

Where Has All The Hope Gone

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- [0 : 00] Well, as you can see in your bulletin that we have a lot to read today out of Ephesians. And is that where I said it was?
- And talking about who's ready to hear about end times, living in the end times. No? Not ready to hear about that? Okay, good, because that's not what we're going to be looking at today.
- And per usual, after I'd already given Ann the title of the message and what I'd been studying all week and everything, the Lord put it on my heart that, no, we're not doing that.
- I was like, again? Come on. I can't. And he goes, what do you mean you can't? Sure you can with me. And so at 2 o'clock this morning, I started writing what we're going to be hearing today.
- And so I'll be reading a lot of it today because there's no rehearsal whatsoever on this. But as always, I also want to hear from the Lord of what he is saying that we need as a body to hear.
- [1 : 18] He knows the hearts of the people. He knows what we're going through. And I liked today's theme of comfort. And because that's, to me, this is a comforting, encouraging message.
- I had other things in mind or that I thought and that I wanted to speak on, but he says no. As a pastor once told me, feed the sheep.
- Don't beat the sheep. I was like, yeah, but we need beating now and then. And we need to be put in our place. That's my heart. That's not his heart. And exhortation, yes, but not beating.
- And so he changed it up. And so here we go. We are going to be turning to the book of Proverbs. Okay. We are going to be in verse, or chapter 13.
- We will not be reading the whole thing. So, but for what we are going to read, if you could stand with me for the reading of God's word, if you're able.
- [2 : 37] Proverbs 13, verse 12. Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but desire fulfilled is a tree of life.
- So reads the word of God. Let us pray. Father, we thank you for this morning. We thank you that you brought us here to hear what you would have for us to hear, to give us comfort, to give us hope in things that we need to have hope in, to understand what this message means.
- And as it's already been spoken of a few times here, that, Holy Spirit, we do want you to be the teacher this morning. And that everybody would hear from you in your words.
- Thank you for loving us. In Jesus' name, amen. Hope deferred makes the heart sick.
- Have you ever been sick at heart? Have you ever felt that? Do you feel blah? And I put that in the past tense, like, have you ever felt sick at heart?
- [4 : 01] But are you feeling sick at heart? Are you currently going through that? Are things that are happening in your life where you just, what's going on?

I don't understand. I almost wanted to title the message, Hope Restored. Because it's all about hope. Hope.

Hope. Where does it go? Where did it go? What happened to it? Hope deferred makes the heart sick. You feel depressed.

You're sad. You're bitter. Angry. You're grumpy. Just going through the motions. Thinking, why bother? You're being an Eeyore.

Oh, but that's just the way things are. I guess I'll just have to accept it. That's just what's going on.

[4 : 58] Why do we get this way? What happened to us? Reading Proverbs 13 tells us that hope deferred makes the heart sick.

So I ask a question. Is this proverb an explanation of why we get sick at heart? Because hope has been deferred?

We'll leave that hanging for a moment. Let's first define what hope is. And so another question. How would you describe hope to others?

Okay. Is it wishing for something? Anticipating something? Expecting something? How would you use hope in a sentence?

I hope you feel better. I hope I get this job. Fingers crossed. I hope it works out for you.

[6 : 01] Knock on wood. What happens when we have hope that doesn't come to fruition? We get sick at heart.

So I ask again. Is this proverb an explanation of why we get sick at heart? Sure seems like it.

And the answer would be yes. It's an explanation. Hope has been deferred. But this proverb is much more than that.

It is an exhortation. So we don't get sick at heart. It's what happens when we get sick at heart.

Or the cause of why we get sick at heart is because hope is deferred. But it's an exhortation to so that we don't get sick at heart. Are we following that? It's an explanation.

[7 : 04] And it's also an exhortation. Let's see if we can, if I can give this our, anyway. What does it mean that hope is deferred?

Deferred means to put off. To put aside. To put away.

That's what deferred is. You defer it. You put it aside. You put it away. You put it off. In this situation here, why, or in our situations, why did the hope get deferred?

