

P544

Grace Notes Program

THEME: What do we HOPE in? – Part 3

SONGS: WHERE THERE IS FAITH

STRONGER FOR IT

INTRO: Welcome to Grace Notes. So far in our study of ‘hope’, we learned that we need to focus on the right OBJECT, or person, AND have a valid OPINION about that object. Barbara Sandbek outlined the importance of seeing GOD for Who He is and believing that He is out for our ultimate good. She used Hebrews 11:6 to challenge us to be diligent in our search to know God more fully. Our program today addresses the issue of what to do when our hope is shaken - so stay tuned.

It’s been said that the African impala can jump to a height of over 10 feet and cover a distance of greater than 30 feet. Yet these magnificent creatures can be kept in an enclosure in any zoo with a 3-foot wall. The animals will not jump if they cannot see where their feet will fall.

God doesn’t expect animals to live a life of faith – but He does call Believers, in Christ, to take the faith Jesus gives and live by it.

This illustration makes us wonder if WE have enclosures in our lives that keep us from experiencing all that God has for us. How do we view things we can’t figure out – as disappointments, or opportunities to see how God works and learn the mind of Christ?

God can be trusted - even if what we’ve been hoping for doesn’t pan out.

On our last program I mentioned that in my early Christian walk I had very little faith – primarily because I didn’t spend time reading the Bible. After I committed to do this, God first showed me a great truth - His ways are not my ways, even if I think I’m right. Then He allowed me to go through an experience to help reinforce this truth.

I’d already begun to see the value of prayer, so I started praying for people on our church’s sick list. One Sunday prayer was requested for a young mother of thirty who was diagnosed with lymphoma. I’d always admired Leslie. She was beautiful inside and out. She and her husband were preparing to go

to the mission field. Her prognosis was grim and the pregnancy had made it worse. I brought her name to God's throne many times as she went through the treatments. The hospital agreed to perform a bone marrow transplant because of her unusual type of lymphoma. Everyone thought this would be God's miracle, but as the days went by, her body refused to accept the new marrow and make the needed blood. She died in her husband's arms, leaving behind a tiny baby, a sorrowful mate, and many questioning prayer warriors.

**I told the Lord I didn't think it was fair. Everybody was praying for healing. She was a good, faithful person...and so young. I wrestled with this until He gave me peace in the form of a poem I wrote called,
'Commitment - regardless'**

**It's hard to understand the way our Father works sometimes.
It seems too often life's pathway yields mountains we can't climb.**

**The good die young, the faithful suffer, the wicked take first place.
At times we struggle so 'neath the load we hardly start the race.**

**But without faith we cannot please our blessed Lord above.
He told us He'd be true to us. He showed us by His love.**

**No one would care to offer up His only Son for me;
To suffer, bleed and die for sin to pay my penalty.**

**So how can I refuse to trust my Heavenly Father's care?
He made me part of His great plan and in His wealth I'll share.**

**I'll cast my burdens, cares and fears at my dear Savior's feet
And trust that He and I will share a fellowship that's sweet.**

**When things don't make sense - that's where real FAITH comes in.
Just ask for more of it - and TRUST GOD no matter what.**

***** WHERE THERE IS FAITH ****

God also showed me through studying the lives of Biblical ‘greats’ that there are things He allows in our life that seemingly have no purpose at the time, but later prove to be eternally beneficial – though we may not see it in our lifetime.

I imagine the apostle Paul never thought that the epistles he wrote from a prison cell would make such an impact on people’s lives, even to this day, or that the suffering he went through - imprisonment, floggings, beatings, stoning - would make him more compassionate like Christ and better able to write to the true needs of his readers.

I’ m sure he wouldn’t have orchestrated any of these situations for himself. But he wrote in 2 Corinthians. 12:10...

I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

I truly believe God wants to use some of us in a way that requires hard training through trials and suffering. If we stop kicking and screaming when they occur, we’ll be able to look back and say – we’re stronger for it, too.

***** STRONGER FOR IT *******

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Join us on our next program.

Until then, let your grace notes be a song of praise!