

The Purpose of Hope Titus 2:11-15

We had just moved to Colorado, and we were all by ourselves. We had just started attending Southgate Church of the Nazarene. Ally got sick and was in pretty bad shape....

What do you do when you face moments like that? What do you do when you find yourself in the ICU ward of life? Well, I have a word for you today. It's a word that comes from the throne of God about what to do when you face those moments in life. And that word is this: Turn to the God of Hope! The God of the Bible, the God of Christianity, is the God of hope, and in these days of crushing moments for people in our church, I have found the Lord leading me to study what scripture says about that God of hope. We started this journey a couple weeks ago now with talking about **"The Promise of Hope"**. We found out that the promise of hope is that no matter what the circumstances of my life, with God things are going to work out. Maybe not the way I want, maybe not when I want, but they will work out. Even in ICU wards and cemeteries. Then last week we looked at **"The Process of Hope"**. In which we found out that there are some steps that you have to take to follow this hope. We have to open our eyes and gain the right perspective. We have to strengthen our hands to hold onto that hope. Then we found out that we have to develop our heart and let God develop us. And then finally, we found out that we have to move our feet, or in other words move out in that hope.

For this week I think we need to continue to discover this God of hope by looking at **The Purpose of hope**. I asked Todd Gordon to tell me 5 things as to what is the purpose of hope is. He said the purpose of hope is:

- To keep the Publisher's Clearing House alive!
- To be a comfort until that truly glorious day when, "The bachelor"/"The Days of Our Lives" is taken off the airways once and forever
- To shift the blame when you've blown it
- To blind you to harsh realities long enough for them to become truly catastrophic
- To keep MasterCard and Visa in business

After those answers I had to ask the question, why hope? What good does it do? Why is hope so important for a believer in the ICU or on the job site? What is God trying to accomplish in us by calling us to put our hope in him? For those answers and so much more I want us to take a look at the of **Titus 2:11-15... "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in the this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope - the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good. These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you."...Prayer.** I want to share with you this morning the purpose of hope using this particular scripture and our trail guide for this journey, Abraham. There are two critical things God is out to accomplish in our live through hope. Two critical purposes for challenging us to be a believer who is fully persuaded that God has the power to do what he promised he would do.

1) I have discovered that the one of the purposes of hope in my life as a believer is to carefully **strengthen** my faith.

I want you to notice what the bible tells us that hope does for us, **"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope."** (Titus 2:11-13) I don't know how many times I have told Christians that it is ok to say "NO". I find that true in their jobs, their families, their finances, and even their ministries. It is ok to say NO when there is: ungodliness, or worldly passions, or even when it brings glory to only yourself, or in other words self-righteousness. It is very easy to fall into the temptation of the world and promote your agenda rather than Gods! However, Gods gives us the ability to withstand the attack of the enemy. You don't believe me? Let's take a look at our trail guide for this journey.

Back in Romans 4:20 it says that Abraham, *“did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith.”* (Ro 4:20) You are aware that Abraham is considered to be one of the greatest examples of faith in the bible, aren't you? He's the guy who gets the most press in the Faith Hall of Fame that you find in Heb chapter 11. Well, I want you to know that it was hope that developed in him that kind of faith. It was hope that gave Abraham the ability to believe that God was still going to work things out and give Sarah and him a child, **in spite of the lack of evidence.** Remember, the bible says that Abraham was 100 and Sarah was right there behind him. It had been years and years and years and years of waiting to have a baby; but still they had nothing. It was hope that gave Abraham the ability to believe that God was still going to work things out in spite of the lack of evidence, and it was hope that gave Abraham the ability to believe in spite of obstacles. The bible says that his body was as good as dead, and that Sarah's womb was dead. In other words: the thought of having a baby and Medicare paying for the hospital bill seemed unbelievable, but still Abraham believed. Why?