What happened? How did it get deferred? Who deferred it? How did it get put off, put aside, put away?

Was it God that did it? Does he take away our hope? When we're going through it, we sure think so. This didn't come to pass.

[8 : 08] God must not want me to have that. I had these dreams. I had these hopes. I had things planned out.

When I got married, this was how life was going to be. This is how my children were going to turn out. This is how my grandchildren were going to turn out.

This is how my friendships were going to be. This is how my job was going to be. I was going to do such grander things than what they turned out to be. Hope is not realized.

Who took it away? What happened? Again, did God take it away? The answer to that one is real simple.

No. We did it. We took our own hope away. We put it aside. We put it off. We put it away.

- [9 : 09] So, this proverb is an exhortation not to defer hope. But how are we deferring hope?
Certainly, we don't want to do that. Certainly, we're going, no. If it's my hope, if it's things that I hope for and stuff, why would I defer them?
Why would I put them off? But we do it. When I start saying things like, because I'm impatient, it's hopeless.
It'll never happen. I won't get that job. I'll never get a boyfriend, a girlfriend, a companion. I'll never get out of debt.
My kids will never go back to church. My marriage is unsavable. That's not a word, by the way. That relationship, it'll never be the same.
- [10 : 13] That fighting, that fight that we had, that relationship can never be restored. When I talk like that, when I defer hope, when I put it away, I become sick at heart.
When I feel like that, bodily, emotionally, and spiritually. Tired, sluggish, in a fog, wake up sad, barely able to get through the day.
When I see these symptoms, I need to take stock of how I got this way. What happened to make me put aside hope? Was it my impatience?
When the hope didn't come in my time frame? Did life's problems pull me down? Or was my hope placed in the wrong meaning of hope?
Another thing that happens is we let ourselves, this will be a little, this is almost like a tongue twister. We let ourselves talk to us.
- [11 : 28] When the alarm goes off, stupid alarm. I'm so tired. It's going to be a crappy day. Starting out our day real nice just by doing that, huh?
We're talking, we're letting ourself talk to us. Our emotions, our feelings, we're letting them speak to us and dictate basically how our day is going to go when we do that.
Rather than talking to yourself. You talk to yourself. Instead of letting yourself talk to you. Why are you cast down, oh my soul?
Why are you speaking to yourself? You speak to yourself. Why are you cast down, oh my soul? Why are you depressed?
Why? Why are you letting these things get to you? Why are you listening to all this other stuff? Why are you cast down my soul?
- [12 : 41] Hope in God. Know what the meaning of hope is. So I go back to my original question of what is hope, only this time I add, biblically.
Not what would you tell a friend, not what you would try to convey to somebody else who's not a Christian, but how would you define hope biblically?
It is the absolute expectation of coming good. That's what hope is. The absolute expectation of coming good.
I know, I know that I know that I know with complete confidence that good is coming. That's hope.
That is hope in God. And the good coming is from God who loves me and has my best interest in mind. That's how we know that God doesn't take away our hope.
- [13 : 46] He says, for I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you a hope and a future.
Jeremiah 29, 11. We all know it. We've heard it. Do we speak that? Do we speak those words of hope?
So then I thought, all right, what are some things God gives us hope for? I gave you one. So I type it in.

Hope in the Bible. God's hope in the Bible. Oh, my gosh. I had no idea that there was such a plethora of scriptures.

I thought, you know, I'll find 10, 20, something like that, and I'll be able to jot down a few of them. Oh, no, no, no, no. You've got hundreds of them in there. I challenge you.

[14 : 50] I, yeah, I challenge you to look up, do a word search on hope, hope in the Bible, and see how much God gives us hope.

The hope that he gives us, it is just amazing. It's overwhelming. You just get flooded with it. You go, God, I had no idea there was that much in there.

I had no idea. Never took the time to look. So here I am, depressed, saddened, whatever, because things aren't going the way I think they should, and yet here they are, all these other things that I've been blessed with.

