

Christ Our Hope

About a year ago I wrote on the subject of biblical hope.  Since then, like many believers, my wife, Naomi, and I have been pelted with heartbreaking news. Unexpected deaths of friends and ministry associates. Cancer among our dearest friends. Defections from the ministry. Moral failures. Bankruptcies. Church splits. Widespread disillusionment—even among veteran believers. Over all of this there seems to be a virtual canopy of “dis-ease.” Just as Jesus predicted, “People [are] fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world” (Luke 21:26, ESV).

There’s no question that hope is under siege. Paul wrote that “faith, hope, and love abide” (1 Cor. 13:13). Together these comprise the very essence of our life in Christ, so it should come as no surprise that the devil aims to destroy them. We’ve heard a lot of teaching about faith and about love—as well we should. But if hope erodes, faith and love will not be far behind.

In the midst of all the bad news, God has been unfailingly faithful. I remain firmly fastened to the hope we have in Christ.

Don’t get me wrong. I forsook humanistic-based optimism long ago. But biblical hope will hold you—even in the 9/11s of life. That Bible-based hope will keep you joyful, steady and anticipating good things from our good God.

William Carey, the great missionary to India, gave wise advice: “Attempt great things for God. Expect great things from God.” This counsel came from a man who was blasted at every turn by Satan’s heaviest artillery. But he was a prisoner of hope. You can be one too. Prisoners of hope are the most liberated people on Earth.

Christians worldwide have recently celebrated once again

Christ's resurrection. That event is the bedrock of our hope. Peter wrote, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet. 1:3-4, NASB).

The intent of the original Greek reads more like this: "*Impelled* by His abundant mercy." God's very nature moved Him to redemptive action on our behalf. We have been born again into a living, active hope. The New Testament Greek scholar, Kenneth Wuest, observed that this hope is "an energizing principle of divine life in the believer." It is a mindset of expectancy—both for the future glories of heaven and for present blessings—simply because we are God's children.

Wuest continued, "The Christian looks forward to the inheritance awaiting him in heaven, and a hopefulness of present blessings from God in this life in view of the eternal blessedness of the believer in the next life. A child of God has no right to look on the dark side of things, and to look for the worst to happen to him. As the object of God's care and love, he has the right to look for the best to come to him and to look on the bright side of things."

If you're looking at life through the corrective lens of Scripture, things aren't getting darker; they're getting brighter. "The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter until the full light of day" (Prov. 4:18, NIV).

As I wrote in my book *Living as if Heaven Matters*, "I want to be very clear. Christ is our hope. His resurrection, His return, His glorious rule; this is our hope. No Jesus—no hope. With Jesus—great hope. All our hope is wrapped up in Christ. He is "the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope" (1 Tim. 1:1, NKJV).

Because our hope holds, let's live every day in the joyful, healthy, dynamic tension of looking for the blessed hope of

Christ's return and going full throttle until He comes, serving Him and His purposes in our generation.

About the author: David Shibley is the founder and president of Global Advance (), an international training ministry that equips tens of thousands of church and business leaders every year in many of the world's neediest areas. David has ministered throughout America and in more than 50 other nations. He is the author of numerous articles and author or co-author of more than 20 books, including *Living as if Heaven Matters* (Charisma House).