

THE CHALLENGE OF HOPE

Text: Psalm 33:17

Key Word: Hope

Key Thought: We must Be Aware of the Wise & Unwise Choices We Have to Gain Hope from.

Wildfires in Lytton, BC; Extreme flooding in Langley BC; Hurricanes Henry and Ida; Glen Canyon Dam on the Colorado River had a water shortage and of course COVID-19. Add to that earthquakes, tornadoes, volcanoes, These are just samples of recent headlines trying to capture the hearts and minds of its readers. It is very difficult to gain much hope by listening to the latest news headlines. People are looking for hope in what is often called a hopeless world.

****** A man walked into a restaurant in a strange town. The waitress approached him and asked him for his order. Feeling a little lonely and hoping for a good meal in a friendly environment, he replied, *“I’d like the meat loaf and a kind word.”*

When the waitress returned with the meat loaf, the man asked her, *“And where’s the good word?”*

The waitress placed the meat loaf in front of him, bent down and whispered into his ear, *“Don’t eat the meat loaf.”***

****** **Customer:** *“Your sign says, you’ll give fifty dollars to anyone who orders something that you cannot supply. Well, I would like to have an elephant ear sandwich.”*

Waiter: *“Oh no . . . Were going to have to pay you the fifty dollars.”*

Customer: *“No elephant ears, huh?”*

Waiter: *“Oh, we’ve got lots of them . . . But we’ve run of those big buns.”***

Bob Phillips

“The World’s Greatest Collection of Clean Jokes”

pp. 87, 90, 91

What Have We Placed Our Hope In?

I. Do We Place our Hope in Horses (Psalm 33:17)?

II. Do We Place our Hope in Fortresses (Zechariah 9:12)?

III. Do We Place our Hope in God (I Timothy 4:10)?

I. Do We Place our Hope in Horses (Psalm 33:17)?

“A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save.”

Psalm 33:17

Voltaire once scoffed, “*They say that God is always for the big battalions.*” Other secular humanists would agree with him that force and power will eventually prevail. **There is nothing wrong with using the strength of a horse, but we’re not to trust in its strength.** Even the mighty and swift horse must receive its strength from God. Why should we trust in the creature and not the creator?

“Yet I will show love to the house of Judah; and I will save them – not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but by the LORD their God.”

Hosea 1:7

God uses the weak things of this world to confound the wise (I Corinthians 1:27). It is when we’re weak that we are really strong (II Corinthians 12:10).

*** Elmer Bedinger once told the remarkable story of a B – 17 bomber that flew on a mission over Germany and in the later days of World War II. The plane was hit several times by shells and flak, with some of the hits directly in the fuel tank. Miraculously, the bomber did not explode.

When it finally landed, they discovered eleven unexploded twenty-millimeter shells in the fuel tank! The shells were dismantled, and to the amazement of everyone, all of them were empty of explosives. Inside one of the shells was a note written in Czechoslovakian. Translated, it read, “*This is all we can do for now.*”

A member of the Czech underground movement, working in a German ammunition factory, had omitted the explosives in at least eleven of the twenty - millimeter shells on the assembly line. That worker must have often wondered if the quiet work he was doing to subvert the Nazi war effort was going to make any difference whatsoever to the outcome of the war.” ***

Charles R. Swindoll
“*The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart*”
P. 275

II. Do We Place our Hope in Fortresses (Zechariah 9:12)?

*“Return to your fortresses, **O prisoners of hope**; even now I announced that I’ll restore twice as much to you.”*

Zechariah 9:12

What are the fortresses in our life that we trust in? Are there walls of defense that we have erected that have failed us? Have we built fortresses of **knowledge, strength, influence, finances?** It is not wrong to have such blessings. It is only foolish to trust in them. The Bible has made it clear that all these things will fail on the day of God’s judgment.

God on the other hand has given His people a **Place of Security**. There are fortresses for the people God. These are not constructed with brick and mortar. No one is wise enough to confound its stability. No weapon can destroy the fortress that God places around his people. No President, Prime Minister, Army General, or any of the number of influential people on earth can overcome the fortress of God. No economical disaster can shake its foundation.

In his best-selling book, *“The Millennium Bug,”* a computer expert by the name of Michael S. Hyatt painted a grim picture.

“12:01 A.M. January 1, 2000: Your electricity goes off. Phones aren’t working. The computer at your local bank crashes. The police and 911 are nowhere to be found. The illusion of social stability is about to be shattered . . . And nothing can stop it . . . The results will be catastrophic.

