

10-16-20

## Here's Hope

### What's Missing?

What's missing from your heart may be hope. How would a person know if they have or have not hope? How do you diagnose "hopelessness?" What are the symptoms of this lack? How would you know that condition?

If you have no hope, then you have nothing for which to look forward. For that matter without hope you will seldom find yourself looking forward at all. You know, of course, that we hope forward. Hope deals with the future. Quickly, I don't mean the far future. I'm thinking mainly about this afternoon, or tomorrow morning. That too is future. Our plans for tomorrow gather around that for which we hope. If you have no plans, there's a good chance you have little hope as well.

To be hopeless is a sinking feeling. When we hope for just about anything it raises our spirits. We say "we get down." By that we mean we've sunk down in our inward man. Or maybe we might say that the hope has drained out of our heart. Optimism wanes. We become a bit passive in our confrontation with life. If you feel empty inside, it may be because you are lacking hope.

To be hopeless is to invariably become pessimistic. Some are pessimistic as their life song. They're always singing the blues. Often they say well, bad things have happened in my past. I expect my future to be the same. In all fairness, that may be. Their future may have trials, troubles, rain and storms. But, also in all fairness, it may be totally the opposite. More likely, it will contain a mixture. By expecting (in drudgery and pessimism) the worse you cannot countenance even a bit of hope. To be hopeful is to be "unwise" and childish. Really? Just because yesterday is dark, does not mean tomorrow will be. And, let me remind you, most people find what they're looking for. If you're habitually pessimistic, your problem needs a shot of hope.

I'll end with this. There is a big difference between a canary and a vulture. A vulture spends his days looking for something dead. After all, that is how he lives and eats. A canary eats seeds, so he too looks for them, and invariably finds them. If you'll allow, you'll become a vulture looking for something dead. You'll find what you're looking for. On the other hand, if you look for good things, pure things, uplifting things, that is what you'll find. If you look for the worst in people, you'll find it. If you look closely, you'll also see the good in folks. The Bible says "to the pure all things are pure."

People are amazing creatures. They can change. Animals are driven by instincts. They do what they do because of their genetic code. A dog will always act (in the end) like a dog. A monkey swings in a tree, that's how he's been designed. People are different. People have free will. They can (be an act of will) begin to change their attitudes. They can focus on the hope found in the pages of the Bible. On the other hand, they can live lives of fear based on the latest newscast. I have a lot of reasons to have hope. After all, we serve the God of all hope. It is true we have problems, but better than our problems we also have Jesus. When I spend time with Jesus, I find a hope that helps me deal with the seeming hopelessness of life.

### A Vulture or a Canary?

Jerry Rea