

Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

The TREE OF LIFE weekly teaching summary from the week ending November 30, 1997

Tree of Life 11/30/97

The Doctrine of Hope.

Upon concluding the doctrine of the correct interpretation of history, we returned back to our main passage, Phi 1:20. So far we have translated the following in that verse "**On the basis of my intense concentration and confident expectation,**". What Paul demonstrates for us in these few words "according to my earnest expectation", is the attitude which is indicative of what is necessary for born again believers to possess in order to forge ahead in the plan of God. If we do not concentrate on God's plan and have an intense desire to fulfill it, we will at some point fall by the way side.

Next we have the antithesis of fear exemplified in, "**and hope**" meaning a confidence or a confident expectation, or something anticipated with pleasure. This is not a hope as we commonly know it as being uncertainty or a wish. The hope of the Bible is an absolute confident expectation of the future. It is dogmatically knowing that all will turn out for the glory of God as well as for your benefit and pleasure.

The word hope means to expect or look forward to with desire and confidence; a confidence in a future event; expectation of something desired. Confidence being a firm trust; reliance; self assurance, boldness; an assured state of mind, a state of trust and intimacy. Such a hope is not something which can simply be voiced and then claimed, it must stem from a firm strength of mind. This confidence must come from something that causes or justifies hope, i.e., the word of God.

The word for hope in the Greek is the word word "*elpis*", which was actually coined by the great philosopher Plato. Plato developed this word

as a concept of being a virtue. It started out meaning "*I know*" things will turn out okay. Whereas today, thousands of years later, the word hope is used more in a subjunctive mood, "*I wish*" things would turn out okay, but I'm not really sure. Plato states that human existence is determined not merely by one's intellectual perception but by the ability to recall that intellectual perception when needed. It is in such recall that hope is secured. The doctrinal translation would be, anyone can think when the going is easy, but what is important is how you think when the going becomes difficult and fraught with pressure, that is when the recall of doctrine is of the utmost importance.

The four words Plato used to develop this concept of hope are:

- * Aisthesis = perception
- * Mneme = memory
- * Elpis = hope/confidence
- * prosdokia = expectation

In the combination of these words Plato maintained that perception plus memory = hope and expectation.

This same word elpis is the word Paul used in Phi 1:20 thereby pointing to a strong and absolute confidence that at the Judgment Seat of Christ he would not be embarrassed and when he goes to heaven he will be at a much greater place than he was at on earth. Paul uses these same words by which Plato developed the concept of hope to make his claim that we should have an absolute confidence and expectation of things in our future. The future should be as much a reality to us as is the present and was the past. Such a confidence is only in accordance with our own habit of making positive decisions for God's plan. Your habitually good decisions in God's plan will make you absolutely confident to expect certain things in your future. Habit hardens the body for great exertions, strengthens the heart in great peril, and fortifies judgment against first impressions. Habit breeds that priceless quality of calmness and confidence that lightens one's task. Paul was so confident in what the word of God said that most thought of him as being arrogant.

To have meaning in life you need to have a philosophy that looks forward to something better, i.e., eternity. Col 3:2 commands us to set our minds on the things above, or to be eternity-minded rather than to fix our sight and hopes on the things of this world. If we really believe what the Bible has to say we will not love the things of this world over that which is eternal. Hope therefore, gives the believer a personal sense of destiny in regard to the future. Titus 1:2 informs us that our hope for eternal life should be an absolute confidence! In your thinking, if you have hope you

go forward to the fantastic future that is to come and bring it back into time with great strength and power to overcome your present problems. This entails three different types of hope; a confidence in your salvation/eternal life, next your rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ for your consistent positive decisions in time in accordance with the word of God, and also a confidence that the problems and difficulties of this life will also work out for your benefit.

