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## **Our Living Hope** by Elder Bro. Duane Rocke



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# Our Living Hope

## Context of a Living Hope

In thinking about the term “living hope,” there are two considerations that help to frame our understanding of this term. First, the need to be balanced between the holiness of God and His promises. While this topic relies heavily on the promises of God, we also need to keep in mind the holiness of God to balance out this perspective and how Scripture presents it. Second, the need to consider how a living hope fits under the sanctification of God, which is discussed in more detail further in this document.

## What is Hope?

Many dictionaries define hope as something good with an expectation of obtaining it, or a confidence. More updated dictionaries show the trend of how the meaning of this word has shifted to being defined as a wish or a want for something to happen. As you think about your view of hope, one question to ask is if it is a reflection of what the Word of God defines as hope or how society has moved over the last hundred years to use this term. Would you say as you use and reference the word “hope” that you think of it as a confident expectation with a desire and expectation to obtain it, or is it something you simply wish or want?

The word “hope” is found 134 times in Scripture, with about half being in the Old Testament and half being in the New Testament. Within the Old Testament, the one English word “hope” is derived from about 15 different Hebrew words. On the other hand, with only three exceptions the New Testament’s use of the word “hope” comes from one Greek word and a root of the same Greek word, which is always a noun. In the New Testament, it is never used like it’s commonly spoken today in phrases such as, “I hope it will rain tomorrow.” Rather, the use of the word “hope” in the New Testament is a noun, or something that mankind possesses.

When referencing hope within the Old Testament, care must be taken to determine if the right application and definition is being applied. For example, the word “tiqvah” is used a number of times in the Old Testament. Today this word could also mean “a cord” or an “attachment,” besides the word “hope.” This use can be found in *Ruth 1:12-13*:

*“Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also tonight, and should also bear sons; Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me.”*

The use of the word “hope” in these verses in *Ruth* means an “attachment,” like a baby in the womb to its mother. There’s a cord or a bound that holds them together physically.

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## Hope as an Anchor

*This definition of hope as an attachment or cord is also seen in the New Testament in Hebrews 6:17-19:*

*“Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;”*

Hope is the anchor of the soul. It allows all of us to be attached to the Rock, Jesus Christ. It is a privilege we can possess to have something that physically attaches us to our heavenly Father. This attachment helps us get nourishment and life sustaining nutrients for our soul.

## Hope as an Expectation

Hope is more than an attachment or cord. It is also being expectant of a future event. For Christians our hope is eternal life; it's the future event we are expecting. We expect this event to occur, and even if we have different thoughts about when, we do not question that it is going to occur. *Romans 5:2-5* talks about hope in this context:

*“By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”*

We are given the privilege to have hope in tribulation and things that are happening now as well as hope in those things that are to come. It is an encouragement to us that we rejoice, that we have hope, both now as something that we presently possess, as well as we have hope in what we expect to come.

Our hope is anchored in the future event of eternal life:

*“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.”(Titus 1:2)*

*“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.”(Titus 2:13)*

## Where is our Hope?

As God salvages each of us and washes us by the shed blood of the Lamb, we have a life changing experience of salvation. We find a shift occurs because our self-confidence leaves and our confidence now resides in Christ Jesus. It is through this process that we are saved when we become broken in repentance, submissive, and surrendered. It is then that hope can give us a wonderful replacement for confidence in ourselves. When we have hope in Christ, we can say with confidence “I have hope in God.” Our hope is in God and Jesus Christ, not ourselves. Thus, hope is alive, because it is by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

*“Blessed be the God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”(1 Peter 1:3-5)*

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*“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Savior, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope.”(1 Timothy 1:1)*

## Hope and Sanctification

*“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure”(1 John 3:2-3)*

Having the privilege to be attached to Jesus Christ through this cord of hope causes us to get nutrients that purify us. Hope can be filled with exhortation, because it refines us. Because we are attached to God and because He loves us enough, God in His goodness sends things our way that purify us.

## The Length of a Living Hope

Hope is something that is possessed clear to the end of our lives as *Romans 8:24-25* states:

*“For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.”*

*Hebrews 3:6* also tells us how long we ought to have hope:

*“But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.”*

This verse indicates we are to have hope that is firm unto the end. We don't know how long that will be for each of us. Some people are older in years and can figure they are in the end of the last stretch of life. Regardless, we are to be encouraged, because God promises and intends that we possess hope until the end, however long He has chosen the end to be for us. Whether it is when we finally get to experience Him returning in the clouds or whether He chooses to call us home one by one. He offers us the privilege to carry hope, in our bosom, until the end.

It can clearly be lost, but that would be from our doing and not from God. Consider some of the following promises God gives us:

*“He staggered not at the promises of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.”(Romans 4:20-21)*

*“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39)*

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God loved us enough to give us hope. Hope is an encouragement to us. For those who are at the brink of death and see its shadow, death and uncertainty cannot take away hope. We could choose to give it up, but we need not fear that death or principalities or angels or anything else can rob us of hope. *2 Timothy 1:12b* says:

*"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."*

## Hope as it is Viewed Today

The following questions help us think about how hope is viewed today. If you are in a group of people and they are speaking about their desire to have a family, one might say, "Well, I hope we can get pregnant," and another might say, "We're expecting in October." Which one do you think is more likely to have a baby? If you have been through that experience and some of the difficulties surrounding it, than you know the big difference between saying "I hope" and "I'm expecting."

