

The light of Hope Hebrews 11:8-19

There once were two brothers who were identical twins.

Even though they looked exactly alike,
they were really opposites.

One brother was a hoper, an eternal optimist;
and the other brother an eternal pessimist.

The one brother saw the good and the potential in everything,
and the other never saw good in anything.

One Christmas

their parents decided to try an experiment on them.

The pessimist son, the parent gave a bright shiny new bike,
a top of the line schwinn.

To the hoper, they gave a bag filled with nothing but straw.

They put the presents under the tree with the boys names
on them, and waited to see what would happen.

On Christmas morning,

the two boys ran down stairs to see what they had received
from their parents for Christmas.

On finding the bicycle, the pessimist proclaimed,
“A bicycle? Why did you give me a bicycle?”

Its cold outside, aren't you giving me rides anymore,
and besides, I'll probably fall and hurt myself.

I can't believe you got me a lousy bike!”

The hoper, on the other hand, opened his present,
found a bag of straw, thought for a minute and
suddenly began to jump for joy.

He got up and ran into the back yard looking frantically around.

His parents and his brother were completely puzzled, and
finally asked him, “What in the world are you doing?”

The Hoper replied “Well, after getting a bag of straw,
I just know there's a pony around here somewhere!”

That is hope for you. Hope.

What is hope? Hope is difficult to define.

Some people have said it is a mood or an attitude in which
beliefs, emotions, imagination, and purpose all combine,
they give the hoper a sense of confidence and
an eager expectation about the future.

Hopelessness, however, sees the future with
suspicion, anxiety, dread, or apathy.

All they see is darkness ahead, road blocks, and failure.

Hope sees the future with a sense of what is possible.

They always see a light at the end of the tunnel.

A light in the darkness

Hopelessness sees the future as closed and

assumes change is impossible.

It focuses on what cannot and will not happen.

Hope sees the present as pregnant , and

is curious about what might be birthed.

Hope is intrigued and fascinated by what is yet to happen.

Hopelessness sees the future as a dead end,

as an array of last chances.

Hopelessness is the feeling of being trapped and not being able

get out and everything staying the same.

Hope on the other hand is attracted to the lure of the future and
pull of tomorrow. Hope dreams dreams!

Hope sees visions of things to come.

The eternal pessimist say “That’s impossible.”

I can’t do that. I don’t know what to do.

This will never work. There is nothing else to do.”

Hope says,

“Move to a strange and foreign land? Live in a place where

I can’t understand the language and the customs?”

Sure I can do that.

Hope says:

“Start a family in a hostile place at the age of 100?”

Sure I can do that.

Hope says

“Sacrifice my son, sacrifice my most prized possessions,

my life as an offering to God?”

Sure I can do that.

Hope is a strange gift.

It is an open attitude toward the future based on a way of
thinking and feeling and reasoning and considering.

And for Abraham and Sarah this hope

was based on the promises of God.

God and his promises were the foundation of
their faith and their hope.

God made many promises to Abraham and Sarah.

God said he would be their God and they would his children.

Their descendants would be like the stars in the sky.

They would be a blessing to the nations.

And look at v 11 They considered God faithful who
had made the promises.

Abraham and Sarah had every reason to be eternal pessimists,

to be full of hopelessness, and despair and depression.

They had every right to be overwhelmed

by the darkness in their lives.

They had no home, they had no children,

they lived far from family and the familiar.

They experienced more than their fair share of heart
aches and disappointments and conflicts and failures.

Yet they were full of hope.

V 10 They looked forward.

V 15 They saw opportunities.

They thought the past was to be left behind.

V 19 They reasoned that God must have something beyond
their experience in mind.

But most of all it says in verse 11 they were hoppers

because they considered God faithful,

They considered God trust worthy.

They considered God and

stood on the promises he made to them,

even though their experience told them other wise.

Hope is standing on the promises of God no matter what.

Hope is placing our trust, placing our future,

placing our confidence,

seeking the light in our lives in the promises of God.

Hope is an essential ingredient in living the Christian life.

Without hope you cannot be a Christian.

Without hope we look at the straw of the manger, and

simply see its uselessness,

we simply see it as animal feed destined for the manure pile.

But hoppers

when they see the straw in the manger at Christmas time,

they jump for joy and go rushing off to find a baby,

a savior who will set them free and
open up a new tomorrow.
Hoppers see the straw of the manger and
welcome the light of world to come into them.
They pray that the spirit will fill them with dreams and
visions of a new reality, and new earth.
A vision of them becoming new people.

Today three young people are being baptized.
They are spiritual children of Abraham and Sarah
our hopeful faith parents.
Today God is repeating his promises to them and to us.
I will be your God, Peter. I will your God Emmanuel.
I will be your God Steven.
And you will be my children.
I have great things in store for you.
I will use you to do great things;
I will bless you and love you and be with in all things.
I will take care of you, don't worry.

Today they will be baptized.
And the promise is that the Holy Spirit will fill them with the
faith, the hope and the love it takes to live as a Christian.
They will be enabled and empowered to live by faith alone,
and to be filled with a hope that looks forward with eager
expectation for God's kingdom and God's Promised Land
to become real for them.
And they will be filled with a
sacrificial love like that of Jesus himself.

And so God extends an advent invitation to all of us,
to you and to me.

Consider me, says God. Trust me.
Consider Jesus the Promise made flesh.
And stand on my promise. Hold onto him.
For Jesus, is the light of hope in a dark and broken world.
Amen?