

Sermon Title: The Thrill of Hope is Found in Jesus

How is giving the gift of love going? What about the gift of sharing your faith? These aren't one-time gifts... So, let's keep giving... for **God will keep supplying!**

Back in 1 Corinthians 13, there is still one more gift in the big 3 of abiding/enduring/lasting gifts... **Faith, Hope, & Love!**

What's interesting about this gift is that you can't have the other 2 without this one! "Love" & "Faith" both include "Hope" in their Biblical definitions!

- **"Love hopes all things!"** **Love** is built upon the foundation of hope!
- **"Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen!"** Hope is what gives faith **substance!** There's no faith w/out hope!

When hope is lost, everything that is life-giving is gone! But when hope abides, no matter what our circumstances, we can persevere!

- We can get thru the dead of winter, because there is hope of spring...
- **We can get thru suffering,** b/c there is hope of deliverance & purpose...
- We can get thru the loss of a loved one, b/c there is hope of heaven...
- We can get thru infertility, b/c there is hope of future pregnancy...
- We can get thru finals week, b/c there's hope of winter break/graduation...
- **We can get thru financial hardships,** b/c there's hope of generosity/blessings...
- We can get thru a bad diagnosis, b/c there is hope of healing/treatment...
- We can get thru separation, b/c there's hope of reconciliation/reuniting...
- **We can get thru sorrow,** b/c there is hope of joy & happiness restored...
- We can get thru loneliness, b/c there's hope in the presence of others/love...

Hope is the engine, the fuel, the lifeline, the **security blanket** that gets us thru life! It does not originate in us, but in the power of God! **2 Corinthians 4:7-9**

1 Peter 1:3-7 -Our lasting hope is found in the person & work of Jesus Christ! Hope has a name... **Immanuel!**... God with us... Jesus!

He is our hope in... winter... suffering... loss... infertility... finals week... financial hardships... bad diagnosis... separation... sorrow... loneliness... etc.

Hope is not a one-time gift. **For as Jesus lives... so too does hope!** Since Jesus is eternal, hope is a gift that will always keep on giving!

We have been talking about giving gifts this year that are more experiential, rather than just more stuff under the tree! These kinds of gifts give

something to look forward to! They are gifts that keep giving... Examples:

What does the gift of Jesus in the manger really do for us? **It gives us hope!** Hope that transcends Christmas... Hope that is on-going, life-giving... a gift of...

H – Heavenly perspective – Seeing life through God's lens, rather than ours!

Jeremiah 29:11 – **"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a hope and a future."**

O – Opened doors – When we don't know what's ahead, we can look back & see from where we've come, and all the doors that have been opened to us!

Romans 5:2-5 – **"Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."**

P – Promises Made & Promises Kept – God has been & always will be faithful!

1 Thessalonians 5:24 – **"He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it."**

Isaiah 40:31 – **"But they who wait/hope for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."**

E – Eternity – This life is not all there is... there is a future glory that awaits!

Romans 8:18-25 – **"For in this hope (a future hope) we were saved..."**

1 Corinthians 15:19 – **"If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied."**

Romans 12:12-13 – **"Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints & seek to show hospitality..."**

When we are people filled with hope, our hope **spills over** to others! Again, it becomes a gift that keeps on giving! Give the gift of hope this year!

Romans 15:13 – **"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope."**

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