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Hope's Perspective

By Rev. Jerry Rea

Having the perspective of hope changes everything. In some sense *hope* is a point of view, or an outlook. It looks like an attitude or a demeanor. You can always tell if a person has hope.

Hope will lean forward. It does not look backward and concentrate on past events. Hope looks forward with anticipation to what will or may happen. Are you looking forward to 2019? If you continually look forward, you will find yourself with more energy and excitement. Your attitude becomes "it's not what has happened that is important, but what will happen."

Hope is positive. It looks up, not down. At times in our lives, we might give our right arm for a person in our circle of friends who was positive. The news is often negative; the evening news is consumed with catastrophes and shootings. The world of politics is often negative. If it weren't for the slanderous onslaughts of one party against the other there would be nothing going on in Washington. The realm of church life is so often negative. Many have an extremely negative view of the local church. Who can blame them when we often play "ain't it awful" during our services? We live in a time when it is progressively easier to be negative. A man or woman with hope is the exception to that rule. Hope is optimistic, even in a negative climate.

Hope brings certain energy. Despair drains us, but hope energizes us. The world and its calamities positively drain us. Do you ever feel sucked dry? One hopeful person can give us a spark of hope and energy to try again. To be knocked down or to trip up is almost a daily occurrence. Where do we find "try again" power? If you have hope, you get up. You don't give up. If one person disappoints that does not mean that all persons are bad or weak. That's true, isn't it? But where do we find that attitude? Like all life, hope always comes from God. When we spend time with Him, we come away feeling that even though life is nearly empty, there is always hope in His presence. I read in my Bible how believers before our time found inspiration and hope when God acted in small and large ways. When I enter the prayer closet my heart can be completely empty, only to emerge with a clear goal of what to do next. When I'm around fellow believers, we do two things. On the one hand, we groan. That's okay from time to time, isn't it? On the other hand, we look to God, which necessitates that we look up. In that moment of gazing into His greatness and even singing "How Great Thou Art," we find another perspective. We begin to hope. I have every hope for your life. But, my hope is not my own. I hope for you because of Him.

I truly love you,
Jerry Rea