

## Three Reasons to Always Have Hope

Lesson 01 in the series "Half Full"

### A. God wants us to experience abundant life regardless of our circumstances.

"But blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made the Lord their hope and confidence. They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they never stop producing fruit." Jeremiah 17:7-8 (NLT)

### B. Three reasons followers of Christ can always have hope:

1. We have a priceless, eternal inheritance awaiting us in heaven kept safe by God himself.

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed." 1 Peter 1:3-7 (NIV)

- a. We will have brand-new bodies that will never die again. "...When you put a seed into the ground, it doesn't grow into a plant unless it dies first. And what you put in the ground is not the plant that will grow, but only a bare seed of wheat or whatever you are planting. Then God gives it the new body he wants it to have... It is the same way with the resurrection of the dead. Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever. Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength. They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies... Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?' For sin is the sting that results in death... But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:36-57 (NLT)
- b. We will live forever in perfect relationship with God. "I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, 'Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.' And the one sitting on the throne said, 'Look, I am making everything new!' And then he said to me, 'Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true.' And he also said, 'It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life. All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children.'" Revelation 21:3-7 (NLT)
- c. We will live forever together in perfect relationship with believers from every time and place. "After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.'" Revelation 7:9-10 (NIV)

**Life Application:** "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Matthew 6:19-21 (NIV)

2. God is working in ways that we cannot see or understand.

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So, we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NIV)

- a. We wouldn't believe God if He told us His plans. "...Look around at the nations; look and be amazed! For I am doing something in your own day, something you wouldn't believe even if someone told you about it." Habakkuk 1:5 (NLT)

**Life Application:** "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take."

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NLT)

- b. God is NOT worried about the schemes of evil people. "Why are the nations so angry? Why do they waste their time with futile plans? The kings of the earth prepare for battle; the rulers plot together against the Lord and against his anointed one. 'Let us break their chains,' they cry, 'and free ourselves from slavery to God.' But the one who rules in heaven laughs. The Lord scoffs at them. Then in anger he rebukes them, terrifying them with his fierce fury." Psalm 2:1-5 (NLT)

**Life Application:** "Be still in the presence of the Lord and wait patiently for him to act. Don't worry about evil people who prosper or fret about their wicked schemes. Stop being angry! Turn from your rage! Do not lose your temper—it only leads to harm. For the wicked will be destroyed, but those who trust in the Lord will possess the land." Psalm 37:7-9 (NLT)

3. God is always with us.

"The Lord *is* my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You *are* with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Psalm 23 (NKJV)

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### Connect Group Questions

1. How have national events during the past week impacted you emotionally, mentally, and spiritually?
2. Read Jeremiah 7:7-8. How is it possible for Christians to live victorious lives regardless of our circumstances?
3. Read John 10:6-17 and Psalm 23. How have you experienced Jesus as a good Shepherd in your life?
4. Discuss the following aspects of having an inheritance in heaven.
  - We will have brand-new bodies that will never die again. (1 Corinthians 13:36-57)
  - We will live forever in perfect relationship with God. (Revelation 21:3-7)
  - We will live forever together in perfect relationship with believers from every time and place. (Revelation 7:9-10)

How often should we think about these things and talk about them with other believers? (Colossians 3:2)

5. Discuss the following aspects of trusting that God is working in ways we don't understand. (Proverbs 3:5-6)
  - We wouldn't believe Him even if He told us His plans. (Habakkuk 1:5)
  - God is NOT worried about the schemes of evil people. (Psalm 2:1-5, 37:7-15)

How good are you at trusting God even when you don't understand Him?

6. Spend some time as a group praying for our nation. We are deeply divided on economics, social issues, race, religion, politics, etc. Ask God to raise up strong, confident, Bible-believing, Holy Spirit-filled, praying Christians He can use as His witnesses during this time.