

# *The Professor's Theological Home Page*

"...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved..." (Acts 16:31)

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## **Hope where there is no Hope – Part 2**

We are continuing our examination of what constitutes true hope in this hopeless world. The article is taken from a story on click2Houston.com about a mother in the Woodlands who shot her son and then turned the gun on herself. A similar story of such hopelessness may also be seen in Bay City where a man shot his wife and four children before turning the gun on himself. Apparently the man lost his job and the wife left him due to their rocky relationship.

Although, we live in the midst of such hopeless confusion and speculation in this world, we have seen in part 1 of our article that the believer in Jesus Christ can have a hope that surpasses even our fleeting earthly existence. Yet, a believer cannot benefit from God's hope unless they understand and live in this hope.

We must understand that only God decides the time, manner and the place of our death. We must also understand that our physical death will transfer us to a place of no more sorrow, no more tears or pain, in the presence of God forever. In our thinking, we are to go forward to this extraordinary future and bring it back into time. As a result, we find great strength and power to overcome our present problems. When sorrow creeps into our life, we are to project all the magnificent things we have in Christ.

The first category of a believer's hope is having a confident expectation of our eternal security, understanding God's dying grace for our life, and the reality of our resurrection. Once we understand these things from the Word of God, they go from being a confident expectation to being an absolute reality.

*Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; (KJV Titus 1:1-2)*

God has made a promise that when we believe and accept the saving work of Christ on the cross, we have eternal life. Once we understand and believe this first category of God's hope, it is no longer a hope, but a reality because we know we now own it. Yet, the hope for the born-again believer should not stop here.

The next category of God's hope would include receiving blessings in time at the point we reach spiritual maturity. Blessings in time are only a potential until we reach spiritual maturity. Upon reaching spiritual maturity and receiving those blessings in time, this hope is no longer a hope, but a reality because you have received them.

There is much confusion when it comes to the subject of blessings in time for the mature believer. The confusion is in those who do not understand this goal, simply because they have not reached the high ground of maturity. Reaching spiritual maturity and receiving blessings in time are the reason that the born-again believer remains on this earth after salvation.

However, the answer as to what is spiritual maturity is as fleeting as chasing after the wind for many professing believers. The proof of maturity is not giving financial support to a

ministry that teaches that in return you will get big shiny things, like a new car, a new house or an abundance of money. God is not some genie or slot machine that you give money to in exchange for a blessing. The Lord wants us to have capacity for the blessings He has for us. Therefore, blessings come as we develop capacity for them.

What are some of these blessings that the Lord has for us? One blessing that everyone chases is being happily content. Many search for happiness in such things as money, success, pleasure, a social life, friends, relatives, health, sex or some status symbols. Basing our happiness on these details of life only last until these things are taken away, then the happiness ceases.

You may recall that Satan was the most attractive and successful creation made from the hand of God with a genius mentality. As the ruler of this world Satan also has power over millions. However, with all these things at his disposal in great abundance, Satan is, not only miserable and frustrated, but also bored and extremely unhappy. If these things didn't bring perpetual happiness to Satan, why would we deceive ourselves into thinking that they will bring perpetual happiness to us?

Please do not misunderstand the point, these details of life are not wrong in themselves in their proper function, but when you have capacity from basing your happiness on the Lord, we can enjoy these things to the maximum. We do so because these things will not be the source of our happiness, but simply a means of expressing the happiness that we already possess in the Lord. The Apostle Paul continually emphasizes the importance of believers basing their happiness on the Lord (Phil. 3:1; 4:4; 1Tim. 6:6-8)

*Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. (KJV Phil. 3:1)*

*Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. (KJV Phil. 4:4)*

*But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. (KJV 1 Tim. 6:6-8)*

The word "contentment" in 1 Timothy 6:6 refers to God's perfect happiness, which begins with the three stages of our spiritual advancement beginning with spiritual self-esteem, continues in spiritual independence, and culminates in spiritual maturity. It is at this stage that we have capacity for life. Being content with "food and raiment" simply means that you have learned to be content with the basic things and you develop perfect happiness. It is at this point when God can trust you with the most magnificent things in life.

The attainment of this perfect happiness will require daily decisions from the right scale of values. This means that our number one priority must be learning God's Word and having a motivation to come to hear it under the ministry of the Holy Spirit and through the teaching ministry of a qualified pastor/teacher. You must listen, learn, apply, advance, and grow, and you will be happy for all time and for all eternity.

It is unfortunate that relatively few believers ever obtain this perfect happiness because it requires consistency in rehabilitating our mind to what the Bible teaches (Rom. 12:1-2).

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the*

*renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (KJV Rom. 12:1-2)*

Spiritual maturity requires concentration and is not for the lazy-minded. Most believers cannot concentrate or be consistent on sound Biblical truth long enough to learn God's perfect system of virtue. Do not be like those who become easily distracted and discouraged, instead press on to the goal of maturity.

Please be sure and look for my third installment of my article when I will examine the privileges and decorations for the eternal state for those who do reach the goal of maturity.