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HOPE- THE ANCHOR OF THE SOUL

Greetings in the name of our big and powerful God- the Great Jehovah!

We pray that every one of you are experiencing His resurrection life and enjoying the fruits of your salvation!

I wanted to begin this month's Living Logos by thanking those of you who have responded to last month's mail-out by either requesting our new audio series "The New Creation" and/or giving into my mission's trip to India coming up towards the end of 2013. We really appreciate the support and we believe that this, our first audio teaching series, is going to be a blessing to you because we have already received great feedback about these teachings. So if you have not received "The New Creation" as of yet, contact us and we will send it to you for a gift of any amount. Again, all proceeds go towards the funding of my next trip to India.

Well, as for this month's Living Logos teaching, I believe the Lord would have me share with you a message that He gave me for one of our Sunday afternoon meetings in early April.

As we approached 2013, I felt that the Lord had placed on my heart for our Sunday afternoon group to camp on the subject of faith for a period of time. I believe the reason for this was because the Lord wanted to generate a spirit of faith in our people. So we studied faith from many different perspectives- everything from how faith comes, what it can accomplish, and how there is no better way to please God.

But for the past couple of months, we have been studying this subject of faith from the perspective of how it is what enables us to overcome the winds and waves of life. Our base Scripture has been John 16:33 which says, "...In the world, you will have tribulation but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." We have learned that with us being in the world (yet not of the world) we will have tribulation, just as being in the ocean, we will have waves. In other words, in the world we will have tight and pressure-filled situations, peaceful times and frightening times, ups and downs similar to how in an ocean we will have constant ups and downs. This is why we need that which overcomes the world- even our faith. And we found that this is what Jesus was referring to when He went on to say, "But be of good cheer. I have overcome the world." He was saying that He had finished His race and He had fought the good fight of faith. Therefore, we can look to His example of a world overcoming walk of faith and be of good cheer knowing that if Christ- who held no particular advantage over us- can overcome the winds and waves of life, then so can we.

So let's turn over to the Book of Hebrews and look at a couple of Scriptures that use this same analogy of the effects of water in regards to life's difficulties...

**LEST WE DRIFT AWAY**

In Hebrews chapter 2, we have a powerful Scripture... Hebrews 2:1 says, "Therefore, we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away." The Message Bible puts this statement this way. It says, "It's crucial that we keep a firm grip on what we've heard so that we don't drift off."

## II

Notice the analogy that the writer of Hebrews uses of the effects of the world on our souls when we fail to give the more earnest heed to God's Word... It says that we will drift away or drift off.

Have you ever noticed that when you are at the beach, and you go out in the water, that the water will slowly and systematically pull you away from the spot where you went out? For instance, if you put your towel down in one spot and then you go straight out into the water, if you do not consciously make yourself stay in that spot, you will find yourself drifting to one side.

This is so true of our spiritual lives as well... There is also an undertow of the world that will cause us to "drift away" from our spot if we are not careful. It is slow. It is subtle. It is not an obvious pulling away, but is a slow process that pulls us away from where we are supposed to be. This is why the writer of Hebrews said that we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

You see, the key to not allowing yourself to drift away with the things of the world is to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard. This shows us that it is not enough just to hear something one time. We must continuously revisit those truths. We are to keep the mirror of God's Word ever before us so that we do not become forgetful hearers, but doers of the Word that we have heard.

But the writer of Hebrews takes it a step further... He says that we are to give them even the more earnest heed. This means that we must make even more of an effort to hear what we have heard than when we originally heard them. Why? Because, again, there is a natural progression that will try and carry us away from the truths that we have heard. It is that subtle undertow of the world and the flesh. Therefore, we must make even more of an effort to hear those truths that we have heard before, by keeping them in the forefront of our hearts and minds. This, and only this, will keep us from drifting away with that undertow of the world and the flesh.

Think about it from the analogy that I just used... How is it that you keep yourself from slowly and methodically drifting away from your spot when you are out in the ocean? You must be conscious, focused, and mentally alert to where you are so that you can make sure you are not being pulled away "unbeknownst." This is exactly how you need to be in this world while you are trapped inside your unregenerate flesh. You must be sober and vigilant because the devil will try and devour you through that slow and subtle undertow.

So being mindful of the truth of God's Word is absolutely essential to not drifting off and being swept away by this dark and perverse generation, but there is another thing that you can do to keep yourself grounded and not drifting off and that is, get an anchor!

