

Lesson # 8 -- The Biblical Description of Hope.

Introduction

- A. The Christian life is described in the Bible in the most glowing terms possible. (John 10:10; Gal. 5:22,23; Phil. 4:6-8)
  - 1. The provision for our daily life is God Himself, Exodus 3:14; I Cor. 1:30; Ephesians 1:3.
  - 2. The divinely ordained procedure for living the Christian life is found in the virtues of faith, love and hope, I Cor. 13:13.
    - a. The goal or object of these virtues is God Himself.
      - 1). By faith we trust God.
      - 2). By love we give God rightful place in our lives.
      - 3). By hope we express our confidence in God regarding the future.
    - b. These virtues are abilities or functions. We must choose to practice faith, love and hope in order to have the grace and power of God in daily life.
- B. One important facet of the Christian life is that of hope.
  - 1. This virtue is particularly related to the human need for personal security.
    - a. God created us to find our security in Him. He is the Author of history and has created us to do His will and live under His providential care.
    - b. In the Fall we lost this relationship with God and have lived ever since with a deep sense of insecurity and hopelessness.
    - c. In salvation the believer is reconciled to God and hope again becomes a possibility as a powerful and comforting reality.
  - 2. In times of personal, family, church, business or national distress -- hope comes into sharp focus.
    - a. The non-Christian can live without hope only by repressing his insecurity and finding false security in an illusion (self-confidence, money, possessions, education, physical strength, friends, an institution, or false religious beliefs).
    - b. When man lives without hope that vacuum is often filled with hopelessness and despair.

C. The sharp distinction between a Christian and a non-Christian is seen in the lack or the possession of hope.

1. The non-Christian is described as being without God and therefore without hope, Ephesians 2:12.
2. The Christian is described as a child of God and as having hope in God, I Peter 1:21.

#### I. The Meaning of Hope.

##### A. Comment:

1. Hope is inseparably related to faith and love. This is why the three are often described as united in a single thought or actions, I Thess. 1:3.
2. The particular emphasis in hope is its projection into the future.
  - a. Faith and love are related to the present. By these functions we trust God and give Him His rightful place in our lives now.
  - b. Hope projects the content of faith and love into the future by a confident expectation in God's Person and Word. We thereby expect God to be to us and to do in the future what He has promised.
  - c. Hope may therefore be defined: "The certainty of faith and love's expectation."

##### B. Scripture:

Matthew 12:21 --

Romans 8:24,25 --

Romans 15:24 --

I Corinthians 15:19 --

II. The Basis of Hope.

A. The Scriptures constantly remind us that our hope is in God and in His Word.

Psalm 119:43,49,74,81,114,147,166 --

Psalm 146:5 --

Jeremiah 14:8 --

Jeremiah 17:7,13 --

Romans 15:13 --

I Timothy 1:1 --

I Peter 1:21 --

B. The practical application of this principle.

1. God continually instructs us that He is good and that His actions are expressions of His goodness.

Exodus 34:6 --

I Chronicles 16:34 --

Psalm 23:6 --

Psalm 107:8,9,15,21,31 --

Isaiah 63:7 --

Jeremiah 33:9,11 --

Nahum 1:7 --

Romans 2:4 --

II Thessalonians 1:11 --

Observation: In the light of these verses we recognize how serious it is when we contradict this clear teaching by accepting and practicing hopelessness. By such an attitude and action we are saying that God is not good.

2. God continually reminds us that He is truth and that He is faithful to His Word.

Deut. 7:9 --

I Cor. 1:9 --

I Cor. 10:13 --

I Thess. 5:24 --

II Thess. 3:3 --

II Thess. 2:13 --

Hebrews 2:17 --

Hebrews 10:23 --

I John 1:9 --

Observation: Again we see the profound sinfulness in the attitude of hopelessness. God is faithful. We may not allow ourselves to contradict God's character and Word.

### III. The Warning Regarding Hope.

- A. In order to have hope as a product or characteristic in our lives -- we must aggressively choose to believe God (faith), give Him His rightful place in our lives (love) and apply this to our future (from the next 5 minutes on).

Specifically we must choose to expect God to work and bless -- as He said He would.

- B. We must not fall into the trap and error of judging God on the basis of feelings and circumstances.

1. We cannot find a basis for hope in feelings and circumstances alone.
2. We must believe God, love Him and then accept all that comes into our lives as related somehow to His goodness and thank Him for it, I Thess. 5:16-18.
  - a. He may allow some things to come into our lives so we will learn how to reject them (temptation) or endure them (trials).
  - b. We cannot understand nor explain all that comes. However, if we love God, He has promised to work it all according to good (Romans 8:28,29). We must accept this and praise Him for it. Be aggressive in praising Him and cooperating with Him.