Another scenario might be if you are standing beside your children as they face a dying mom or a dying grandpa and they say, "Are they going to go to heaven?" And you have a choice to say, "We hope so," or you can say, "They cannot wait to see Jesus." How do you respond? What does the Word say that we should answer with? What difference might it make in our children's impression? If we want to raise our children with a love for God, what kind of difference does it make by how we respond in these kinds of situations?

What happens in your workplace when somebody comes along and they say, "Are you saved?" And you say, "I hope so." Or do we say, "Let me tell you how I know I am saved. Let me tell you the difference that hope has made in my life."? What is the difference it could make in your co-worker by how you respond? In many of these situations we should remove from our vocabulary the phrase "I hope" or "I'm hoping".

## Presently Possessing a Lively Hope

It is true that sometimes we have doubts, we have questions, and we are not sure. There are times we are going to have questions, but we need to not be content with the questions. Rather, the Scripture says we should examine ourselves:

*"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Corinthians 13:5)*

We have the privilege of searching out the scriptures and being persuaded we still have faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, that we still have the fullness of God living and dwelling amongst us, and that hope is our possession. We will have up and down times in our lives, and we should be thankful for brethren that are around us who help us through those times as we examine ourselves, because they can help us to see us as we really are. While we shouldn't be too hard on ourselves in the light of the Word, we can't sweep things under the rug that ought to be addressed. We have to instead do as the scriptures would have us to do and seek it out.

How can you answer the question, "Do you possess hope?" You might be struggling with this question as to whether your hope is lively, whether you currently possess it, and how to have a prevention plan from losing connection and attachment to the Rock. A prevention plan can include the following thoughts and actions:

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- Be still and know that He is God (*Psalms 46:10*): One of the best things we can do is to just sit in the quietness of the woods and behold God. We can stare into the clouds and the skies. We can marvel at a morning with a beautiful blue sky and just a sprinkling of white puffs. And we can then realize that our hope is in the same God that made and built all of that. This thought can strengthen us!
- Allow God at times to shake your life: We need things of this world to be made strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace. *“Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also the heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made: that those things that cannot be shaken may remain.”* (*Hebrews 12:26-27*) What can remain after being shaken by God are things like hope, faith, and love. If you find yourself shaken, you can rest assured that hope will be strengthened coming out of it. In the absence of times of shaking, we will become lukewarm and drawn away, thus often making choices that strip us of our hope. We have to allow God to shake us and allow it to work within us to strip off from us the things that are not necessary for eternal life.
- Be bold in coming to His grace: In *Hebrews chapter 10*, we read about God becoming a consuming fire. We can get apprehensive about who God is and what He is going to do with us, but we need to read the whole chapter. Paul is speaking about what happens to those that choose to walk away from God and become apostates.

*“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”* (*Hebrews 10:19-25*)

God gives us instructions that we can be bold in coming to His grace. This does not refer to being bold in thinking that we have everything figured out, but rather when we understand that we have been saved, we'll put emphasis on being saved by hope rather than being saved by ourselves. We have to boldly come to the One who can save us and He gives us the right to do that, to keep coming over and over knowing we need help. We can draw on the full assurance of faith in His blood and water and of hearts sprinkled with blood from the evil conscience. We have the privilege to be washed and purified in the Word. We can hold fast the profession of our faith, because He is perfectly able to finish His saving power in us.

- Continue to profess our faith: We have to continue to share our faith and communicate it to others. It is hard for Satan to undermine our hope if we are sitting and talking about it to someone else. It should be our full time occupation to share our faith and provoke each other to love and good works. As we assemble with other believers, we will either provoke each other unto strife and wrath or we have the privilege to provoke each other to love and good works. It is a choice that we make and we need to come together to do so.

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## What Do We Do With Hope?

*“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you of the reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.”(1 Peter 3:15-16)*

How prepared are you to share your hope? How willing are you for someone to ask you about it? If you are waiting for someone to physically walk up to you and say clearly, “What hope do you have,” you would be missing the principle of the scriptures. If you do not notice your co-worker that is bending beneath the load of sin and crying out for help, if you do not notice the neighbor that is struggling with how to be able to relate to their children, if you do not notice the elderly sister in your congregation that is wrestling with the thought of death, than where is your preparation? Where is your time in prayer asking God to reveal those that are in need? It would be selfish to have the privilege of being connected to Jesus Christ and only use it for our nourishment. After being sanctified, we have to be ready, be looking, be praying, and be sharing.

We carry in an earthen vessel the hope that we have in Jesus Christ, the hope that is ours, of eternal life. A hymn writer once said, “To me is given boundless mercy, a gift that I did not deserve . . . no man shall take this rich possession, it is my boast and my delight, my faith in mercy finds expression, in prayer I praise its wondrous might. On this compassion, I endure until my death in hope secure.” We can endure until our death, secure in our hope in Jesus Christ.