

NEKESA

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THE INCREDIBLE POWER OF HOPE.

It is a reality that we, in our Christian walk through life, will have problems. In fact, Jesus said that, "In the world you will have tribulation and trials and distress and frustrations;"

But that is not the end of it: Jesus continued, "but be of good cheer [*take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted*]! For I have overcome the world. [*I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you.*]"

Paul wrote that we can rejoice in the hope of the glory of God because we have been justified by faith and, therefore, have peace with God (Romans 5:1-2). He goes on to say that we can glory in tribulations because they led us to patience, experience and finally – hope. Hope does not disappoint. (Romans 5:3-5).

As believers, we know the power of love, of faith, of prayer and of God's word but many of us have never really been introduced to the incredible power of hope. Paul speaks of the power of three virtues - faith, hope and love - to abide.

Let us consider the power of hope. In the darkest days of Israel when the Babylonians completely destroyed the temple God unveiled His plan for them; but, before He promised anything else, He promised them a future full of hope (Jeremiah 29:11).

Why did God bring a message of hope and a vision for a good future right in the middle of the people's gloom? Because God knew that hope would empower them to keep going. (Pro 29:18)

Where there is no vision [no redemptive revelation of God], the people perish; [*I Sam. 3:1; Amos 8:11, 12.*]

When people see only the fight or the problem and see no chance of winning, they give up the fight. But, if they have a vision of victory they have hope and persevere. That is why the Bible says that Jesus, "for the joy [*of obtaining the prize*] that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising and ignoring the shame, and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2)

Florence Chadwick was the first woman ever to swim the English Channel. On her first attempt, she gave up just a few yards before she reached the shore - because she could not see the finishing line. The second time round, she finished victoriously because, this time, she had memorized every detail of the English coastline.

A rat was placed in a tank with water in it so there was no way out or to rest. If the tank was completely dark, the rat gave up and drowned after twelve hours but when they used a pinhole of light to give the rat hope, it survived nine days!

What prompted the prodigal son to get up out of the pigpen and return to his father? Hope. What gave a blind Bartimaeus the impetus to shout louder when Jesus passed by? Hope. What propelled the woman with the issue of blood through the pressing crowd until she touched the hem of Jesus' garment? Hope. What will pull you out of your pigpen, propel you through life's greatest obstacles and lift your head when you feel you should hang it in shame? Hope.

We live in a world without hope. That is the reason that suicide is the third leading cause of teenage death in the USA.

What is hope? Hope is more than wishful thinking; it is confidence that the Word of God is true, that nothing is too difficult for God (Mat 19:26) and that we have whatever we ask according to God's Word when we ask and before we see it (1 Jon 5:14-15). Scriptural hope is confident expectancy based on solid certainty of the Word of God. It is a firm assurance about things yet unseen, things yet in the future. (Romans 8:24,25, Hebrews 11:1)

Examine a few scriptures that describe the power of hope. See Ps 31:24; 33:18-22; 43:5; Jer 17:7; Lam 3:21-24,26.

As believers, we have hope because we have a God - Psalm 39:7. Hebrews 10:35

How to unleash the power of hope in our lives.

- Look up and see where your help is. (Psalm 121:1,2)
- Look inwards and quiet your spirit so you can hear the Holy Spirit bearing witness to your spirit. (Colossians 1:27, 1 Peter 3:15)
- Look backward because contemplating past victories encourages us to believe God for greater things in the future.
- Look forward to see God's plan for you. (Jeremiah 29:11).
- Look to Jesus. When Peter walked on the water, he only began to sink when he took his eyes off Jesus (Matt 14:25-31 Hebrews 12:1-2).

God's word is true; He never fails. Tomorrow will be better.

God's blessings. Justus Ochuro