

“Where Is Our Hope?”

1 John 3:1-3

- I. Where is our hope?
 - A. When we hear the stories of Christians being persecuted around the world; do we despair?
 - 1) When we think of family and friends who have died this past year; are we overcome by sadness?
 - 2) Does God give us any word? Does God give us any strength and guidance?
 - B. That guidance and that strength are in God’s Word.
 - 1) We see it so clearly in 1 John 3.
 - 2) Verses 1 and 2 are often used to bring comfort to those who mourn at funerals.
 - 3) And verse 3 is a clear proclamation of hope for all who are in Christ.
 - C. It proclaims for all to hear that our hope is found in the resurrection of Jesus.
 - 1) We know that he has been resurrected.
 - 2) We know that he is returning for all God’s children.
 - 3) We know that when he comes we will see him.
 - 4) And, we know that we shall be like him [we will share in resurrection].
- II. We must realize that our hope is not found in ourselves.
 - A. Our wisdom is not enough to give us hope.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 1:27 says, “But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise.”
 - 2) Human wisdom will only take us so far and provide us with so much illumination.
 - 3) It’s then that God invades the best thinking of our minds and gives us something we can’t rationalize – hope.
 - 4) Ecclesiastes 2:15 says, “Then I said to myself, “The fate of the fool will overtake me also. What then do I gain by being wise?” I said to myself, “This too is meaningless.”
 - B. Our ingenuity is not enough to give us hope.
 - 1) Human beings have achieved some great things throughout history. We are a pretty ingenious bunch.
 - 2) We’ve conquered major diseases; explored outer space; uncovered mysteries all over the planet – [and we still can’t explain the success of the Macarena]!
 - 3) The more we learn, the more we see to achieve. It’s a never ending drive to do more, tame more, and build more.
 - 4) Ecclesiastes 2:11 says, “Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.”
 - C. Our well-being [our health] is not enough to give us hope.
 - 1) Ecclesiastes 8:14 says, “There is something else meaningless that occurs on earth: the righteous who get what the wicked deserve, and the wicked who get what the righteous deserve. This too, I say, is meaningless.”
 - 2) I believe that God’s desire is wholeness for all followers of Jesus.
 - 3) I also believe that God’s defines wholeness a bit different than we do.

- 4) I believe that God sees it in a more complete and spiritual sense than what we often see limited by our humanity and our sin.
- 5) We cling to our health and our comfort and our well-being as signs of hope – that God has blessed us. But its not enough.
- 6) Things change in an instant. That’s why Ecclesiastes continues in verse 15, “So I commend the enjoyment of life, because there is nothing better for people under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. Then joy will accompany them in their toil all the days of the life God has given them under the sun.”
- 7) And Ecclesiastes 11:10 says, “So then, banish anxiety from your heart and cast off the troubles of your body, for youth and vigor are meaningless.”
- 8) Our health, our prosperity, our self-satisfaction is not enough to give us hope.

III. Our hope is not found in others.

A. The best leader cannot lead us to hope.

- 1) We’ve just come through a city-wide election for Aldermen and Mayor.
- 2) I always enjoy watching a political race and seeing the fervor that a contest for office creates.
 - a) I’m something of a politics wonk – I like to know what’s going on and weigh the arguments back and forth.
 - b) But I have to be careful or I get sucked into the whirlwind of it all.
 - c) I start to become what I laugh at –
- 3) I like politics, but I also try to keep it in perspective.
 - a) I think leaders are important and I pray for our leaders.
 - b) But, I also believe that no political party, no candidate, no individual is the author of my hope.
- 4) Ecclesiastes 4:13-16 says, “Better a poor but wise youth than an old but foolish king who no longer knows how to heed a warning. The youth may have come from prison to the kingship, or he may have been born in poverty within his kingdom. I saw that all who lived and walked under the sun followed the youth, the king’s successor. There was no end to all the people who were before them, but those who came later were not pleased with the successor. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.”

B. The wealthiest person with all their resources cannot buy us peace of mind.

- 1) How often have you wished you won the lottery? How often have you wished for a long-lost rich relative to remember you in their will?
- 2) Do you think Bill Gates is happy? Do you think all that stuff can fill the hole in your own heart?
- 3) Ecclesiastes says, {5:10} “Those who love money never have enough; those who love wealth are never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless.”

IV. It’s clear where our hope is not.

A. Our hope is not in ourselves.

B. Our hope is not in others.

C. So ... where is our hope.

V. Our hope is found only in Jesus Christ. And that brings us back to 1 John 3.

A. We experience it in His provision for us now.

- 1) “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God.” {1 John 3:1}

- 2) Our hope begins in what God has done for us through Jesus Christ.
 - 3) 1 John 4:10 – “This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”
 - 4) We find hope knowing that God is watching over us right now.
 - 5) So when it all goes south – god provides. When it looks like the sky is black – god provides.
 - 6) Whatever situation you are facing in your life right now – God is all over it. And that should give you hope.
- B. We believe in His provision for later [our future].
- 1) 1 John 3 {verse 2} also says, “Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”
 - 2) Hope is found in God’s concern for our future.
 - a) As important as “right now” is – God has a bigger picture in view.
 - b) God’s looking at eternity while we often look only at now.
 - 3) George Alan Ladd has called Christ’s second coming “the blessed hope” of the church.
 - a) He’s right. No matter how bleak today looks – there’s a new world coming.
 - b) He’s coming for us. And when he appears – we will see him and we will share eternity with him.
 - 4) As difficult as today may be for you – this too shall pass. There is a future free from pain, sin, sadness, death, disease, and hurt.
 - 5) If you have a clear grasp of your hope you can survive your today.
- C. We know His provision is for all.
- 1) Finally, God’s provision is open to everyone.
 - 2) Verse 3 says, “All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as Christ is pure.”
 - 3) We’ve talked before about all; you know what it means. All means all and that’s all all means.
 - 4) If your life is full of the shadows of despair; if you wouldn’t recognize hope if it walked close by; if you feel lost in your own life – there’s good news.
 - 5) The hope of God is yours for the asking. It’s open to all.
 - a) You just have to ask for it. You have to take what’s offered.
 - b) But there is hope.
- VI. There is always hope because there is always God.