

Sunday, February 7, 2010

Hope: a Confident Look at Tomorrow

from the series **My Journey with God**



Getting Focused

It is very common in our world to say “I hope.....” (you can fill in the blank). Sometimes we hope for something to happen, sometimes for something not to happen. But when you think about how we use this word “hope”—what exactly does it mean? Is it the same as using the word “wish”?



Brainstorming (a little group activity)

Take a moment in group to ponder this verse from last week—“*faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see*” (*Hebrews 11:1*). Last week was all about faith; this week is all about hope. As you pick apart this verse together, what is the difference between the two?



Time in the Word

Read **1 Peter 1:1-21** and answer the following questions.

1. Scan this passage and list all the places the word “hope” is used. Peter uses the word hope in a number of different ways, but is there something common that ties them all together?

2. The first occurrence of hope is in verse 3 where Peter says we are “given new birth into a living hope”.
 - a. Hope always has an object (what we “hope” for), so what is it that we are hoping for because of this new birth?

 - b. Why would it be called a “living hope”?? Is there such a thing as “dead hope”?

3. As you think through the opening sentence (verses 3-5), it seems like hope has an interesting time element attached to it—it has something to do with the past,

something to do with the present, and something to do with the future. Can you describe each one:

- a. Hope flows out of the past because _____ (vs3)
- b. Hope turns our eyes to the future because _____ (vs4)
- c. Hope keeps us going today because _____ (vs5)

4. It seems in Scripture hope is often that thing which is most precious to those who are suffering. Read 1:6, 2:12, 2:19-21, 3:16-17, 4:12-13.

- a. What can you say about the circumstances in which the readers of this letter are living?

- b. Why is hope such a great thing to give people who are in the midst of suffering? How does it help?

- c. What kind of people today would you say most need the gift of hope?

5. Read verses 8-9. For those whose hearts are full of hope, what are their lives like (is just a “hanging on till the end” kind of existence)?



Time for the Heart

Hope is all about being able to face today with joy because we know God owns tomorrow. We all have worries—things in our lives that steal our joy and make us dread tomorrow. What is it in your life that causes you to lack hope in the future?

Meditate on these words of Peter’s and ask God to calm your heart and fill it with joy:

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never spoil, perish, or fade—kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last times.” (1 Pet. 1:3-5)