### **HOPE IS THE ANCHOR**

Yes, while one way to keep ourselves from drifting with the tide is to be mindful and alert so that we can manually keep ourselves where we need to be, an easier way is to simply put down an anchor. This way you don't have to make as much of an effort to keep from drifting off because the anchor is doing all of the work.

### III

And Hebrews 6:19 shows us what that anchor is... It says that hope is the anchor of our souls. Yes, hope is what holds us in place and keeps us steadfast.

So the question is- What is hope? Well, it is first important to understand what hope is not. Hope- Bible hope- is not what we use it as in the world today. Many use this word "hope" as a word to describe being optimistic or wishing something would happen. For example, if I were to ask someone, "Are you going to lose your job?" their response might be "I sure hope not." What they are really saying is that they are wishing and desiring that it doesn't happen. This, my friends, is not what the Bible is referring to when it uses the word "hope."

When the Bible uses the word "hope" it is not describing wishful thinking or even an optimistic outlook. This Greek word "elpis" literally describes having a confident expectation of something. And this is a far cry from the way we use this word today. The way we use it in today's society has zero faith. It is full of unbelief. For instance, if you are about to be prayed for to receive healing and are asked, "Do you believe God is going to heal, deliver, or save you right now?" and you respond- "I sure hope so"- you might as well just not even pray because there is no true hope there. There is hope in the sense that you might want it to happen but not in the biblical sense that you expect it to happen. But if you were asked the same question and your response was- "Yes, I expect it to happen"- then you are in position to receive.

Of course, it is not just being able to say the right thing. Don't ever try and be in faith by just learning the lingo and putting on lip service. If you are not in faith- in that you are not persuaded and convinced in the truth that you have heard- then don't fake it. It will not work if you are just outwardly conforming to the way faith acts and talks. Just keep plugging on! Keep on hearing and hearing the word of truth until you do get convinced and persuaded of it. There is no need to be condemned over not being in that place yet. We have all been there. Just hook up with others who have faith and keep hearing and hearing and hearing until your "expector" gets turned on too!

But, yes, hope- as the Bible uses it- is having a confident expectation of something. It is not wishing for it; it is expecting it! Hallelujah! There is a huge difference between these two usages of the word "hope."

## **HOPE- THE EXTENSION OF FAITH**

Let me begin by defining hope from the New and Old Testaments...

In the New Testament, the term "hope" comes from the Greek word "elpis." This word is defined as- "hope, not in a sense of an optimistic outlook or wishful thinking without any foundation, but in a sense of confident expectation based on solid certainty." To sum it up, to hope for something, according to the New Testament definition, is to eagerly wait for and to anticipate something.

Now there are several Hebrew words that are translated "hope" in the Old Testament...

## IV

The most often used Hebrew word for “hope” is the Hebrew word “tiqvah” which means virtually the same thing as the Greek word for hope. This Hebrew word was also translated “cord” in some places. It was used this way in Joshua 2:18, 21 when Rahab was told to put up “a line of scarlet cord.” This is a great way of describing hope because hope is like a cord that connects our faith now to our desired destination.

You see, hope is not inferior to faith, but it is an extension of faith (or, a cord connecting faith to the manifestation of the thing believed for). Faith is the present possession of grace; Hope is the confident expectation in grace’s future accomplishments.

I like the analogy of a flashlight... The flashlight itself is like our faith because we have faith in our possession now, and hope is like the beam that comes from the flashlight so that we can see something off in the distance. You see, hope is where our focus is and where we want to go and faith is where the vision comes from. So “hope” is the “cord” that directs and guides our faith to the end result.

Hebrews 11:1 shows us how faith and hope are eternally inseparable... It says, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” This verse describes faith as the substance of our hope. The word “substance” is the Greek word “hupostasis” which literally means “to stand under, establish, or to be firm.” So “hupostasis” literally describes “a foundation.” The Greek word for “faith” is “pistis” and refers to being “convinced or persuaded”. So we could translate this verse as- “Now being persuaded and convinced of the truth is the foundation of the things we eagerly expect from God...” What does this mean? It means that we must be convinced and persuaded that God and His Word are true before we can have an eager expectation of what God’s Word promises just like a building must have a foundation before it can be completed. That’s why faith is the foundation of hope. This verse goes on to say, “the evidence of things not seen.” Our complete persuasion of the truth, that came through His Word, is our proof of what we do not see. In other words, His Word is the evidence we have to believe in Him and is therefore the foundation that we base our lives on and also get our hope from.