Dave Hunt

“Y2K - A Reasoned Response to Mass Hysteria”
p. 9

We were told that as of November 1998, only 40 percent of all European countries had gotten around to planning what to do about the Y2K bug. We were also warned that the cost to repair the problem could run more than a **trillion dollars**. The world became fearful that missiles would be set off; water plants would fail; banking would come to an abrupt halt.

But then the evaluations began to change drastically and didn’t appear to offer the same concern. We were then being told that it would ONLY be an *“annoyance or a speed bump in the road”* (Tony Hampel - Sun Microsystems Inc.). Could it only be a *“tremor and not a quake”* (Alex Patelis - Goldman Sachs Investment Banking). Rick Egelton, an economist with the Bank of Montreal likens it to a *“snowstorm.”*

III. Do We Place our Hope in God (I Timothy 4:10)?

“ . . . We have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe.”

I Timothy 4:10

When we take time to consider the options, we can clearly see that stability can only be found in God. He has proven himself over and over. He has never failed us. He will never fail us. Everything else is doomed to fail. When all is gone, God will still reign as King and LORD.

A. His Uncompromising Word - Psalm 119:74; 130:5

For centuries men have tried to destroy the Word of the LORD. It has been a futile effort. The Bible makes it clear that God’s Word is an eternal Word. The heavens and the earth will pass away, but God’s Word will last forever (Matthew 24:35).

“May those who fear you rejoice when they see me, for I have put my hope in your word.”

Psalm 119:74

“I wait for LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I put my hope.”

Psalm 130:5

It gives me such assurance to know that what God said yesterday still applies today. He does not change like the waves or the tides. He doesn’t blow in today like a cloud and disappear tomorrow. He has given to us His everlasting Word. We have a heritage of the Word of God that the patriarchs and the prophets built upon in the past. He never failed Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel. He poured His Word into His disciples. They in turn carried it to the ends of the earth.

We live in the **end time generation** that people are looking for the uncompromising Word of God. May God give us strength so we do not waver as **ambassadors of its truth.**

Let us not be deceived by those building massive empires to the credit of their own name. We have been called to be servants of God, to build His kingdom and to promote His name. He is to be exalted. He must increase while we must decrease. Our world won’t be saved by the wisdom of men. It needs the wisdom of God. That is why the LORD gave us His Word.

III. Do We Place our Hope in God (I Timothy 4:10)? (Contd.)

B. His Unfailing Love - Psalm 147:11

“The LORD delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love.”

Psalm 147:11

God’s love is higher than the heavens and deeper than the sea. It is beyond our ability to fully understand. We don’t fully understand how the computers in our cars work and yet we don’t stop enjoying the benefits of having a car. It is best to receive the love of God and not to try to understand the full details of the love of God.

When God wants to drill a man,
And thrill a man,
And skill a man;
When God wants to mold a man
To play the noblest part,

When he yearns with all his heart
To create so great and bold a man
That all the world shall be amazed,
Watch his methods, watch his ways –
How he ruthlessly perfects
Whom he royally elects.

How he hammers him and hurts him,
And with mighty blows, converts him
Into trial shapes of clay
Which only God understands,
While his tortured heart is crying,
And he lifts beseeching hands.

How he bends but never breaks
When his good he undertakes.
How he uses whom he chooses
And with every purpose, fuses him,
By every act, induces him
To try his splendor out.
God knows what he’s about.

Michael Greene
“Illustrations for Biblical Preaching”
1420 pp. 383, 384

III. Do We Place our Hope in God (I Timothy 4:10)? (Contd.)

C. His Unending Strength - Isaiah 40:31

“But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Isaiah 40:31

As for me, I really don't see much of a challenge in where to place my hope in. I clearly realize that my strength is very limited. I would much rather exchange my strength with God's strength. His strength is **unending** while mine is **ever failing**. This world and its problems are way too big for me to handle. Even the work of the church is too big for anyone to handle. Just problems related to one person's life can be overwhelming.

We would be wise not to trust in what the Bible calls *“the arm of flesh.”* Just when we need it to hold us up, it will let us down. Only God will be there is strong as ever.

“A friend will strengthen you with his prayers, bless you with his love, and encourage you with his hope.”

E. C. McKenzie
“14,000 Quips and Quotes”
p. 478

May God give us all the wisdom and the strength to place our hope in Him. We do not have the time to back track. It's time for the church of Christ to stand strong. It needs to be a haven and a hospital. We must point people to One who is greater than we are. Our hope must lie in Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world and Him alone.

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Date: Dec 26/21

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: Father God - F

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