicate to the Lord that he is concerned about his practical circumstances. Hence, he prays: “Let me never be ashamed; in Your righteousness deliver me.”

David also had made the choice to commit his spirit to the Lord knowing that the Lord had ransomed him or delivered him. Now clearly, David’s circumstances had not yet changed; but he knew the promises God made to him. He rested in those promises such that he was convinced that his soul had already been plucked away and he had already been delivered, it was just a matter of time for it to be proven out. The Hebrew is very clear on this matter. David feared the Lord and hoped—or had full confidence—in the Lord’s lovingkindness to both deliver his soul from death and to keep him alive in these dark times.

Some of you may think that what David was going through was perhaps not all that difficult, so he could easily say these things. However, to get some insight as to the magnitude of David’s suffering (which we will get to in verses **9-13**), understand that this was also a prophetic utterance which Jesus Himself would say when He was on the cross bearing the full weight of the world’s sin. Literally, with

His last breath, Jesus pulled from these prophetic words and cried out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit” (*Luke 23:46*). With this foreshadowing of future events, I believe that David was going through some pretty horrific times as God was preparing him to live out the promises God made him.

Psalm 31:6-8

I hate those who regard vain idols, but **I trust in the Lord**. I will rejoice and be glad in Your lovingkindness, because You have seen my affliction; You have known the troubles of my soul, and You have not given me over into the hand of the enemy; **You have set my feet in a large place**.

This is proof that David feared the Lord; he hated what was not God and trusted the Lord. He would not accept a cheap substitute for God, as so many people have. As a result, he knew that, despite his pain, he was in the safest place possible and therefore chose to trust in the Lord. Notice that he says he will rejoice and be glad in the Lord’s lovingkindness. In the Hebrew this is a statement of certain intent, resolve, and determination. David is saying that he has made the choice and will continue to choose to rejoice and be glad. How amazing is that. In the same way that we can choose to be a victim and wallow in our sadness and the pain of our circumstances, we can also choose to rejoice and be glad. David gives us the motivation: God knows what He has prescribed for our lives; and even though it seems rough, difficult and filled with terror, the truth is He has set our feet in a large place. Thus, we are always safe and secure regardless of how things feel. We

are never truly at risk no matter how risky things may seem. This is an important lesson. Because Jesus is the Lord, because only God is good, and because we are aliens and strangers in this place, we are never truly at risk even though so often it feels that way. This is why the Spirit told us that we must walk by faith and not by sight (**2 Corinthians 5:7**).

Psalm 31:9-13

Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eye is wasted away from grief, my soul and my body also. For my life is spent with sorrow and my years with sighing; my strength has failed because of my iniquity, and my body has wasted away. Because of all my adversaries, I have become a reproach, especially to my neighbors, and an object of dread to my acquaintances; those who see me in the street flee from me. I am forgotten as a dead man, out of mind; I am like a broken vessel. For I have heard the slander of many, terror is on every side; while they took counsel together against me, they schemed to take away my life.

David was intimate with God's need to circumcise his life from this world; but he clearly asks the Lord to be gracious in His dealings. At this point, David was physically and emotionally wiped out. He felt run over by both his own iniquity and by the constant threat of his enemies. After all, terror was on every side. I believe this speaks to not just his physical enemies but also to the demonic attack against his life. Because of David's own sin, the enemy obtained the legal right to pursue and afflict David. But David did not allow himself be overrun with the victim

mentality. He was completely honest with how he felt, but he turned to the Lord instead of to anyone or anything else. He did not take matters into his own hands but trusted himself to the Lord.

Psalm 31:14-18

But as for me, **I trust in You**, O Lord, I say, "**You are my God.**" **My times are in Your hand**; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and from those who persecute me. Make Your face to shine upon Your servant; save me in Your lovingkindness. Let me not be put to shame, O Lord, for **I call upon You**; let the wicked be put to shame, let them be silent in Sheol. Let the lying lips be mute, which speak arrogantly against the righteous with pride and contempt.

Those are powerful declarations. It's as if David captures for us, using his own expressions, the "three things" we must believe: "You are my God" is equivalent to the fact that Jesus is Lord. "I trust in You" is equivalent to the truth that only God is good and worthy of our trust. And "My times are in Your hand" is equivalent to David knowing that he does not belong to this world, but is God's special possession. David's reveals to us the life these truths have birthed into his soul as his trust overcomes the pain of his circumstances. He believes in the Lord's lovingkindness, so he calls on the Lord to bring judgment and retribution on the enemy. Once again, I believe this is layered and he is not just praying against his physical enemies, but against the demonic spirits that have accused David before the Assembly. Remember, ***Ephesians 6:12-13*** makes it clear that "our struggle is

not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." We can pray in the same way: let the wicked be put to shame, let them be silent in hell. Let the lying lips be mute, which speak arrogantly against us with pride and contempt. God will hear this prayer, as it is according to His will, which is why He tells us to pray in **Matthew 6:13**: "deliver us from the evil one."

