

Faith and the Blessed Hope

(by Bob Pulliam)

There are some erroneous ideas on hope that are quite common. Some people equate hope with wishing for something. But that for which one hopes is attainable. That for which one wishes is out of reach (thus the need for a genie when making wishes). Hope is not maintained in a spirit of uncertainty. Hope is that which lifts the spirit through the earnest expectations of faith. This hope keeps one going through the hardest of times, because there is the expectation of better beyond the sunset.

The scriptures have much to say about hope, which is very pertinent to us. While all may be going well for you at this moment, it is still the hope of something far better than you have which will motivate you to live your life as you should. If all of my hope rests upon the promise of this world's pleasures, then I will not seek my God. But if my hope is firmly grounded in His will, then I will seek to obey Him. Paul wrote,

"For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance." (Romans 8:24f)

This requires faith. As Paul also wrote, "we walk by faith, not by sight" (II Cor 5:7). We cannot see this great reward, but if we believe it is there, and that we can attain to it, then we will live as we ought. Paul said "we eagerly wait for it with perseverance." The perseverance we exhibit in our service to God is an indicator of our faith and our hope. If we will not serve God faithfully, then our faith is lacking, and our hope is not truly centered on the goal of eternal life. It's kind of like a disease with symptoms. The lack of faithful service (or downright disobedience) is the symptom of a greater problem. That which causes the symptom is a lack of faith. Without faith and perseverance, there can be no true hope.

Moses is a marvelous example of faith for us today. He fell into the lap of luxury, and could have had it all, but chose the greater hope offered by God. The author of Hebrews wrote, "esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward." (Heb 11:26) Here is a man who could see great possibility in his earthly future. But he saw something far more important. He saw something that could only be seen by faith.

If you have been wondering why you cannot seem to get excited about eternal things, and rest in a secure hope, you need look no further than your faith. You are probably concerned about too many worldly things. These may be worthy endeavors (many are), but must not be allowed to become a driving force in your life.

The blessed hope is only blessed for those who pursue it with diligence. For those who will not, it become a point of frustration and futility!