

THE MISSION OF FOUNTAINGATE - PART III
Gently Offering Hope in a Hurting World
The Rewards of Hope

Text: Jeremiah 17:5 – 8, 18, 19

Key Word: Hope

Key Thought: There Are at Least Two Types of Rewards for Hope.

The Bible uses many words to describe our English word for “*hope*” such as “*confidence, expectations, trust, leaning on, waiting on, looking for a refuge.*” This simple word carries with it a broad emphasis of thought. It is a subject that needs to be emphasized today. How many times have we heard of someone giving up their hope? Our city and area have had many incidents that prove that people have lost hope in life itself. It’s devastating for those left to deal with their emotions

In the midst of a world that is full of chaos, we need to hear about good reports of hope

*** A few years ago a pilot was forced to make an emergency landing on a lake in the Northwest Territories. His radio was inoperable because of the crash. He tried several times to notify hovering aircraft of his need, but without success.

On his 51st day he was able to summon help. When asked how he survived the -30 degrees centigrade weather for so long he replied, “*I just knew that someone would arrive to help me.*”

We often quaintly use the expression, “*I sure hope so*” and thereby underestimate the incredible potential of true hope. That kind of hope “flip - flop hope” carries with it an uncertainty that is not known with the true hope that is found in the Bible. **The only hope that God gives us is a full confidence and expectation.** The hope that the world entices us to embrace leads us to frustration and disappointment and despair.

There are really only two kinds of hope. A true hope and a false hope. Each carry with them a reward.

What Are the Two Types of Rewards for Hope?

I. A REWARD OF FALSE HOPE
II. A REWARD OF TRUE HOPE

I. THE REWARD OF FALSE HOPE

A. A Curse for Turning Away from God

“Thus says the LORD: cursed [with great evil] is the strong man who trusts and relies on frail man, making weak [human] flesh his arm, and whose mind and heart turns aside from the Lord.”

Jeremiah 17:5 AMP

There is often not only a false hope today, but also a false belief that God will honour us even when we turn to a feeble mankind for help. **We have so many self-help groups that are trying to convince us that even a little help is worth all the effort.**

“Probably nothing in the world arouses more false hope than the first four hours of the diet.”

Statistics prove that most of this kind of help is TEMPORARY at best. It usually diverts from the real issues. **The result of man helping man has led to a gradual and eventually a complete removal of God from the problem.** Once God is removed, a vast source of help is eliminated. Our world has come to believe that it doesn't need God. We keep being told that we with all our wisdom, wealth and have become the answer – not God.

The reward of such a false hope is pitiful. It is a curse upon those who turn to others for the answer. **As this false hope increases, curses will outnumber blessings.** Our news media is a sad commentary of this fact.

B. A Lack of Prosperity

“He will be like a bush in the wastelands; he will not see prosperity when it comes. He will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in the salt land where no one lives.”

Jeremiah 17:6

Jeremiah uses a vivid description to open our eyes to the true condition of another reward of false hope. He paints a picture of a shrub in a desert that is deluded of any rain. Clouds may come, but they also pass by without leaving any rain behind. The land remains parched.

Jude called the godless prophets of his day,

“. . . clouds without rain.”

Jude 12

I. THE REWARD OF FALSE HOPE (Contd.)

B. A Lack of Prosperity (Contd.)

False hope can ONLY offer us disappointment in the end. Those encourage us to follow them in this direction speak of overwhelming rewards but have proven over and over again to offer nothing of value in the end. Those who trust in these leaders of false hope become dry and useless.

Jeremiah goes on to say that they will dwell in a salt land. Salt has many good features if it is used properly. But salt can become dangerous to plant life, animal life and fish life when it is used in an over abundant quantity. When it mentions that they will dwell in a “*salt land*,” he is saying that the salt is in abundance. Salt will eventually consume any moisture that is present.

An ungodly man (much like this salt) drains anything good that is left in us. He never gives something without expecting something in return. The major reason why these people try to help others is because of what they can gain. That’s a strong statement but once it is evaluated people can see the truth in it. Our world is full of people who will help only when it is convenient or if there is something for them to gain in it.

“You cannot be your brother’s keeper if you are caged by selfishness.”

Anonymous

“Self preservation is the first law of nature, but **self sacrifice is the highest rule of grace.**”

Anonymous

“The world has been controlled by two parties; those who have governed by *‘love of self to the point of contempt for God’* and those who are governed by *‘love of God to the point of contempt for self.’*”

St. Augustine
“*The City of God*”

We can lack “*prosperity*” if we look for hope in someone who is controlled by a selfish spirit. These kinds of people will continue to tell you, “**I sure hope so.**”

II. THE REWARDS OF TRUE HOPE

A. A Blessing for Turning to God

*“But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD,
whose confidence is in him.”*

Jeremiah 17:7

A strong contrast begins to unfold as we place our hope in God. This hope is a full confidence that God will meet our need. We’re not just blessed but **“most blessed”** as the Amplified Version reads.

1. It Makes us Not Ashamed

The Bible tells us that hope in God has a number of tremendous rewards. One of those rewards is that we will not need to walk in shame.