It is who you are in your thinking which determines how you live and what you hope for. Most times our expectations and hopes are "man's" own projection of the future, not God's. Most believers don't have the confidence nor knowledge of God's word to look beyond what sight dictates to that which God promises. It is very important in spiritual warfare to remain focused on the objective. War has a way of masking the stage with scenery crudely painted with fearsome sights, once this is cleared away, and the horizon becomes unobstructed, developments will confirm one's earlier and clear convictions concerning the objective, hence we are to stick fast to our hope. This is one of the great chasms between learning and applying. To think a matter through or learn a doctrine is quite different than to experience it and apply it. It's always the experience which brings about a change of perspective. In fact, this is what the kingdom of darkness counts on. And this change of perspective is induced by the worse of scenarios, this is why we need hope for the future-clearing beyond the present smoke.

The senses usually make a more vivid impression on the mind than systematic thought does hence enters Satan's projections. This is exactly why we should give our hopes and not our fears the benefit of the doubt in low times. Fear is the antithesis of hope and the effect of fear is to multiply lies and inaccuracies whereas the effect of hope is confident expectation of the future regardless of what present circumstances may dictate.

It is the nature of man to have both good and bad expectations of the future. And as a rule most would rather believe bad news than good and thereafter cling to the tendency to exaggerate bad news. God is the source of all expectation of the future and without His word heavily saturating our souls, we will fall prey to the negative projections of this world. Though we may be involved in problems today we should be able to detach and project our focus to the future and bring that comfort back to the present for our confident expectation. What makes this possible is

one's spiritual growth. To be feeble in one's hope means that you bought the lie.

There are three doors of hope:

- 1) Hope in one's entrance into salvation for eternal life as the word of God promises, Tit 1:2; Heb 6:18.
- 2) Hope in the plan for the church age and our entrance into God's plan and our personal sense of destiny.
- 3) Eschatological hope, i.e., hope for the future state of eternity.

All believers have an eschatology that looks forward to dying and death since we know that God has provided something better to come than what we have on this earth! Our objective is for the glory of God and that glory peaks in the eternal state. So, if you are going to live in the hope that God has for you, you need to look forward to a better time than now, you need to focus on eternity. The key is in loving and glorifying God and sticking to His plan no matter what pressures arise. If you have in your soul God's hope you will be able to handle any type of problems life presents. To compromise your morals and values for the fun of today is not living in God's absolute confidence. Your estimation of the future is what gives you a fantastic edge on problem solving in time. The problems we go through are designed by the god of this world (Satan) to lure us away from God's plan, but as Gen 50:20 shows us, God can take such pressure and turn the situation into a blessing for those with hope. Actually the sufferings we go through today afford us the opportunity to strengthen our hope and glorify God. 2Co 4:7-18 describes your life as a believer IF you are willing to live in God's plan. Greatness in the eternal state takes a lot of training and suffering in this life. As heirs of Christ we are not only called to His glory but we are also called to share in His sufferings for the sake of spiritual strength, Rom 8:17. Hope and suffering are intimately related. Success based on God's standards equals endurance in His plan with absolute confidence toward the future.

If you are having trouble and are unhappy, don't look around at your circumstances for the solutions but rather, look to the future and make the proper decisions and adjustments. If God has not removed you from what you are presently going through He means for you to bear it, adapt, and look to the future with His hope for your strength. The solution to any problem never lies in the circumstance itself but in the hope of God. If you have knowledge of the future you will be able to deal with the present. You should never look at present difficulties as what someone is trying to

do to you, but what God is working in you. Rewards are not handed out by God for doing great things but by enduring pressures and sufferings and not quitting on God's plan for your life. That is where greatness awaits us. So, why complain or wallow in the weight of your sufferings today when in reality they are the basis for our rewards in the future. It is your hope in the future that insulates you against the present problems.

A person's hope is based on the estimation of what he really believes. Not what he verbally claims to believe, but what he truly adheres to in his soul. Only when the truth of God is realized can you understand that your present problems are inconsequential compared to the future of eternity. And, when you know you have a future you will know that you have a purpose now. It is up to you to train and dedicate yourself to reach the objective of glorifying God. There is only one way to deal with life and that is God's way! Living one day at a time is living for God today in the light of eternity. John 17:16 tells us that we are not of this world just as our Lord was not of this world. Our true citizenship is "**heaven**". That is our hope; that is our confidence!

[Click here to download](#)

Note: These doctrines are zipped and needs a unzipping utility to view them.

[Return to list of trees](#)

[Return to main page](#)