It is because of hope and the God of hope, Abraham was able to believe in spite of the obstacles and in spite of the evidence. The bible says He was absolutely convinced that God was able to do anything he promised. And because of Abraham's faith, God declared him to be righteous. (Ro 4:21-22) Because he was fully persuaded that God was going to work things out, it strengthened his faith, it developed his faith, and it matured his faith, and God declared him righteous. The purpose of hope is to strengthen our faith. A believer without hope struggles in their faith, but a believer of hope strengthens their faith. Now, let me show you how that works let me show you some of the critical ways that hope strengthens our faith.

a) It lays the right **foundation**. It says there in our passage today, *“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.”* (Ti 2:11) God has taught me through the years that hope strengthens my faith because it lays the right foundation. The reason it does is because hope is based on God's promises and not my preferences. Hope is the confidence that God is going to work things out in my life according to his promises. Somehow, some way, some time, he is going to work things out. My preference is that he works it out the way I want it and when I want it and how I want it. True? Isn't it true that all too often, even as believers, we approach the issues and the struggles and difficulties of our lives on the bases of our preferences rather than God's promises? The grace of God has brought us the ability to encounter this great God of the universe, and we want to tell Him how to do His job!

Notice what it says about Abraham in Rom. 4:18, *“Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”* (Ro 4:18) Also vs. 21: *Being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.”* (Ro 4:21) Do you see it there? Hope strengthens my faith because it lays the right foundation through Gods great salvation. As I was preparing for this message I was reminded that, **“God has yet to answer one prayer the way I told him to.”** When we live by our preference our faith struggles, but when we live by God's promises, our faith is strengthened. That's why hope lays the right foundation for our faith.

b) I have also learned that hope enables us to rely on God's **resources** and not our own; which is the only way that faith grows. Let's be honest, though. Isn't it true, even as believers, that when we are up against one of those crushing times, we tend to rely on our own resources? We will depend on what whatever we can get our hands on...we will depend on what we can do...we will depend on what we can get others to do for us...When we are honest about it, isn't it true that for the most part when we are up against a struggle, we tend to rely on our own resources? That's why the bible says: *We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered... We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure... But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God.* (2 Co 1:8-9) In other words, God will allow those rough moments in your life in order to teach you to rely on him instead of yourself. That's how he strengthens your faith. When we live by our own resources, our faith struggles; but when we live by God's resources, our faith is strengthened. Our passage says, *“It teaches us to say NO to ungodliness and worldly passions...”* **Hope enables me to rely on God, and not me.**

c) Hope strengthens our faith because hope lays the right foundation for our faith and hope uses the right resources for our faith; and then hope builds the right **structure** for our faith. I have found that structure is a faith that keeps growing and going with God. The bible says, *"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."* (Is 40:31) I love that verse, because it says that those who hope will soar or run or walk. Notice that it doesn't say that they are going to sit. In other words, those who live by hope will keep on moving, and they will keep on growing. Our scripture says, *"While we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ."* (Ti 2:13) In spite of every obstacle we might face; in spite of every ability we might lack; in spite of every delay we might endure; we go on; we keep moving; we keep growing in faith. **You show me a person of hope, and I'll show you a believer who is growing up and not just growing old.** But you show me hopeless believer, and I'll show you a person who is just growing older as a believer and not growing up as a believer. I promise you that will become a believer who struggles in their faith. Hope strengthens our faith because it enables to build the right structure; a faith that keeps growing through every season and every situation of life.

d) Hope strengthens our faith also because it **progresses** at the right pace. Have you noticed that we can slow down when I live in hope? Hope is what gives me the ability to stay balanced when too much becomes too demanding. Without hope, I am always in a hurry, because I have to work things out; I have to get it all done; it's all up to me. However, with hope - with the full persuasion that God is going to work things out and that it depends on him and not on me; I can slow down, and I can live at rest. Psalm 62:5 says *"I find rest in God, for my hope is in him."* (Ps 62:5) Hope and rest go together. Without hope you'll find you are very rest-less, but with hope, you have the power to be rested. So what's the purpose of hope? Why it is so important? Hope lets my faith progress at the right pace - which is peaceful instead of panicked.

e) And then hope strengthens my faith because it **develops** in the right manner. It is hope that enables me to do the right thing in life and not do the wrong thing. Our passage says, *"It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age."* (Ti 2:12) Hope is what gives me the power to say no to temptations. Since I know that God is going to work things out in my life; I don't have give into the temptation to short cut that by doing something sinful. **Hope is the foundation of my integrity.** If I don't have hope that God is going to work things out in my life, then truthfully there is no logical reason to live a life of integrity. The Bible says, *"Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure."* (1 Jn 3:3) That's the power of hope in our lives, it keeps us pure and motivates us to holy living. The purpose is to strengthen my faith; to help me grow. To make me strong so that when those "what now?" moments hit, I won't crumble and fall. But I will keep on keeping on!