*“And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.
3. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our
sufferings, because we know that suffering produces
perseverance;
4. perseverance, character; and character, hope.
5. **And hope does not disappoint us (hope maketh
not ashamed - KJV)**, because God has poured out
his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he
has given us.”*

Romans 5:2-5

True hope comes because God has poured Himself into us. Since God is not ashamed or disappointed, and we are created in His express image, we also are not to be ashamed or disappointed. Some may not be experiencing it but that does not mean it isn’t available through a confident hope in God.

Jeremiah learned this non-shaming hope does not come easily. He had many obstacles to overcome. By repenting of his doubt and offering words of hope he could then become a much needed spokesman for God in a time of continual tragedies among his nation.

*“Why is my pain unending and my wound grievous
and incurable? Will you be like a deceptive brook,
like a spring that fails?
19. Therefore this is what the Lord says, **‘If you
repent, I will restore you that you may serve me; if
you utter worthy, not worthless, words,** you’ll be
my spokesman. Let this people turn to you (as God’s
spokesman) but you must not turn to them.”*

Jeremiah 15:18,19

II. THE REWARDS OF TRUE HOPE (Contd.)

A. A Blessing for Turning to God (Contd.)

2. It Offers an Abundance of Prosperity

“He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in the year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”

Jeremiah 17:8

Here again we see a great contrast. The person with no hope is like a bush or a shrub that is barely surviving. The one who places his hope in God is like a tree planted in an ideal location. It not only is located by water but also near a stream indicating that the water is not stagnant but also not rushing. It gently nourishes the ground **NEAR** the stream

*** During one of our past holidays, we passed by many crystal clear streams in the Rocky Mountains. Even though the temperature was in the ‘30s, the trees planted by the streams bore rich, green leaves. You couldn’t help noticing also that many of the British Columbia trees close to the water were fruit bearing.***

The Psalmist in 1:3 speaks also of this blessing that is given to those who seek after God and His Word. The prophet Jeremiah also during his writings of Lamentations, had a hope in God that gave him a never failing blessing.

*“Yet this I called to mind and **therefore I have hope:***

22. Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.

23. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

*24. I say to myself, ‘**The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait [hope in -- KJV] for him.**’*

Lamentations 3:21 – 24

The prosperity seen in our text is that the tree has green leaves, having no worry in the time of drought and is always fruit bearing. **God’s people need to be noticeably different during times of spiritual drought.** We need to be building people up when others are falling into spiritual and emotional bankruptcy. We need to be **growing** while others are **dwindling**. We need to **arise** when others are **falling**. We need to have **peace** when others are in **turmoil**. We need to be **blessing** people when others are **cursing**. These things may not make sense in the natural. But our God is a God that continues to work supernaturally.

II. THE REWARDS OF TRUE HOPE (Contd.)

B. A Confidence for Turning to God

1. A Hope Against all Hope

The apostle Paul wrote,

“Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations.”

Romans 4:18

Prosperity can be measured in many ways. Abraham’s prosperity was witnessed by the nation that God blessed him as its patriarch. James Stockdale found prosperity in life itself.

*** In 1965, naval aviator James B. Stockdale became one of the first American pilots to be shot down during the Vietnam War. He spent seven years as a Vietnamese P. O. W., during which he was frequently tortured in an attempt to break him and to get him to denounce the U.S. involvement in the war. He was chained for days at a time with his hands over his head so that he could not even swat the mosquitoes. He eventually couldn’t bend his left knee and walked with a severe limp from having his leg broken by his captures and never reset properly. One of the worst things done to him was that he was held in isolation away from the other American P. O. W.’s and allowed to see only his guards and interrogators.

How could anyone survive 7 years of such treatment? As he looked back on his time, **Stockdale said that it was his hope that kept him alive. Hope of one day going home.** Each day could be the date of his release. Without hope, he knew that he would die as others had done. Only God can instill that kind of hope. ***

2. Joy, Peace and Trust

There is only God who can offer us a confident expectation in true hope. Everything and everyone else has the capability of failure. When we put our hope in God we will receive His rewards.

“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.”

Romans 15:13

It is very clear to me which kind of hope that I want to receive rewards from. It only makes sense to seek after the true hope. What tragedy and travesty for people to expect an overwhelming reward and end up receiving something that truly disappoints them.

I am not a horticulturalist. Yet I have discovered a secret. Just place an indoor plant in a bowl with some water and let it gently consume what it requires. I used to pour water on it. I either gave it too much water or too little. Let us search after the rewards of true hope in the right way - the gentle way. **The way that offers a long-term benefit.**

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Date: Nov 7/21

Place: FCA (revised)

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: The Solid Rock - G

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B. A Lack of Prosperity - *Jeremiah 17: 6; Jude 12*

II. THE REWARDS OF TRUE HOPE

A. A Blessing for Turning to God - *Jeremiah 17: 7*

1. It Makes us Not Ashamed - *Romans 5:5; Jeremiah 15:18,19*

2. It Offers an Abundance of Prosperity - *Jeremiah 17: 8; Lamentations 3:21 – 24*

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1. A Hope Against all Hope - *Romans 4:18*

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