So instead of saying, I won't get that job, because you've now looked up scripture, that instead you will say, the Lord opens and shuts doors.

He's the one that opens and shuts them. So if you don't have that job, what's that mean? He didn't want you to have it, right? It's okay. Go to the next one, right?

[16 : 03] It's all right. Apply someplace else. He says, no, that job wasn't for you. You thought it was. It looked good and everything else, but I open and I shut doors.

So the door I open, when I leave it open, go on through. So I have to remember, he has my best interest in mind.

He knows what's best for me. Always keep that in the back of your mind. He knows, and if he's guiding your life, you don't need to worry about these things.

Because you just rest in that. Well, I guess God's protecting me. I thank you, Father, for protecting me. In this, you know, whatever I asked for, and you said, no.

You closed that door. Instead of saying, my marriage will never be saved, instead say, God hates divorce.

[17 : 08] That's not a guilt trip on somebody. That's been divorced. That's not the idea behind it. Why does God hate divorce?

He hates it because he says that when two were married, the two shall become one. When there's just the divorce, there's a ripping apart, and that's painful.

The problems that it causes, he doesn't want us to go through that. You don't want everybody in your life to be affected by it.

He loves us, and that's why he hates divorce, because he hates what it does. Man. So instead of, my marriage will never be saved, instead say, God hates divorce, and also, what God has joined together, let no man separate.

Back to that same thing. The two shall become one. That's why. Instead of saying, my kids will never go back to church, instead say this, train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

[18 : 26] I can't tell you how many times I rely on that verse. Because my children don't always go to church. They go through their seasons, and when I hear about it, I can get depressed about it, and worry about it, and oh no, they've fallen from the faith.

But no, I know how they were trained up, and so I hold on to that promise. I know, I have that hope. The sure thing, it will happen, because God's word says it.

I have that hope, and I don't worry about it, because I know that as, when they get old, they won't depart from it. They will at some point in their life, come back around.

I'm assured of that. And it has been proven to me over and over with my own children. So, I've got a set right now that doesn't go to church.

I talk to them, I encourage them. I don't just let it go, but I also don't hound them either. I just ask them simply, did you find a church home yet? No, but we're looking.

[19 : 42] Oh, okay. Okay. Where are you looking? And encourage them. You know, the children, my grandkids, that they need to be brought up.

It is your responsibility as parents to do this. Just not the guilt trip, but just reminding them gently. Yeah, you're right. Okay, that's all. Hey, how's it going now? Life's going now?

Cheap your job going. You don't go on with things. Instead of saying, I'll never get a boyfriend, girlfriend, companion. Instead say, God declared, it is not good for man to be alone.

So, he gave him a suitable helpmate. Rest in there. And if, if he gives you peace about being alone, then take that.

But if you don't have peace about it, start saying things like this. God declared, I know that God declared that it's not good for man to be alone. And he gave him a suitable companion.

[20 : 46] Help me. Cling on to that. Hold on to it. Keep your hope. Goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life.

Hold on to that. Goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life. Do you believe that? Do you understand that his mercy and goodness is following you?

Sometimes it's ahead of you. And it's preparing things. It's out there preparing things for you. All the days of your life. When you have hope, you have a sparkle in your eye, a spring in your step.

You enjoy the day. People notice a difference in you and want to be around you. And maybe they'll even ask, my goodness, what happened to you? What's got you all perky and happy and everything?

And then that opens up the door to be able to share the hope that is within you. Share with them what God is doing. man, God is taking care of me.

[22 : 01] I thought, you know, that this situation was going on. But God, he came in and he said no. But that's okay. I mean, it's an opportunity to witness.

Not only do I need the proper definition of hope, but I need to keep that hope fresh on my lips and in my thoughts. That's important.

I need to talk to myself. Oh, downcast soul, hope in God. Not let myself talk to me or others.

Don't let them talk to you that are negative, that are downers. Don't hang around that stuff. See, we have many voices speaking in our head, in our thoughts.

Now, I probably have more than others because there's a lot of voices up here. It's a joke, people. Maybe. But anyway, no, we have a lot of voices, a lot of things coming at us from all different directions.

