

Lesson Three: Things for which We Can Hope—Promises and Blessings.

Introduction. We have seen the role that hope must play in obedience to the gospel and the need that exists for hope in a world filled with hopelessness. In the next two lessons we will consider some of the things the Scriptures teach for which Christians should hope.

I. The Promises of God. God has revealed promises to mankind for which we should hope. How are these promises made known to man?

A. God's Word.

1. We should set our hope in God's word (Ps. 119:41-44, 73-74, 81, 113-115, 147-148; 130:5-8).
2. Trusting in God's word causes us to have hope (Ps. 119:49-50; Rom. 15:4).
3. The promises related to the Holy Spirit are tied to the assurance we can gain from God's word. We may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:13)—the word is the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17).

B. The Gospel.

1. The Christian has hope in the message of Christ—the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul speaks of the "hope of the gospel" (Col. 1:21-23).
2. The gospel is a "living hope" (1 Pet. 1:3-5). The gospel is a "good hope by grace" (2 Thess. 2:16-17). Accepting the gospel is setting a hope within the Christian for which he or she should be prepared to answer (1 Pet. 3:15-16).
3. The gospel is a "better hope" than was the Law of Moses (Heb. 7:19). It is "more glorious" than the First Covenant (2 Cor. 3:11-12).

II. Spiritual Blessings found in the Promises of God. What promises does God's word offer? What spiritual blessings are offered in the gospel?

A. Mercy. The only hope for us as sinners rests in the mercy of God unto forgiveness. We should hope for God's mercy (Ps. 33:18-22).

B. Grace. The fact that God is willing to show forgiveness in Christ is an act of His wondrous grace. We must "rest" our hope "fully" on God's grace (1 Pet. 1:13-15).

C. Righteousness By Faith. Forgiveness sets man in a right condition before God. Christians hope for the "righteousness by faith" (Gal. 5:5).

D. The Effect of the Gospel on Others. If we trust in the power of God's word to affect a spiritual change in the heart and soul of men and women, we must hold out hope for its effect on those around us.

1. Godly love "hopes all things" (1 Cor. 13:4-7).
2. Christians should hope for the faithfulness of others (1 Thess. 2:18-20).

Conclusion. God's word extends wondrous promises to mankind in the final revelation given to man—the gospel of Jesus Christ. Among the highest of these promises are the spiritual blessings that concern a reconciled relationship with God granted through the forgiveness of sins. Christians should focus their hope on such promises. In our next lesson we will consider some of the things for which these blessings and promises allow us to hope in the future.

Discussion Questions

1. How can the fact that believers hope in God's word cause those who fear God to be "glad" when they see them (Ps. 119:73-74)?_____
   _____
   _____
2. Critics of faith often accuse Christians of using faith as a "crutch." How might we explain the Psalmists description that he hopes in God's word as a "hiding place" and "shield" (Ps. 110:114)? _____
   _____
3. In Paul's prayer in Romans 15:13 that the Romans may "abound in hope" what phrase does he use to describe God?_____
   Explain this description:_____
   _____
   _____
4. Peter describes the gospel as "a living hope" (1 Pet. 1:3). How may we understand this description?_____
   _____
5. David, who lived under the Law of Moses, declared in Psalm 19:7 "the Law of the LORD is perfect," yet the Hebrew writer says the gospel is a "better hope" (Heb. 7:19). Explain the how the gospel can be "better" than the Law David describes as "perfect."_____
   _____
   _____
6. The word the Psalmist uses for "mercy" in Psalm 33:18, 22 is most commonly translated *mercy* (149), *kindness* (40), or *lovingkindness* (30) in the King James Version. What are some ways that mankind might need to "hope" for the kindness, lovingkindness, or mercy of God?_____
   _____
   _____
7. What does Peter teach about the conduct of the one who rests his hope fully on God's grace (1 Pet. 1:13-15)?_____
   _____
8. When people disappoint us it is often easy to assume that they will do so again in the future. What are some lessons Paul's example of hope in the Thessalonians teach us that can help us maintain hope in those who have disappointed us in the past (1 Thess. 2:18-20)?_____
   _____
   _____
   _____

