

4-1-2003

Hope For the Hopeless (The President's Page)

Jiri Moskala

Andrews University, moskala@andrews.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pd>

Recommended Citation

Moskala, Jiri (2003) "Hope For the Hopeless (The President's Page)," *Perspective Digest*. Vol. 8 : No. 2 , Article 2.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pd/vol8/iss2/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Adventist Theological Society at Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Perspective Digest by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact repository@andrews.edu.



Jiri Moskala

Bishop Desmond Tutu aptly said that “a Christian is a prisoner of hope” (see Zechariah 9:12). We hope despite the cruel realities we experience in life—suffering, abuse, diseases, violence, pain, unsolved and unsolvable problems, and death. We cannot escape the horrible calamities that afflict Planet Earth, that one lost world in all God’s great creation. We dwell in a very strange place. Reality is quite different from what we wish.

Little wonder that within every one of us lives a pessimist. It is said that a pessimist is a person with experience. Realities of life around us are drastic. But let’s not be naive: Facts of life are one thing, the interpretation of facts quite another. Interpretation depends on your belief system. One of the best examples is the report of the 12 spies who were sent by Moses to the Promised Land. How differently they interpreted what they saw! One group, lacking faith, saw giants in the land; the other group envisioned victory

Hope for the Hopeless

(see Numbers 13-14).

German theologian Jürgen Moltmann tells how he survived concentration camps: “I saw how other men collapsed inwardly, how they gave up all hope, sickening for the lack of it, some of them dying. The same thing almost happened to me. What kept me from it was a rebirth to new life thanks to a hope for which there was no evidence at all.” Later he wrote his famous book *Theology of Hope*.

Dreams Are Dreams

It is hope that enables us to survive. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn said: “All that the downtrodden can do is go on hoping. After every disappointment they must find fresh reason for hope.” But there are many false hopes which disappear like a mirage: hopes to win a lottery, be beautiful, smart; hopes to meet smiling people, have faithful friends, an excellent marriage. To dream is important and healthy. But dreams are dreams and they often vanish with the dawn.

We all know how we feel when we have waited for someone, hoped for something, and been disappointed. The Book of Proverbs describes our feelings well: "Hope deferred makes the heart sick" (chap. 13:12, NKJV). Without hope, life is dark, like a world without a sun. Faith without hope is dead. Love, faith, and hope constitute a vital triad. Hope gives sense and meaning to love; Hope gives perspective and future to life. In fact, biblical hope surpasses our world. It comes from above. Though it goes beyond reason, it is reasonable,

because it is based on the sure Word of God. It is God's surprising gift.

Our Only Surety

Our God is the God of hope (Rom.15:13), the source of hope, because he is our Creator, Redeemer, and Accomplisher of our salvation. He is the only surety in this complicated and uncertain life. He gives perspective to a future that reaches beyond death. Without hope there is no future. With hope is eternal life. An unknown writer in a Warsaw ghetto wrote: "I believe in the sun even though it does not



shine; I believe in love even though I do not feel it; I believe in God even though he is silent." Hope is present in spite of everything. In our skeptical age, it is not easy to cultivate hope. But we have a source of hope, therefore we can nurture it. One does not need light so bright that we can see all details of our journey at once. God gave us his prophetic word as a guide, a light, a morning star (2 Peter 1:19). Hope is like the stars; we cannot reach them, but they are there for our orientation to lead us step by step until we perceive not only the light that shines from the cross, but also that radiance that signals his return—the hope of all ages, the hope of all hopes.

Inspired by Hope

In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Paul is saying that we are not like those without hope, and he points the minds of all Christians to the return of Christ. Hope in the second coming of Christ gives us not only perspective but also true joy in spite of the problems we go through, the reason this hope is described as "blessed" (Titus 2:13). Hope in God's promises is a firm and secure anchor (Heb. 6:9). Paul declares that we can endure difficulties of life because we are "inspired by hope" (1 Thess. 1:3, NIV). Jesus Christ is the unique hope for this world (Col. 1:27; 1 Cor. 15:19, 20). Christ's second coming will bring the consum-

mation of this hope; the reality will exceed all our expectations.

Biblical hope brings surprising and unexpected perspectives. It is a necessary spice of life that inspires courage, gratitude, and victory over sin. Thus the beleaguered Job dares to affirm: "Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him" (Job 13:15, NIV). Job's hope was built on the knowledge of who God is.

A Never-Changing Reality

The prophet Jeremiah, after going through a national catastrophe, cries out to God over the burnt ruins of Jerusalem and her temple. In spite of what his eyes behold, he confidently asserts that we "have hope" (Lam. 3:21, NIV). The reason for that hope is nothing less than God's steadfast enduring love: "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (Lam. 3:22-23, NIV).

God's love is a never-changing reality. Therefore, we can have hope in spite of everything that happens in our lives. We can have this hope because of the promises God gave us, which are as firm as a rock. Even the worst of tragedies in life will never alter this hope founded in God's Word. Genuine hope brings the assurance of his presence in our life. Paul therefore rightly admonishes: "Be joyful in hope" (Rom. 12:12, NIV).