**Being A Prisoner of Hope**

Keeping hope alive in our hearts in times like these is a challenge yet our God has made a way for us to live in a place of peace. We are going to explore keys to keeping our hope alive.

First we are going to answer the question: What is Hope?

Hope is: Secular definition: the feeling that what is wanted can be had or that events will turn out for the best & Biblical definition: to anticipate usually with pleasure, expectation, confidence.

As was pointed out in a previous message, hope is a critical part of our vitality as believers, this is why it is so vital to keep hope alive in our hearts. Biblical hope is the blueprint of our faith, it gives our faith a target.

This is why knowing what God has promised is so important because if you can’t exercise biblical hope for what you don’t know God wants you to have...**You can’t hope for what you don’t know God wants you to have.**

Here are some examples of what God desires for you to have:

**Salvation:**

*1 Timothy 2:1-6 NLT*

*I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. [2] Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. [3] This is good and pleases God our Savior, [4]* ***who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth.*** *[5] For, There is one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus. [6] He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone. This is the message God gave to the world at just the right time.*

*John 3:16-17 NLT*

*“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. [17] God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.*

**Protection & Provision:**

*Psalm 91:1-16 NLT*

*Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty. [2] This I declare about the LORD: He alone is my refuge, my place of safety; he is my God, and I trust him. [3] For he will rescue you from every trap and protect you from deadly disease. [4] He will cover you with his feathers. He will shelter you with his wings. His faithful promises are your armor and protection. [5] Do not be afraid of the terrors of the night, nor the arrow that flies in the day. [6] Do not dread the disease that stalks in darkness, nor the disaster that strikes at midday. [7] Though a thousand fall at your side, though ten thousand are dying around you, these evils will not touch you. [8] Just open your eyes, and see how the wicked are punished. [9] If you make the LORD your refuge, if you make the Most High your shelter, [10] no evil will conquer you; no plague will come near your home. [11] For he will order his angels to protect you wherever you go. [12] They will hold you up with their hands so you won’t even hurt your foot on a stone. [13] You will trample upon lions and cobras; you will crush fierce lions and serpents under your feet! [14] The LORD says, “I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name. [15] When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue and honor them. [16] I will reward them with a long life and give them my salvation.”*

*Psalm 68:4-10 NLT*

*Sing praises to God and to his name! Sing loud praises to him who rides the clouds. His name is the LORD— rejoice in his presence! [5] Father to the fatherless, defender of widows— this is God, whose dwelling is holy. [6] God places the lonely in families; he sets the prisoners free and gives them joy. But he makes the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land. [7] O God, when you led your people out from Egypt, when you marched through the dry wasteland, Interlude [8] the earth trembled, and the heavens poured down rain before you, the God of Sinai, before God, the God of Israel. [9] You sent abundant rain, O God, to refresh the weary land. [10] There your people finally settled, and with a bountiful harvest, O God, you provided for your needy people.*

(Expound on how being aware that these promises of God are for you will help you remain stable in times of turbulence and fear)

**Keys To Keeping Hope Alive In Our Heart**

**Key One: Trust In God’s Promise and Not The Process**

***John 7:40-53 NLT***

***When the crowds heard him say this, some of them declared, “Surely this man is the Prophet we’ve been expecting.” [41] Others said, “He is the Messiah.” Still others said, “But he can’t be! Will the Messiah come from Galilee?***

***[42] For the Scriptures clearly state that the Messiah will be born of the royal line of David, in Bethlehem, the village where King David was born.” [43] So the crowd was divided about him. [44] Some even wanted him arrested, but no one laid a hand on him. [45] When the Temple guards returned without having arrested Jesus, the leading priests and Pharisees demanded, “Why didn’t you bring him in?” [46] “We have never heard anyone speak like this!” the guards responded. [47] “Have you been led astray, too?” the Pharisees mocked. [48] “Is there a single one of us rulers or Pharisees who believes in him? [49] This foolish crowd follows him, but they are ignorant of the law. God’s curse is on them!” [50] Then Nicodemus, the leader who had met with Jesus earlier, spoke up. [51] “Is it legal to convict a man before he is given a hearing?” he asked. [52] They replied, “Are you from Galilee, too? Search the Scriptures and see for yourself—no prophet ever comes from Galilee!” [53] Then the meeting broke up, and everybody went home.***

(Expound on how some in the crowd missed the Messiah because in their mind they had a predetermined process by which He was to come)

***Genesis 50:14-21 NLT***

***After burying Jacob, Joseph returned to Egypt with his brothers and all who had accompanied him to his father’s burial. [15] But now that their father was dead, Joseph’s brothers became fearful. “Now Joseph will show his anger and pay us back for all the wrong we did to him,” they said. [16] So they sent this message to Joseph: “Before your father died, he instructed us [17] to say to you: ‘Please forgive your brothers for the great wrong they did to you—for their sin in treating you so cruelly.’ So we, the servants of the God of your father, beg you to forgive our sin.” When Joseph received the message, he broke down and wept. [18] Then his brothers came and threw themselves down before Joseph. “Look, we are your slaves!” they said. [19] But Joseph replied, “Don’t be afraid of me. Am I God, that I can punish you? [20] You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people. [21] No, don’t be afraid. I will continue to take care of you and your children.” So he reassured them by speaking kindly to them.***

(Continue to expound on how Joseph by maintaining hope was able to see the dream he sas given come to pass in spite of the many adversities he faced).

**Key Two: Maintain The Proper Focus**

*Colossians 3:1-4 KJVS*

*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. [2] Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. [3] For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. [4] When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*

Affection: to direct one's mind to a thing, to seek, to strive for

(Expound on how a wrong focus will produce a wrong result)

**Key Three: Be Childlike**

*Luke 18:15-17 NLT*

*One day some parents brought their little children to Jesus so he could touch and bless them. But when the disciples saw this, they scolded the parents for bothering him. [16] Then Jesus called for the children and said to the disciples, “Let the children come to me. Don’t stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. [17] I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn’t receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.”*

**(Expound on how hope in the goodness of God will stabilize your emotions and open you up to receive what you are believing for)**