Psalm 31:19-22

How great is Your goodness, which You have stored up **for those who fear You**, which You have wrought for those who take (*and continue to take*) refuge in You, before the sons of men! You hide them in the secret place of Your presence from the conspiracies of man; You keep them secretly in a shelter from the strife of tongues. Blessed be the Lord, for **He has made marvelous His lovingkindness to me in a besieged city**. As for me, I said in my alarm, "I am cut off from before Your eyes;" nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications when I cried to You.

David knows that God is not only good, but is confident God will deal with him from His abundant goodness. But take note, as with the promise of the Lord's lovingkindness, this promise is also contingent. This special relationship is reserved for those who *fear him* and will continually choose to take refuge in Him. God convinced David of these truths and made them marvelous to him in a besieged city or in the midst of great trials and tribulations. This is not a response of a man

who is rejoicing after the fact; David made the choice to rejoice, real time, in the midst of his terror. He chose to wait on the Lord to deliver on His promises; and like Paul in ***Romans 5:2***, he learned to exult in the midst of his tribulations. How amazing is that. David proves that you can bet your life on the character and nature of God despite what you feel and despite what you might be going through.

Clearly, David is not saying that he handled things perfectly. He freaked out. In a time of emotional panic and alarm, he thought he was cut off from God. But he knew the Lord heard him when he cried out to Him and he settled on the truth that God would be his protector and his deliverance. David then used the truth like a weapon to submit his feelings to his faith. This shows us that in a relationship of intimacy with the Lord, it is normal in our humanity to have times of freaking out. That is not inconsistent with fearing God. God is so patient and gentle. He understands our humanity and He does not shame David or punish him for feeling this way. It was ok; and given the magnitude of David's suffering, I believe it was expected. Hence, the statement that the Lord's goodness was stored up and wrought (or fashioned) for him. It was ready and prepared for this time because David feared God and took refuge in Him.

I love the fact that David was not controlled by shame. He never hides any of this stuff from us. He let his humanity and his failures be written down for all to see, as he did his faith and love for God. Again, this speaks of a man who knew his God so well, he could be confident in the depth and power of that relationship even when he would totally blow it. No wonder he could say: "How great is Your goodness."

Psalm 31:23-24

O love the Lord, all you His godly ones! The Lord preserves the faithful and fully recompenses the proud doer. Be strong and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in the Lord.

As David finishes this Psalm, he commands us to love the Lord and he points us to the fact that God is worthy of our love. David gives us a reason why we can obey this command, and he ties it to the character and nature of our God. The Lord preserves and continues to preserve over and over again (it is a *participle*) the faithful; and He **harshly** punishes over and over again those who are proud (it is in the Hebrew *piel*—hence the harsh or intensified nature of the punishment—and it is a *participle*). And with this as our foundation of truth, the Spirit of God through David commands us to be strong, or in the Hebrew to fasten upon, to seize, or to apprehend the truth (which is very similar to the command to wait on the Lord) and God will give courage to the heart of those who hope and continue to hope in the Lord (it is in the third person *causative*—similar to the Greek *passive*).

As with David, when we turn to God and God alone and forego all our coping mechanisms that we use to survive the difficulties of this life (and as we have learned, we have many coping and self-protective mechanisms), God will do His part. We will be strengthened and have the courage in our hearts to go forward despite the circumstances of our lives. But here is the chicken and the egg. Some of you are waiting to let go of those coping mechanisms once God breathes courage into your heart. I have to say, you will be waiting a long time. God wants you to know Him and be convinced, like David, that you are safe and secure and therefore

willingly release all those coping mechanisms and no longer seek ways to pacify the pain in your heart. If you do, then you will know His stability, security, strength and courage for He will breathe it into your heart. But you must choose to fear the Lord, you must choose to bet your life on His name—on His character and nature, trusting that He will always do what He says, it is just a matter of time. Make the choice and your heart will take courage for He will do it. Become one who can say along with the rest of us: **Our soul waits for the Lord.**

Let's Pray