

THE TEACHING
LEGACY
 OF DEREK PRINCE

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 Hope

Hope is Essential, Part 1 of 5

Perhaps you are familiar with the saying, “Where there is life, there is hope.” There is a good deal of truth in that maxim. But the opposite is also true: “Where there is hope, there is life.” In my opinion, hopelessness is one of the saddest conditions in human experience—and uncounted millions in our world today are hopeless people. But thanks be to God—you and I do not need to be hopeless!

I believe that *genuine hope*, as presented in Scripture, can give someone a completely new outlook on life. That is why I have chosen this topic as my theme for this year’s five-part Teaching Legacy series: *Hope*. I trust that what is shared in these messages will help you grasp what hope is, how important it is, and most of all, how you may have it.

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 Eternal Foundations

By way of introduction to the theme of hope, let’s look at 1 Corinthians, chapter 13, verse 13, where Paul says:

But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

In that verse, Paul presents us with the three great, abiding spiritual realities of the Christian faith. Much of what we experience in life may come and go. Some of it may be important or significant for a certain period or a certain situation we face. But these three realities that abide forever are: faith, hope and love.

Most Christians have heard much preaching about faith and a good deal about love. But, in many cases, they have heard comparatively little about hope. That was my condition many years ago when I was in desperate need of help from God. I had heard a lot of messages on faith. I had heard some preaching on love. But the message I needed in that particular situation was hope. To meet that need in me, the Holy Spirit had to take me directly to the Scripture, because there were no sermons that I knew of about hope. But it was



in the Word of God that the Holy Spirit met my need.

As a result of my experience, and my own deep need for hope, I have a particular concern that people understand the importance of hope. As I said, I trust that what we share on this topic this year will help you to grasp what hope is, how important it is and how you may have it.

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Hope is Essential

Hope is necessary to maintain both faith and love. As we progress in this series, I will show you in various ways that unless we have hope, our faith will leak out and our love will fail. So, hope is not an option. It is a component that is essential to the fullness of the Christian life.

As we said earlier, there is a saying people often use: “Where there’s life, there’s hope.” I think there is a good deal of truth in that. But let me say that the opposite is also true: “Where there’s hope, there’s life.” And conversely, “Where there is no hope, there is no life.” In my opinion, hopelessness is one of the saddest conditions in human experience. I can hardly think of anything sadder than to be hopeless—and uncounted millions in our world today are hopeless people. But, thankfully, you and I do not need to be hopeless.

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Working Together

To expand our understanding of hope, let’s look at 1 Thessalonians, chapter 1, verses 2–4. In this passage, Paul presents a picture of God’s people, the Christians of Thessalonica, enjoying their full inheritance. They have faith, they have hope and they have love. Please notice that he mentions all three of these virtues as he gives thanks to God for them. Here is what Paul says:

We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; [Why does he give thanks?] Constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope

in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father, knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you . . .

It is clear that the spiritual condition of those Christians in Thessalonica convinced Paul they were really people chosen by God. What he saw in them were those three abiding realities: faith, love and hope. In his praise for them, he uses a characteristic word to describe what is special about each of those realities. He speaks about the *work* of faith, the *labor* of love, and the *steadfastness* of hope. In the sections that follow, we will focus on each of those phrases for a moment and meditate on them.

First of all, faith must be expressed by works or by actions. Faith that doesn’t act is dead faith. Here is what Paul says in that regard in Galatians 5:6:

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

Notice, it is *faith working* through love. The book of James says the same thing in another way. In James 2:26, we read:

For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

We see that the characteristic expression of faith is works. It is action. It is doing something that is the outcome of our faith and expresses our faith. Faith without works is a dead faith.

In the passage we quoted at the beginning of this section, Paul’s word to the Thessalonians he speaks about their “labor of love.” That word “labor” means really hard work. Isn’t that so characteristic of true love? True love does not just sit around and sympathize. True love gets in where the action is, rolls up its sleeves, and does something tangible. Love involves a cost of labor. It demands a cost, possibly, of weariness and sleeplessness. Love labors. It is not just a passive emotion. Love is an active, driving force that moves people to sacrificial labor on behalf of others.

Then in the passage cited earlier, we come to the phrase about hope. Paul says to those Thessalonian

Christians, “the steadfastness of [your] hope.” We see then that hope produces steadfastness, endurance, perseverance. Without those qualities of steadfastness, endurance, and perseverance that hope produces, we may easily lose the benefits of the first two virtues—that is, faith and love.

The Source of Hope

How then does hope come? How may we have this kind of hope which is so real and so necessary? The answer is that hope is the direct outcome of the new birth. It is the direct outcome of being born again by the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ. It is not through just general faith in Jesus Christ, but rather a specific faith in His death, burial and resurrection. This truth is confirmed by what Peter says in 1 Peter, chapter 1, verse 3:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
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Please notice that very significant phrase: “new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” This tells us that when we believe in the death of Jesus Christ on our behalf and then in His resurrection from the dead by the power of God, we are born again; we have a new birth. We are born into a living hope. Not just some dead theology, but a living, vibrating hope.

Hope comes to us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. We must clearly understand this ultimate historical basis for all hope. The basis for true hope is the resurrection of Jesus. Without the resurrection of Jesus, life would be hopeless. It is the resurrection of Jesus which brings us into a living hope.

Hope Continues

It is important for us to realize that this hope must continue until the consummation of our

salvation. Earlier we looked at a quote from 1 Peter. We see another vital truth in that same first epistle. This verse occurs just a little further on in the same first chapter, in verse 13:

Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

What Peter is saying here is that the process of salvation is not yet complete. It is ultimately going to be consummated by the revelation of Jesus Christ. In the meanwhile, you and I have to fix our hope completely on that future event. In other words, the ultimate focus of all Christian hope is the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and His revelation when He comes again. As we make our way through this life, we need to obey that injunction of Peter. We must fix our hope completely on the grace and blessing that will be ours through the return of Jesus in glory.

Until the End

Like this important principle, the writer of Hebrews brings out another very important facet of hope in Hebrews 3:6:

But Christ was faithful as a Son over His house whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.

Once again, please notice that this hope must be maintained until the end. You and I cannot give up hoping until our hope is fulfilled by the event. That is why the writer of Hebrews gives the admonition above. In order to be a part of the people of God, we must hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.

The kind of hope we must maintain is not just a passive, inner expectation. Rather, it is something very strong, very confident. It is a hope that boasts—not in itself of course—but in the Lord.

This instruction for us to boast, to maintain a verbal expression of our hope, is part of what God has provided for us. It goes along with hope, and hope

in turn, goes along with faith and love. We have to maintain this confident boasting of our hope—this continual assertion of our expectation of the coming of the Lord Jesus—until the end of our lives or the coming of Jesus Christ.

Hope is Available

Let me close this first segment of this year's teaching legacy theme on hope by asking you a question. Do you have hope? Can you honestly say that you have the vibrant hope we have uncovered in this biblical exploration of that topic? Or would you

describe yourself in a similar condition to where I was before the Holy Spirit opened my eyes?

If your answer to that question is uncertain, let's take action together now. I want to invite you to join me in a prayer—asking the Lord to bring hope to life in our hearts. Will you join me?

Lord, I'm not sure that I have a living hope to the degree I need at this time. I know, from what we have seen so far in Your Word, that it can be a powerful force in my life. I want that, Lord. Please begin the process today of bringing true hope to life in my heart. Thank You, Lord. Amen.



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This teaching is taken from the *Derek Prince Legacy Radio* series entitled “Hope.” For further study, we recommend the CD of the teaching *A Better Hope* (Hebrews 6:6-7:19).

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