

Finding Hope in the Midst of Tragedy December 30th, 2017

Psalm 33:22 (NIV) “May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in You.”

There is a tension of trying to maintain hope in what seems to be a hopelessly **broken** world

Hope is the person(s) or thing in which your **expectations** are centered

At different stages of life, we make a decision to lean our ladder of hope onto something we think will support our ambition, aspirations, or our hopes and dreams for the **future**

We are often unaware of what we’re hoping for, and the only time we ever think about hope is when we begin to feel **hopeless**

Hopelessness is the feeling you get when you realize what you’ve leaned your ladder against isn’t going to **come through** for you

Question: How do you maintain hope in a world that is in fact **hopelessly** broken?

When you read the Bible, you will find we are instructed to place our hope in **God**

1 Timothy 6:17 (NIV) “Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.”

In America we have a hard time putting our hope in God because we are the best in the world at creating **walls** that hold up pretty good

If you are a Christian, just for good luck, you say, “Dear God, please don’t let my **ladder fall**.”

At some point in your life you begin to recognize that nothing, nothing is **secure** in this world

We think of sin as something you **do**, and it’s an **incident**

The Bible views sin as a **disease** that’s toxic and fatal, and that **everything** in the world was impacted by sin

Romans 8:20-21 (NIV) “For the creation was subjected to frustration,... in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay...”

Everything is **decaying**, and eventually every living thing dies

God is going to let sin run its course, and it touches **everything**

The reason we lean our ladder up against the wrong wall is because we think we can beat the **odds**, but **no one** can or does

Romans 8:22-23 (NLT) “²²For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as His adopted children, including the new bodies He has promised us.”

This tension we feel creates in us a longing for something **better**

Romans 8:24 (NIV) “For in this hope we were saved.”

When you became a Christian you became linked to a bigger, better story with a much better ending that goes beyond **this life**

Romans 8:25 (NIV) “But if we hope for what we do not have, we wait for it patiently.”

We do not give up hope, but we realize our hope is **not** in this world; we have to wait **patiently**

Romans 8:26 (NIV) “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.”

Romans 8:31-32 (NIV) “What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?”

When God becomes the focus of your hope, as you center your expectations in the love of your Heavenly Father, this is where hope does not, does not **disappoint**

Romans 8:38-39 (NIV) “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Is someone taking their own life wrong (sin)? **Yes** – but is it the unforgiveable sin? **No!**

Matthew 12:31 (NLT) “So I tell you, every sin and blasphemy can be forgiven—except blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which will never be forgiven.” (also see Mark 3:20-30)

You want to put your hope in something secure, something that won’t disappoint, something you can go to every single time – you’ve got to **move** your ladder

You’ve got to move your ladder and lean it against your Heavenly Father for only there will you find **enduring hope**

In the meantime you live out **Kingdom values** in a world where there’s not necessarily a lot of happy endings

When I loosen my hands from around all these things that I’ve placed my hope in, only then am I able to transfer my hope to the only person, the only thing that can sustain my hope through **good** and **difficult** times

If you have centered your expectations anywhere other than in your relationship with God or God’s love for you, it is **misplaced hope**

The only way to maintain hope in a hopelessly broken world is to place your hope in the **unfailing love** of God for you

My Next Step Today Is:

- Although I am already a follower of Jesus, today I am moving my ladder and placing it in the unfailing love of God for me
- I would like to know more about starting a relationship with Jesus & placing my hope in Him

Next week: Join us as we explore why church attendance isn’t the most important thing to God. Invite a friend!