



Teaching Letter 6

Hope In God

No one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame” (Psalm 25:3, NIV).

There is no doubt this verse is for you. It leaves no one out. The psalmist has included you, me and everyone with his very first words. “No one.” The verse is a promise of God. It is as sure as Jesus, and He is more sure than anything or anyone we know or ever will know. And it is for you—and me.

This verse tells us possibly the most important point about hope we could ever learn. David, who wrote this psalm, understood the necessity of placing his hope in God alone. He understood there are other things in which we might erroneously place our hope. Isaiah, the prophet, understood this as well. He wrote—“Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the Lord” (Isaiah 31:1, *NIV*).

Israel as a nation was often guilty of this. We read about their struggles and sins repeatedly in Scripture. We all have been guilty. My Egypt, horses, and chariots might be named *education, personal abilities, self-effort, people, or money*. It doesn't matter whether we have these things—we can still hope in them. This is misplaced hope. There is, however, no promise for us if we put our hope in anything or anyone except God. The result of putting our hope in anything else is shame, according to our Word for today. I would like to avoid that. Isn't it good of God to tell us how we can?

So we are on solid ground if our hope is *in* God. A greater challenge comes in knowing

what to hope *for*. We don't want to have misguided hope. Misguided hope results in disappointment. The Apostle Paul tells us, “And hope maketh not ashamed” (Romans 5:5a, *KJV*). The same verse in The New International Version reads, “And hope does not disappoint us. . . .” He is speaking of true hope.

I believe Paul understood the difficulty of knowing what to hope *for*. You might want to read Romans 8:24-27. Try reading in several versions. In these verses about hope, Paul explains, for one thing, that “we know not what we should pray for.” He indicates that for those who have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, “the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” and that “he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (*KJV*).

It is God's will that we both pray and hope for things that are “according to the will of God” (Romans 8:27). From this passage we can see the difficulty that sometimes exists. Solid ground lies where we have the clear Word of God on a matter—a promise or some clear teaching in Scripture. If there are conditions and we meet those, we have good reason to hope based on God's revealed will in His Word.

We get ourselves onto shaky ground when we hope for something without having the revealed will of God in the matter. Our enemy Satan will be glad to help us with that as well, for the result of that hope will be disappointment or shame. I must admit I have had misguided hope. Things I really wanted never happened. I thought they were God's will. I was disappointed.

However, I asked the Lord to teach me, and He revealed my enemy misguided hope. Hope based on God's revealed will does not disappoint.

On the other hand, undoubtedly some of you, like me, have heard God's *rhema* word to you. That's a word spoken directly by the Holy Spirit to your heart. That word is certain. I thank God for these words from the Lord. To be honest, occasionally I have heard things that were not from God, and it was difficult to know the difference. I always seek the Lord earnestly about things I hear. Scripture tells us we should try the spirits to see if they are from God. If God causes us to hope, we will not be disappointed. I have some *rhema* words yet to be finalized in my life, but I have every confidence they will be.

Misplaced hope and misguided hope are instruments of Satan to try to cause us to become disappointed with God. We must not let these enemies undermine our faith and hope in God. We must rid ourselves of them. God may heal the loved one for whom we have prayed—and hoped. God may save the marriage for which we have sought Him—and hoped. But if He does not, He still is the God of hope who will and does help us.

I conclude with a blessing and a prayer. "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13, *NIV*). **SH**

GOD'S WORD FOR TODAY

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