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Here's Hope  
by Rev. Jerry Rea

### Holding Hope

Hope is mysterious. Who can understand it? Why do we have it some days, and not others? Why does it disappear and leave us depressed? Why are some so especially blessed with a huge hope quotient, and others just limp through life never able to fine their "hope muscle"? It's an idea not easily grasped. Neither is it easy to hold on to. Hope sometimes drives us forward into majestic Christian living. On the other hand, holding hope is like holding the wind.

Some of our favorite Bible heroes seem (at times) to have lost hope. Elijah ran from Jezebel and asked God to take his life. That's a bit hopeless. Moses argued with God. The writers of many psalms seem ready to demolish enemies and call for God's help in doing so. That's not exactly a "mature" believer. Abraham questioned God's destroying of Sodom and Gomorrah. He bargained for just ten faithful people. He said, "If I can find ten righteous men, will you spare these cities?" That same Abraham seems to have lost hope that God would give him a son, so he took things into his own hands. That's how Hagar and Ishmael came to fame. What about Haggai? He got tired of waiting on God. Jonah would not go to Nineveh because he doubted the way of God. So, here are our "heroes" in all their glamor and in all their *hopelessness*.

Let me make a few observations. Here's the first one. Heroes in all their heroics *struggle* just as you are now. The Bible is faithful to portray them just as they were. One of the glorious truths about Bible truth is that it is real. Its value is not tarnished because it is real; its value is deepened because it is real. By reading of the discouragement of Moses, Abraham and Jeremiah, we see in bold relief the failures and the faltering of our forefathers, and we see the value of our faith.

Those who follow God must sometimes follow Him when there is a *lack of clarity*. Following God can be like living in a fog. It often seems that our way is dark and foreboding. We take one step, and then look for a way to take the next one. His word is a lamp for our feet, but often that lamp flickers and fades. I guess what I'm saying is that living by faith means living without full sight. It means trusting the guide, even when the guide Himself is a bit cloudy. It is not His fault, it is ours. However, the sun may be shining brightly, but a man with faulty eyes still sees the world as dark.

Following God is a *walk*, not a *run*. It is no mistake that the text admonishes us to "walk" by faith. Most of the time the Christian walk is just that - a walk. In an "instant" world where everything is rated by its speed, do we still have to "walk?" Granted the analogy in scripture is just that, an analogy. I've learned, though, that the analogies of the Word are altogether perfect. I mean Jesus could have called Himself anything, but He claimed to be the Water of

Life. What a perfect picture of what Jesus is to my spiritual man! What water is to the body, Jesus is to the spirit. There is no replacing water in the body, and there is no replacing Jesus for the spirit. The body was made to run on water, and the spirit was made to be fed by Jesus. Now, back to hope. Along the faith walk, we find hope.

So, you can't hold hope. Like holding water in your hand, it leaks away. We can, however, follow Jesus. One step at a time, or one day at a time, we witness this man's amazing ability to provide what we need. One of the things you need is hope.

Following Jesus, we find hope  
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