[23 : 15] it's almost like, not almost, it is, it's like radio waves that are out there flying through the air.

They're all out there. They're going all over the place. And just like the radio tunes into different broadcasts, so our brain tunes in to different things that are out there that are being said.

We tune into those things. voices, the thoughts, some are fearful, negative, worries, concerns, doubt.

When we hear those things, just like a radio, we have the ability to change the channel, change the station, if it's not what we like to hear, or that we need to hear, I should say.

Do you get agitated from talk shows on the radio? Change the dial, hit the button, move on. You don't like the lyrics or the beat of rap music because you landed on that dial?

[24 : 29] Change the dial, change the channel. Find a station that is edifying. Colossians 3, 2 says, set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

Don't focus on the earthly things. Keep your thoughts above. Keep them in scripture. Keep them in the hopes that God gives you as you look them up.

Claim these things. Pull them in and say, yes, that's what I'm going through. I need to claim or hold on to that hope. Remember that hope that God says in his word that he is doing with things and how he handles situations, how he goes, anyway, how he deals in my life.

It's important. Give you an example of good old negative voices.

We all know the story out of Numbers 13. Israelites, they're ready to go into the promised land, but instead, after sending out the spies and they come back with the report, they're ready to go into the promised land, but then they listen to the ten negative reports.

[25 : 53] There are giants in the land and we look like grasshoppers compared to them. What they should have done instead was listen to the two voices that spoke of God's power, protection, and promises.

It is true there are giants in the land, but they look like grasshoppers to God. That's what they should have heard.

That's what they should have gone with. That's what they should have held on to. Here's a little side note. Only because in looking at this stuff, I'd always been taught that the promised land represented heaven.

That's the way I was taught. Never thought anything different. Never thought about it because that's what I was taught. That's what it is. The promised land represented heaven. But when I start thinking about it, it's like, wait a minute, there's not going to be any battles that are going on in heaven.

In the promised land, there's a lot of battles going on. So what does the promised land represent?

[27 : 03] It is a picture of the spirit filled life. It has challenges, battles, giants, but its land is fruitful.

It's a land of excitement, productivity, prosperity, and it is intriguing. It is leaving Egypt, the world, and going to a spirit filled life.

But in order to walk in this land, you must have hope. Otherwise, what happens? Because they listened to the voices that were negative, hope was deferred, and they became sick at heart.

They were fearful. they were hopeless. They lost a vision. Where there is no vision or hope, that's what a vision is, or that's what we can attach it to, the people will perish.

If you don't have a vision, if you lose that vision, if you lose that hope, what's going to happen? You're going to perish. You're going to perish sometimes physically, emotionally, spiritually, it's just what happens.

[28 : 21] The result of them becoming fearful, being sick at heart, putting aside hope, was them wandering in the desert, going in circles for 40 years.

Does this describe your walk? Have you been walking around in circles? Has it been a lot of years? when will you say to yourself, enough soul, put your hope in God and praise him?

When will you say, God works everything for the good to those who love him? It's okay. That's hope. because you know it to be true. You can hang on to that.

First Peter, gird up the loins of your mind. Man, get it together. It's all right. Talk sternly to yourself.

Sometimes we need that. Set your station, your radio station, on hope. H-O-P-E. Don't set it on N-O-P-E.

[29 : 47] Set it on hope, not on nope. Hope, whatever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, think on these things.

Set your station on that. Don't set it on nope. I'll never be blessed. Everyone gets blessed but me. That's from Sally 1023.

There's a joke in there someplace. I know. That's right. When I'm quoting scripture, I might as well quote myself, although I was going to say that's Mark 1023, but everybody would look, oh, it's Mark 1023, but it's not.

Maybe I should go with Richard, because that's my real first name. Richard 1023, and that stands for October of 23. This is when I said this. I'll never be blessed. Everyone gets blessed but me.

Anyway, forget it. Just think about it. Hey, it'll make sense. So, what station will you turn to? Hope or nope?

