

STEADFAST HOPE FOR TROUBLED TIMES

Hope is a serene, confident expectation of good. Isn't that the kind of hope we all want and need? How do we get this kind of confident hope?

By Derek Prince



The source of all hope is the love of God. Paul affirms this truth in 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 when he says, “Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.” (NASB)

When you meditate on the profundity of this verse, five important aspects emerge.

The first aspect is that the source of hope is God's love. God loved us, and therefore He gave us “eternal comfort and good hope by grace.” You see, the ultimate power behind the universe is the love of God. God is a Father, and when we know God as our Father, we have this kind of hope – it is a gift of His love. It proceeds from a confidence in His unwavering love and faithfulness.

Second, God's hope comes to us through Jesus Christ. We know this because Paul mentions not only God our Father, but “our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.” