

Hope Restores in Every Situation

Every one of us goes through dark valleys and troubled times. But in Christ Jesus we have hope. And hope restores in every situation—no matter how dark it may seem.

To say that the last year has been challenging would be an understatement for most of the world.

On a national level, almost everyone has experienced a COVID-19 pandemic and economic uncertainty. Added to that, you may have walked through political volatility or personal struggles like a job crisis, health challenges or relational struggles.

After you have walked with the Lord long enough, you begin to see the truth that the place of trouble always, always leads to a door of hope.

Always.

God takes your deepest valley, your Valley of Achor, and He transforms it into a door of hope.

After the door of hope, Hosea says, comes joyful celebration: “She will sing there as in the days of her youth, As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt” (Hos. 2:15, NASB1995).

You will sing and celebrate as Miriam did when God had worked a miracle and delivered the Israelites from Egypt, right through the midst of the Red Sea (Exod. 15:20).

Don't Stop in the Middle

But too many people stop in the middle.

Perhaps you can't get even a glimpse of the door of hope so you sit down. I know; I've done it.

But if you believe that the valley is only a way of passage through to the mountain heights, the only logical thing to do is get back up and keep moving again.

This means that if you find yourself in a valley right now, keep on walking.

As you walk, you will be gaining new strength so that you will be capable of climbing the mountain when you get there. And once you get high enough up on the mountainside, your perspective will change about the valley of trouble behind you.

You will surely exclaim, "Why, that valley is full of flowers. Just look at them! Look at that rushing brook. Look at that green grass. I must have missed it when I was down there!"

You will be so glad you kept walking because hope restores.

He Restores What Is Lost

There is a crazy story about the prophet Elisha and an iron ax head that floated on water, and the story foreshadows the events that made Jesus our Redeemer.

Here is a quick review of the story:

"One day the group of prophets came to Elisha and told him, 'As you can see, this place where we meet with you is too small. Let's go down to the Jordan River, where there are plenty of logs. There we can build a new place for us to meet.'

"'All right,' he told them, 'go ahead.'

"'Please come with us,' someone suggested.

"'I will,' he said. So, he [Elisha] went with them.

"When they arrived at the Jordan, they began cutting down trees. But as one of them was cutting a tree, his ax head fell into the river.

"‘Oh, sir!’ he cried. ‘It was a borrowed ax!’

"‘Where did it fall?’ the man of God asked.

"When he showed him the place, Elisha cut a stick and threw it into the water at that spot.

"Then the ax head floated to the surface. ‘Grab it,’ Elisha said. And the man reached out and grabbed it" (2 Kings 6:1–7 NLT).

Have you ever flown off the handle? Have you ever lost your head? Have you ever been defeated right in the middle of your hard work?

Have you ever experienced a loss that you just can’t fix? Have you ever forgotten until the mishap occurs that what you have lost was actually borrowed? Your life is not your own, you know.

But the remedy for the lost ax head points to the remedy for every one of your losses. You find it at the end of the story.

Elisha had the man point to the exact spot where the ax head had entered the water. (In the same way, God has you humble yourself and identify honestly what has happened.)

And then, wonder of wonders, there is hope after all!

Elisha cut a stick from a tree. (The cross of Jesus is called the "tree.") He pulled back his arm and lobbed the stick right to that spot. A miracle occurred. The heavy ax head that had just sunk like a stone to the bottom of the river bobbed to the surface as if it were made of wood itself.

Hope!

Miracles still happen. They never happen the way you may think they should but in the end, you are altogether grateful.

With God, your valleys of trouble yield to doorways of hope every time. And hope restores.

I'm grateful to report that years ago, my cancer miracle happened in Zion, Illinois. I had to endure some extremely difficult and expensive treatments. I also had some powerful prayer afterward. But as I sat in a small examination room, uncertain of what I would hear, my doctor matter-of-factly told me that my cancer was gone.

"What? Could you repeat that?"

"Your cancer is gone. It melted."

"You said the cancer melted?"

"Yes, it melted and is no longer in your body."

I left the treatment center stunned by what I had just heard. I found a small, quiet restaurant and took out my phone to share the amazing news with my four children and a few close friends. Waves of gratitude and awe washed over me each time I said, "The cancer is gone. The doctor said it melted."

Miraculously, that cancer has never come back and it is never going to come back again. I appeared before God in Zion (Ps. 84:5). I know beyond a shadow of doubt that I made it through the valley of the shadow of death.

Iron can float and cancer can melt away. I know. I am more than a survivor. I am an overcomer in Christ Jesus!

No matter what you are going through right now—nationally, personally, physically, emotionally, spiritually—there is hope in Christ Jesus.

And hope restores in every situation—no matter how dark it may

seem. {eoa}

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