

Accepting Adversity and Tragedy

Lesson 13 Hope The Ultimate Answer

Introduction

This is the last lesson in this series but it is not a review of the material we have studied. Instead, we will look beyond this life, with its trials and adversities, and look toward our hope of a home in heaven. We have considered our hope of eternal life at times during this class. In lesson 3, God's promise of eternal life was viewed as evidence of His goodness; later we saw how the Hebrews endured gladly the loss of their goods because they knew they had a better and abiding possession (Hebrews 10:34); the Thessalonians were told not to grieve as those who have no hope (I Thess. 4:13); and Paul spoke of his constant physical suffering as mere light affliction because he could see the heavenly dwelling that awaited him (II Corinthians 4:17 – 5:2).

Other Consolations

In learning how to accept the tragedies and difficulties of life, we must concentrate on those things that God has given to console us. Remember how we have discussed:

1. Christian Family – We gain a hundredfold houses and brothers and sisters and parents when we become a child of God (Mark 10:29-30). Brethren who will help to bear our burdens.
2. Peace from God – We are promised a peace that passes all understanding (Philippians 4:7), one that will allow us to face life without anxiety (Matthew 6:31-33).
3. Prayer – We are told simply, if you suffer pray (James 5:13). We are promised that God will hear and that our prayers will accomplish a great deal.

All three of these serve as wonderful consolations to help us endure the difficulties of life. But each one is really only applicable to a Christian. A Christian family would only be truly meaningful to a Christian; God promises His peace only to those who are in Christ; and the prayer described by James is to be that of a righteous individual (James 5:16). How difficult it is to face the kinds of trials and sorrows we have discussed throughout this class without a relationship with God. Such a relationship holds the promise of this life, but even more the life that is to come (I Timothy 4:8). A life without the consolation of God's blessings is a wasted and empty life as well as one filled with additional pain and anguish.

Hope at the End

David asked to understand this in Psalms 39. Read Psalms 39:1-7.

1. What was David's condition before he prayed to God (vs. 2-3)?
2. What did he ask God to make him know (vs. 4-6)?

3. Where was his hope (vs. 7)?

There is a great value in being able to look beyond this life and see where we are headed. To see what the true end of life is. But we must have hope that something wonderful awaits us at the end. A passage that stresses both our hope and our end is I Peter 1:3-9.

1. Our hope is said to be a living hope, one that serves us now. How did we receive the hope (vs. 3)?
2. Specifically, where is our hope and what is it (vs. 4)?
3. What does this hope allow us to do, even if we are grieved by various trials?
4. What happens to a faith that is tested?
5. What is the end of our faith (vs. 9)?

So much of our study is summed up in this passage. As Christians we accept the trials of life that would crush those who do not know Christ; we do this joyfully because the trials draw us closer to God, and because we see the ultimate salvation of our souls.

Hope, an Anchor of the Soul

Satan uses the sufferings of life to raise doubts in our minds about God. He looks upon adversity as an opportunity to sway us, to cause us to drift away from God, but a proper hope prevents this from happening. Read Hebrews 6:11-20.

1. What does the writer desire us to have until the end (vs. 11)?
2. To what should we hold fast (vs. 18)?
3. What is the anchor of our souls (vs. 19)?

Great sufferings and trials tend to overwhelm us, blotting out all other considerations. But when our hope of eternal life becomes a constant part of our view of everyday life, then hope will arise even in the most difficult of trials to keep our faith in God strong.

Heaven

Let's learn to wait patiently "*for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ*" (Titus 2:13). When that moment comes, all the pain and heartache and suffering of this life will quickly be forgotten: as we dwell in a place without tears, without death, without mourning, without crying, and without pain (Revelations 21:1-4).