[30 : 49] Don't be a dope. Give another illustration of putting aside don't listen to the negative stuff.

Jesus did that. He didn't listen to the negative stuff because he was going to do a miracle. He had hope that a little girl was going to be raised from the dead.

The story comes out of Mark 5, 22 through 24, and then picks back up in 35 through 43. In fact, I think I want to read that. Mark 5, verse 22.

One of the synagogue officials named Jairus came up and on seeing him fell at his feet and implored him earnestly saying, my little daughter is at the point of death.

Please come and lay your hands on her so that she will get well and live. So, at this point, Jesus started to go to the house and, but as he was going, a crowd was following him and at this point, there was a woman who had hemorrhage for 12 years and we know that story, so it gets interrupted.

[32 : 11] Jesus gets interrupted going to the house of Jairus and to heal his daughter, check her out, see what's happening.

Although I'm sure Jesus knew at this point what was already going on. But anyway, so the story picks up in verse 35. While he was still speaking, meaning that he was talking about the woman who got healed from touching the hem of Jesus' garment, while he was still speaking, they came from the house of the synagogue official saying, your daughter has died.

Why trouble the teacher anymore? Hope lost. It's no use anymore. Child died.

Don't bother the teacher. Don't bother God anymore. No hope. Didn't make it on time. He got somebody else needed a healing more than my daughter did, I guess.

Don't bother. She's dying. But Jesus, overhearing what was being spoken, said to the synagogue officials, do not be afraid any longer. Only believe.

[33 : 31] Have hope. Only have hope. Believe. And he allowed no one to accompany him except Peter and James and John, the brother of James.

They came to the house of the synagogue official, and he saw a commotion and people loudly weeping and wailing. And entering in, he said to them, why make a commotion and weep?

The child has not died but is asleep. They began laughing at him, putting them all, so this is what Jesus did, but putting them all out, he said, I listen to this negativity.

I'm not listening to this doubt. No, that's not going to happen. I'm not going to listen to the mockers, the weepers, sad folks.

He moved them all out. Hey, now I have no place, this has no place for this hope. hope. So he took along the child's father and mother and his own companions and entered the room where the child was.

[34 : 44] Taking the child by the hand, he said to her, I don't know how to speak Greek or whatever, Talitha, I don't know, which translates mean, little girl, I say to you, get up.

immediately the girl got up and began to walk, for she was 12 years old. And immediately they were completely astounded. And he gave them strict orders that no one should know about this, and he said that something should be given her to eat.

Get away from me, worry, doubt, mockers, my own voice, the things that are going on in my head. Get away. Hope is here. true hope.

And then Jesus takes us by the hand. He says, get up, rise up, my child. Such a neat thing, neat example that Jesus gives us of what we need to do.

Ultimately, the hope we should always keep in the forefront of our mind and not set it aside, not defer it. It comes from 1 Peter 1 3, 1 through 3, or no, 1 Peter 3 through 6.

[36 : 09] There we go. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade.

This inheritance is kept in heaven for you who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have to have to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. That's a hope to hang on to, isn't it?

The future. And that's what hope is. Hope is always in the future. True hope. It's not something that's already happened.

As scripture says, if it's already happened, if you can see it, there's not hope. Right? Hope is not seen. Future. Future. Well, I've already completed my message here.

[37 : 20] I've got one more example. I don't know if anybody wants to hear it or should we close because I also don't want to over give examples because sometimes we get muddled in our thoughts with that.

So you have the stuff you can take home with you, that you can ponder, that you can meditate on and give yourself some time to look up a word search on hope.

Do you have enough to do that? All right. Let's go with that. Father, we thank you for, again, your word. We thank you. I do thank you that for me, it gives me comfort to know that all I need to do is keep my hope in you.

To tell myself to tell my soul to not be downcast, to not be sad.

Just hope in God and praise you because of how you take care of me. Thank you for that, Jesus.

[38 : 38] Jesus. thank you for wanting us to know this truth. And in your name I pray. Amen.
Amen.