

HOPE IS VITAL TO CHURCH GROWTH **(Romans 8:24-25)**

I. What is hope?

- A. How many times have you said “I wish that...”
- B. A lot of people look at hope like a Christmas wish.
 - 1. Some see hope as an unrealistic outcome that you really want to happen;
 - 2. Others see hope as an alternative to accepting something that is inevitable;
 - 3. It has been turned into a catch-phrase: “where there is life there is hope.”
- C. Dictionary.com defines hope as: “the feeling that what is wanted can be had or that events will turn out for the best”.
- D. What does the word translated hope in the New Testament mean?
 - 1. The Greek noun translated hope refers to a “favorable and confident expectation.”
 - 2. It has to do with trust in the unseen future, which is how Paul used it in Romans 8:24-25.
- E. The Greek verb *elpizo* is translated “to trust”.
 - 1. It comes from the Greek word we just looked at for hope and it centers on the object of hope.
 - 2. Notice how Paul used it in 2 Corinthians 1:10.
- F. When you look at these words, you see that three things make up biblical hope:
 - 1. Desire: wanting something;
 - 2. Expectation: based on knowledge of God and His promises;
 - 3. Trust: because of Who God is.
- G. This is the kind of hope every Christian is to have.
 - 1. A congregation weak in hope, won't grow like they could with strong hope.
 - 2. The reason to have hope is its source (Colossians 1:5).
 - 3. The basis for our hope is Christ (1 Thessalonians 1:3).
- H. In a nutshell, hope is assurance in God, His word, and His promises.
 - 1. Do we really believe what God has told us and promised us?
 - 2. If we do, based on our trust in Him, we have a desire to grow and an expectation to do so.
 - 3. That is hope in connection with church growth.
- I. People with this type hope want to share it with others who act as if they have no hope.
- J. If we have this type hope, we know it is a better hope and one that people need (Hebrews 7:19).
- K. Only a Christian can be fully optimistic about the future and the present.

II. Elements of hope.

- A. There are numerous things of which hope consists and understanding what these things are will strengthen our hope.
- B. All hope centers on God and comes from God.
 - 1. Psalm 38:15; Psalm 43:5.

- 2.1 Timothy 4:10.
- 3.We have a living hope because we serve a living God.
- C.Our hope is in the future resurrection of the dead.
 - 1.So many people struggle with death and dying because they don't have any hope.
 - 2.Jesus promised hope of a wonderful life after this (John 5:28-29).
 - 3.Notice what Paul told the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).
- D.Our hope is in the glory of God.
 - 1.We can see the glory of God in His handiwork, and because of His promises understand that we will be with Him for eternity.
 - 2.Romans 5:2; Colossians 1:27).
- E.We have hope of salvation, both in this life and the one to come.
 - 1.2 Thessalonians 2:16.
 - 2.Romans 8:24.
 - 3.Because of all this, we live in hope of the next life (Titus 1:2).
- F.Our hope is in the return of Jesus.
 - 1.The Christian believes in what the New Testament teaches about the 2nd coming of Jesus.
 - 2.We believe that every eye shall see Jesus when He returns and it will be loud when he does so (Revelation 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).
 - 3.When He does return, it will be to deliver the kingdom up to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24).
- G.It is a hope reserved in heaven.
 - 1.The New Testament teaches that the child of God is a pilgrim on this earth (1 Peter 2:11).
 - 2.The Christian is on a journey home to heaven.
 - 3.Notice how this is made possible (1 Peter 1:3).
 - 4.Jesus promised to prepare us a place (John 14:1-3) and Peter tells us that it is reserved for us who are hoping in Christ (1 Peter 1:4-5).
 - 5.Our hope is truly in heaven (Colossians 1:5).
- H.It is a hope in righteousness.
 - 1.Justification demands a right relationship with God (Galatians 3:5).
 - 2.The man or woman who lives righteously is able to die in hope (Revelation 2:10).
 - 3.The wicked person dies with no hope (Ephesians 2:12).

III.Sources of hope.

- A.Hope doesn't come out of the blue or rest in some person.
- B.Hope is produced by the Bible (Romans 15:4).
 - 1.This shows the necessity of Bible study.
 - 2.The more we study and learn about God, the stronger our hope in Him will be.
- C.Hope is produced by the gospel (Colossians 1:23).
 - 1.Every time we preach the good news of Jesus Christ, we are preaching hope.
 - 2.The gospel is the only message designed by God to bring about hope and this is one of the great reasons we are to go out and share it with others.
- D.Hope is the result of the work of Jesus.

- 1. Because Jesus came to this earth to die for our sins, we can have hope.
- 2. Because Jesus was resurrected from the dead, we can have hope of our being resurrected one day.
- E. Hope is the product of experience (Romans 5:3-5).
- F. Hope is based on the promises of God.
 - 1. Acts 26:6-7.
 - 2. God keeps His promises therefore we can have hope.
- G. Every person who answers the gospel call has hope.

IV. Results of hope.

- A. When you have a congregation full of hopeful Christians, you have a congregation that can grow because they will want to do God's commands.
 - 1. This type congregation will be noticed by those in the world.
 - 2. Hope produces several things.
- B. Hope produces joy.
 - 1. Paul told the Romans to rejoice in their hope (Romans 12:12).
 - 2. This hope is the result of Jesus being in our lives (Romans 5:1-2).
- C. Hope produces salvation.
 - 1. Romans 8:24.
 - 2. Where there is no hope, there is no salvation.
- D. Hope produces steadfastness.
 - 1. Hebrews 3:6.
 - 2. Hebrews 6:11, 18.
- E. Hope produces boldness for Christ (2 Corinthians 3:12).
- F. Hope produces expectation of the best at all times.
 - 1. 1 Corinthians 13:7.
 - 2. The Christian can truly believe the best is yet to be.
- G. Hope motivates us to live pure lives (1 John 3:3).

From a book entitled, "How To Have Biblical Church Growth" by J.J. Turner.