

P543

Grace Notes Program
THEME: What do we HOPE in? – Part 2
SONGS: Sing to the Lord
Word of God speak

INTRO: Welcome to Grace Notes. We hope you've been enjoying our series on 'Hope'. On our last program we discussed the importance of placing our hope in the right object – or should we say – the right Person. Today, Barbara Sandbek will address the issue of how our hope, or faith, is formed by our opinion about what we hope in. But before we begin, let's set the mood with an appropriate song.

**** SING TO THE LORD ****

The song you just heard was from Psalm 30:5 where it says..

'His anger lasts only a moment, but His favor lasts a lifetime'.

How does this truth strike you? I have to admit - in my early faith-walk, I tended to dwell on the momentary anger part – rather than on the blessing of His eternal favor. I perceived God as somewhat of an Ogre – looking down on me, ready to zap me for anything I did wrong. This attitude continued for quite a while – I'm sorry to say.

When Dale & I started our concert ministry in 1992, I was still a person of little faith. Jesus had given me faith to believe that He is the only way to God. His death and resurrection from the grave secured my eternal salvation when I asked Him to save my soul, but beyond that, I pretty much had to have things visibly demonstrated to 'buy in'. Every time someone would ask a spiritual question I couldn't answer, or refute something I said, my faith would be shaken.

I'm the kind of person that doesn't believe in putting on facades, so this posed a real problem. How could I convincingly tell my audiences they needed to put their hope in Christ to live effective Christian lives when I wasn't doing it? When God shows you your shortcomings, be assured, He'll also direct you to the solution, if you listen. I knew His answers came from Scripture, so I began a word study on 'faith'.

One of the first verses I read was Hebrews 11:6. The first part of that verse says...

‘Without faith it is impossible to please God.’

I was struck by the fact that my lack of faith displeased God. I knew if I kept searching, He’d show me what I needed to do, so I read on. The verse continues with...

‘..he that comes to God MUST BELIEVE THAT HE IS...’

That’s not hard to accept. It’s obvious through viewing creation that God exists. In fact, the Bible says in Romans 1:20 that man can know God through His creation. All his invisible qualities, His eternal power and Divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made so that men are without excuse.

Psalm 14:1 goes even farther to say...The FOOL says in his heart – there is no God’.

Yes, I believe God exists, and maybe you do, too, but the verse goes on to say that we must also believe...

that He is a REWARDER of them that DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM.’

Let’s break that down into two sections. First, - ‘He is a rewarder’.
‘Rewarder’ in the Greek means ‘one who pays wages’. I never thought of it that way. What wages does God pay us? We don’t deserve to be paid anything. In fact, Romans 3:23 says we have sinned against God, and Romans 6:23 says the wages of sin is death. But Jesus paid the wages that we owed for our sin when he took our place on the cross. He bought us with His Precious Blood and gave us eternal LIFE in place of the eternal death we were destined for – all for the asking. Now that’s FAVOR!

But do we really believe God is out for our good? I have to say that part of me still saw Him through the flaws of my human father, though I was well into adulthood. Parents make mistakes. They withhold when they should give. They give when they should withhold. But, God, the perfect Father, has everything in balance. He’s knows what it takes to make us more Christ-like.

What other rewards do we get when we believe? God told the patriarch Abram in Genesis 15:1 that HE was His exceeding great reward. Just think of it. God is OUR exceeding great reward. To know Him and to be in His family is all the reward we really need.

Not only that, but we can also claim all the promises Christ gave us, here and now, like the one in John 10:10b, where He said...

I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly (or beyond measure).

Abundant life starts the moment we accept Jesus into our lives.

The problem comes in assimilating these promises. That's where the second part of the verse comes in. Once again, it reads...

He that comes to God must believe that He is..and that He is a rewarder of them that DILIGENTLY seek Him.

Here's where the rubber meets the road. It takes a little effort on our part. 'Diligently' means 'to place above all things', 'to seek wholeheartedly'.

When we approach God to ask for help, or to worship, serve or commune with Him, we must be pleasing in His sight. As a Believer in Christ, God sees us as righteous because of the Blood of Christ, so positionally we are in right standing. Jesus did all the work so we could be accepted into God's family, BUT we have an obligation to be obedient to His commands in order to have the fellowship that pleases Him.

It takes time to search for something, but if we don't see it of value, we won't make the effort. How important is it to us that we please God?

Oh, that we could consider God like King David did. He wrote in Psalm 27:4...

One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek Him in His temple.

At one point in his life, King David was in the wilderness of Judah. He was both hungry and in great distress, yet he placed God above all meat and drink. He wrote in Psalm 63:1-2...

O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.

David experienced exceeding great pleasure in the presence of the Lord, so he sought after it with his whole heart. Not spending time with the Lord caused him great suffering of both body and soul.

There are treasures awaiting us when WE diligently seek the Lord and spend time, in silence, listening for Him to speak. Somehow our own words will seem trite when we hear HIS VERY VOICE.

Father, may we, like David, choose to seek your face above all else. Quiet our hearts within us and help us to focus on You to receive the reward of knowing You better. We're listening...NOW.

***** WORD OF GOD SPEAK *****

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