I have learned that on my own, I can pretty well mess things up. But if I rely on God, he will work it out. He always has, and He always will. That is the very reason why God wants us to become believers who live by hope, because hope is what God uses to strengthen and develop our faith. So that when those ICU moments of life hit, we will keep moving with him. We won't give up, but we'll keep going with him, because we know that somehow God is going to work things out.

2) But there is another purpose to this hope. There is something else that God is out to accomplish in my life through hope and that purpose is to clearly **glorify** our God.

Our passage says, *"Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good."* (Ti 2:14) The purpose of hope, the reason God wants us to live by hope is so that God will be glorified when he works things out in our lives. Believers who do not live by that hope don't bring glory to God. You and I know that there are a lot of hopeless Christians running around. Isn't true that there are people we meet who we just want to shake our heads and say, "This guy is hopeless"? I saw this the other day. **Here it is...[Show AFV clip]**

Now those people are really hopeless in some areas of life. But a person that has hope, well that is another story. That is what our trail guide Abraham had according to Romans 4:20, *"Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God."* (Ro 4:20) I really like the way another translation puts that: *Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God.* (Ro 4:20) Abraham lived by hope and because he did, it not only strengthened his faith, but it brought glory to God. Abraham and Sarah have given the people of faith throughout all generations an example of what God can do in and with a person whose hope is in God, a person who hopes against all hope. Remember Abraham was old, and Sarah was old, but because they stayed the course of hope, they discovered the blessing of a son. And they never tired of telling how it was all because of God, AND NOT THEM! If the truth be told, there are a lot of Christians who when people look at their lives what they see is a hopeless cause; as where what they should see is a glorious God! Can you see the contrast here? Let's look at it.

a) A believer without hope **belittles** God. They tend to blame God rather than bless God. "God, this is all your fault." A believer without hope tends to whine and complain about the stuff in their lives. And people see that and hear that; and they are repelled from the faith rather than drawn to it. A believer without hope tends to belittle God by blaming him rather than blessing him. They also tend to ridicule God rather than declare God. Rather than declare that God is going to work things out in my life, they begin to think and even say: "God if you loved me, this wouldn't be happening to me." Without hope, it gets really dark. Prov. 12:25 says, *Hopelessness leads to depression.* (Pr 12:25)

When you see a believer who is always down and depressed it makes people who don't know Christ think there is no use in depending on Christ. So you have people who say: "This guy at my work says he's a Christian and he's always down in the mouth and discouraged and negative. Why should I become a Christian? It doesn't seem to make much of a difference." A believer without hope belittles God.

b) As where a believer with hope **blesses** God. A believer who lives with hope will attract people to God even when things aren't working out in their lives. When people see us living in hope; when they look at us and they know that we are still in the middle of the struggle and we are still in the middle of the pain and yet they see us still making it; when they see us still believing and still lifting up our head and still being positive because we are trusting God to work things out; that gives them the ability to keep going even with what they face. **A believer of hope glorifies God by attracting people to God even when things are not working out.** A believer of hope blesses God by crediting God and not themselves when things do work out. The bible says, *"Christ in you, the hope of glory."* (Col 1:27) Or better yet a way to say that is **Christ in you is the hope of glory!** So when people ask, "How in the world are you handling this?" We need to say, "It's because of Christ in me." They need to see that not just in our words, but in our attitudes and in our actions. So when things finally work out in our lives and people ask, "How in the world did you get that to work out?" Our answer is the same, "Because of Christ in me." God did it, because God always works things out. A believer without belittles God, as where a believer with hope blesses God.

The greatest glory we will ever give to God is by being a living example of someone who is absolutely persuaded that no matter what we are facing in life, God is going to work it out! **Do my friends hear me whine? Or do they hear me glorify God with hope? Do my coworkers see someone living under their circumstances or someone giving others a picture of hope because I am persuaded that God is going to work it out?** The purpose of hope, the reason God wants me to live by hope is so that it will strengthen my faith and so that it will help others discover how God can strengthen their faith, that is the bottom line of this morning's message. Here's what I want you to believe and take with you if you remember nothing else: **God always works things out when I live hope out.** When I live by the absolute confidence that God is going to work things out and I hold on to that - it's amazing how I can begin to see God working things out in my life. I begin to see his hand where I never did before. I begin to see his work where I never dreamed before. God always works things out in my life when I live out my hope in life.

So tell me: What is it that you need God to work out in your life today? What is it that you're facing, what is it that you're up against that you need to bring to God so that when you leave today you are not leaving under that burden, but rather living by hope?