

This is hope?

Biblical hope is all about believing for a better tomorrow. **This is the one thing I want you to leave with this morning – there is hope in God.** In God tomorrow can be better than today. There is more – it doesn't matter what the world says – the best is yet to come. God's plan for us is to give us a future and a hope. No matter how dark the road God is the light to my path. There is hope. He is the God of hope.

In our lives together Denise and I have had to face many tests and troubling times. The ministry is not an easy calling! From pioneering in isolated locations like Alice Springs to living with a family cross culturally in Asia, we've experienced many tests and troubling times. But our hearts cry out to God.

Psalms 73: 26, "My flesh and my heart may fail, **but God** is the strength of my heart."

Maybe you know what I'm talking about. You've been through the wringer, you've been through a lot of stress at work, and you've experienced a lot of heart ache with someone close to you. You may be battling with sickness or emotional pain, your battle maybe financial or related to your marriage. It's all looking a bit dark, a bit hopeless, and a bit desperate. But what do you do?

You have 2 responses:

- Give in, give up or quit
- Get up, move on, weather the storm and believe there's a new day coming!

Psalms 42: 5, "Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my God."

This is hope – that's what hope says. Hope is a confident expectation of good for your future. But we need inspiration to live in hope. "Hope" in Scripture means "a strong and confident expectation." Hope needs inspiration, stimulus and encouragement. Ultimately all of our hope is sourced in God but as you'll see we too can be a source of hope for others as well.

Hope is a confident expectation of good for the future.

Hope is akin to trust and a confident expectation for a better future.

Hope is about the future. It's different from faith. Hope is a solid and sound belief that God's got this no matter how hard it may seem today tomorrow can be better. Hope is about a new day dawning.

Hope is what sustains us in the midst of battles, storms and troubles.

Hope is the source of great strength to those who are weary.

Hope is about the fact that God will never leave us, forsakes us or abandons us and no matter what the circumstance or situation God is able to make it work for good.

Hope is a spiritual reality – it's tangible, it's palpable. Hope is not the same as "I am hoping to win the lottery." "I hope the weather is better tomorrow." Hope is a reality born first in the character of God. His very nature! He is the God of hope. Hope forms His nature and is His essences. This divine hope is then imparted to us as God's children. We are literally filled, inspired and energised by a divine bit of God's character.

There is a transfer, a beautiful exchange, that as we seek Him we are literally empowered by His Holy Spirit to develop a new perspective on our future. It's different from faith – it is hope – a deep set belief that the God of hope has a plan for us, He has a better tomorrow for us, this is not the end but there is more – the best is yet to come. That is hope – a confident expectation for our tomorrow!

Romans 15:13 NIV " 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."

Hope is all about God's plan for your lives – He is called "the God of hope." He doesn't give false hope but gives real hope, He is the God of hope not hype. Note the prayer of Paul – "May the God of hope fill you!" This hope is manifested with joy and peace as we trust Him. Joy in the midst of trial, peace in the midst of a storm. Joy when we're in circumstances that test us and try us. Peace when everything within us is conflicted and in uproar. When chaos reigns and confusion is assaulting us we pray that the God of hope may fill us with joy and peace.

It's not the presences of trials, troubles and testing that robs us of joy and peace – it is our response to them. Even in the midst of turmoil and turbulence we can pray to the God of hope for joy and peace. Hope doesn't mean it's not hard, dark or challenging but hope is what gives us the resilience to stand. Hope is what gives us spiritual toughness to persevere. Its hope that fills our hearts with joy and peace that gives us the strength to endure to the end.

The Passion Translation "Now may God, the inspiration and fountain of hope, fill you to overflowing with uncontainable joy and perfect peace as you trust in him. And may the power of the Holy Spirit continually surround your life with his super-abundance until you radiate with hope!"

Hope is never a static or passive thing. Hope is dynamic, active, directive and life sustaining. Hope is infectious too. Hope is inspirational. You can give hope to others. A biblical hope is not an escape from reality or from problems. It's hope not hype! It doesn't leave us idle, drifting or just in a rocking chair on the front porch. If our hope is biblical and based on God's promises, it will energise us, keep us and invigorate us to continue the journey. People quit when they can't see any hope left.

BARACK OBAMA once said, "Hope is not blind optimism. Hope is not ignoring the enormity of the task ahead or the roadblocks that stand in our path. Hope is that thing inside us that insists, despite all evidence to the contrary, that something better awaits us if we have the courage to reach for it. Hope is the belief that destiny will not be written for us, but by us, by those not content to settle for the world as it is, but have the courage to remake the world as it should be."

