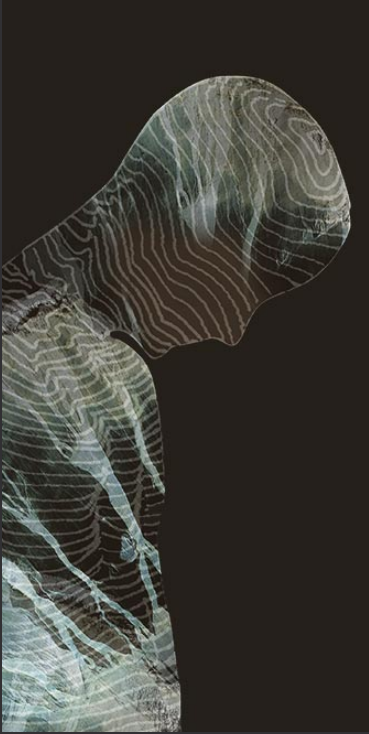


WHY THE HOPE PROJECT?



Hope is rebellion. It defies the pain of today and refuses to give it the the last word.

Hope pulls the future into the present. It changes today with tomorrow.

Augustine made an insightful observation about the family of hope. He said, "hope has two beautiful daughters; they are named Anger and Courage. Anger at the way things are, and Courage to see that they do not remain as they are."

Hope is indispensable. It has been said, "man can live about 40 days without food, about three days without water, about eight minutes without air, but only for one second without hope."

Hope is a mighty force. To affirm this, you need only know its absence. The Bible puts hope on par with faith and submits it only to love. The importance of faith is uncontested.

Scripture is plain, faith is absolutely necessary in the Christian journey. It is the mechanism that connects us to God and his saving work. It is a gift, a muscle and an action. Without it, pleasing God is impossible.

Could the same be said of hope? Do you place it on the same plane as faith? Does it have a central place in your theology and practice?

As I've considered the triad of faith, hope and love, it has become evident that my understanding of hope has been underdeveloped.

This is no academic exercise. Not long ago, I preached a sermon on hope. I studied all day Saturday, preached my heart out on Sunday, forgot it all by Wednesday, and found myself hopeless on Friday.

I sat despairing in my office that Friday and a gentleman came to see me who had been there that Sunday. He

spoke about the hope God was working in his life, unknowingly preaching my sermon back to me. He had no idea how desperately I needed it.

I know the absence of hope and I know it well. I am well versed in the despair that marks life without Jesus.

I am no stranger to the hopelessness that assaults the Christian. I am confident of one thing, I need hope. I need it like air. This project flows out of need. If you're anything like me, you know what I mean.

I am deeply invested in waging war on hopelessness in my own soul and fostering hope in yours. I don't know of a better way to do that than to explore what God says about it.

This is the drive behind the Hope Project. I want to explore the ins and outs of hope from a biblical perspective.

To you my reader, it is my prayer that in reading and meditating on the gift of hope you will know its power and joy in your life.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope" (Romans 15:13).

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