Hebrews 11:6 describes more in detail the relationship between faith and hope. It says, “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him.” What are the reasons this verse gives that will inhibit us from pleasing Him? Number one, he that comes to God must believe that He “is” (i.e. that He exists and that He is who He says He is). Being persuaded and convinced that He is who He says He is describes faith! Then the next statement describes “hope”... Number two, we can then believe that He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him. You see, first we must believe in Him- being fully persuaded and convinced in who He is and in what He has said- then and only then can we expect Him to become a rewarder. This is why Hebrews 11:1 says that faith is the “foundation” of things hoped for. In other words, you must be grounded- persuaded and convinced- in who God is and in what He has said before you can ever have hope in Him.

Just think about it this way: How is it that we can ever expect someone to do something or not? It is when we come to know them. It is when we have experiences with them and we get to know them- their character and who they are. This is when you can come to the place of expectation- where you are fully persuaded and confident of what they will do.

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This is why I despise that crummy statement you hear from so many Christians today- “You never know what God is going to do.” The main reason I have such a problem with that statement of unbelief is because what they are really saying is- “You can never really have Bible hope” because what they are saying is that you cannot expect God to do certain things.

But, thank God, we can (and should) expect Him to do certain things! We should expect Him to do what He said He would do! We should expect Him to answer our prayers! We should expect Him to heal those we lay hands on! We should expect Him to protect us and defend us! Why? Because we are convinced and persuaded of who He is and what He has said. This is the foundation of our hope!

## **HOPE DEFINED IN THE BIBLE**

Now the Bible itself actually gives us its own definition of hope in Romans 8:24-25...

Verse 24 says, “For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?”

Paul’s opening statement seems a little confusing on the surface. What does he mean by we were saved by hope? I thought it was by faith that we were saved? Well, the way to understand this statement is to understand what we have already explained in Hebrews 11:1... Technically we were not just saved by faith because our faith had to have something to give substance to, which is hope! In other words, our faith is essentially incomplete without hope. You see, faith is only the foundation; hope is what puts the roof on our faith. That is the power in the gospel of hope!

Now notice the next statement made by the Apostle Paul in this verse... He says, “But hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?” Basically what he was saying was that you cannot be “in hope” if you can see it. Why? It is because hope- which is a confident expectation of a future accomplishment- is always ahead of us and is not seen yet. So you could say that just as we walk by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7), likewise we walk by hope and not by sight.

Then in verse 25 we come to the biblical definition of hope- “But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.” Let’s look at this definition in detail...

First of all, the Apostle Paul says that “hope” is to “eagerly wait for (something or someone)”... You know, the word “wait” is used many times in the Word of God in reference to waiting on the Lord. And in the Old Testament, where this word “wait” is most commonly used, it does not denote a passive and lethargic attitude like it does in our modern day English language. As a matter of fact, the word translated “wait” was the root word translated “hope.” Therefore, the word “wait” carried more of the idea of actively looking for something.

So hope is first of all to simply wait for something, that is, to look for something... But Paul said

## VI

it is not just to wait, Paul said it was to eagerly wait. In other words, he was describing a hope that is eagerly anticipating and expecting something while it waits. Let me give you a natural example that will help paint the picture of what hope is like...

During the time we had been out in Colorado Springs, getting mail was one of our biggest joys. The reason was because we were blessed with so many loving friends and family members and we never knew if we were going to have something exciting in our mail box from Georgia. Because of this “anticipation and expectation”, it caused us to “eagerly wait” for our mail each day.

You see, hope- which is to eagerly wait for and look for something- is based on our expectation. If you expect it to come, then you will be excited, you will wait eagerly for it, and you will be looking for it. In other words, it makes you more attuned, alert, and focused. It produces excitement and enthusiasm.

But Paul did not end there... He also adds, “to eagerly wait for it with perseverance.” This phrase literally means that hope is to eagerly wait for something “through endurance (or patience).” And this brings us back full circle to the verse we are basing this teaching on- Hebrews 6:19- that says hope is the anchor of our soul!

You see, hope is what keeps us where we are supposed to be! It keeps our mind focused on the manifestation! This keeps our will energized and strong and keeps our emotions inclined towards what we are expecting! And last but not least, this all leads to keeping us grounded, steadfast, and sure!

Again, what hope does is it keeps us from drifting off more on accident than we ever could have on purpose. We could (and most believers do) keep ourselves on track by trying to keep ourselves from drifting off- not thinking on or participating in wrong things- but the best way to keep ourselves sure and steadfast is by thinking on and participating in the truth. As we build hope in our hearts to where our souls are stirred in eager anticipation of the manifestation of God’s promises, we will by default keep ourselves from drifting away. This is the power of hope! It is the anchor of our souls!

Till next month... Maranatha!

Victoriously,