The local church is the hope of the world – Church is in fact the hotbed of hope, the cradle of hope, the home of hope – the very sound of His name brings hope – Jesus! Worship is the atmosphere of hope where God inspires us to look beyond our human limitations. As we preach God's word we are restorers of hope inspiring others to find fresh hope in God. As leaders we are dealers of hope.

Billy Graham recently died once said, "Our world today so desperately hungers for hope, yet uncounted people have almost given up. There is despair and hopelessness on every hand. Let us be faithful in proclaiming the hope that is in Jesus."

Hope is the inspiration that says God loves you too much to leave you where you are.

Hope is the energy that keeps you going when giving up seems so easy.

Hope is the belief that destiny will not be written for us, but by us.

Hope thrives in us when we hope for a better tomorrow for those around us. Giving away hope, becoming dealers of hope to the hopeless is a powerful thing. Remember how we walk with the broken speaks louder than how we sit with the great! A new day is dawning when we replace cynicism with optimism, we replace fear with hope and seek to lift others becoming restorers of hope.

Hope says that what God has placed upon your life is greater than what Hell has placed against you!

Hope says we can see an end to human slavery in our time.
Hope says we can speak out for those with no voice – we can be their voice.
Hope says there is a better tomorrow for those who are physically and mentally disabled.
Hope says we can make an impact on a nation like Togo through the agency of Compassion.
Hope says that each Christmas we will help the most vulnerable to enjoy joy, food and our love.
Hope says that every Easter we will do Good Friday to bless and help those who can't help themselves.
Hope says our church can be a voice for good in our city.

I will forever be inspired by **Rick Warren's** story. No matter how dark the road, no matter how seemingly hopeless the story, no matter how devastated we feel we know God is for us.

After the suicide of his son Warren wrote, ***“What gives me the most hope every day is God's grace; knowing that his grace is going to give me the strength for whatever I face, knowing that nothing is a surprise to God.”***

How important it is to inspire hope – true biblical hope – a hope born in God's heart that there is a better tomorrow for us, that though today is dark and difficult tomorrow will be better because of God's great love for us. It's essential we be the dealers of hope – that we seek to be the ones who restore hope to a generation that is in the grips of such despair.

How vital it is for the church to speak hope to the hopeless, to speak the promises of God to those who have been betrayed and conned. It is our message to our world, God has promised to give us a future and a hope. Hope puts marriages back together, hope leads us and inspires us to walk with lives worthy of His name. Hope inspires us to serve others, bless others and speak well of others. Hope never gives up!

Christopher Reeve, better known as Superman once said, “Don't give up. Don't lose hope. Don't sell out.” This was said after he became a quadriplegic.

Paul in **Galatians 6:9** inspires hope when he writes, “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time **we will reap a harvest** if we do not give up.” If we don't give up! If we don't give into despair! If we're not overcome by anxiety. If we're not conquered by our own negativity, cynicism and misery. “We will reap a harvest!”

Some people react to words of hope because their hearts are so broken. Some react to words of hope because their integrity has been so compromised. Hope cannot build on a foundation of self-denigration, cynicism and criticism towards others – hope cannot build upon the depreciation of others. Hope cannot be built upon a lack of virtue, integrity and character. Hope dawns afresh in an atmosphere of humility, virtue and love.

Remember, hope is not encouraged by gossip. Hope is not fostered by infidelity. Hope is not perpetuated by your judgement of others. Hope is not spread by laughing at the awkwardness and brokenness of others. Hope thrives when we hope for a better tomorrow for those around us. Hope thrives when we are found giving away hope.

Remember this how we walk with the broken speaks louder than how we sit with the great! Let hope rise and darkness tremble when men and women of God rise up to be all God has for them to be – thank God for the generation who says I'm tired of reading history I want to make history!

Hope says, when you surrender control of your life to Jesus and follow God's guidance, you become empowered and equipped to do the impossible, reach higher, and go further than you could have ever imagined. Hope makes a way!

Hope says that by building our lives around godly principles, surrounding ourselves with wisdom, and living for a cause greater than ourselves, we can effectively live out God's purposes and have an enduring impact on our world and the people in our world. This is hope in action!

As Christians we are dealers of hope – restorers of hope – communicators of hope! Jesus is our message – Matthew 12: 21 puts it this way! ***“The mere sound of his name will signal hope, even among those who are far away!”***

For Jesus there is no darkness he cannot enter there is no battle you have not won, there is no stronghold you cannot break, there is no heart too far for him to reach, there is no space he cannot invade, we have no loss He has not known, even though we feel crushed we are never abandoned, there is simply no power greater than our God's. Hope has a name – the name above all names – His name is Jesus!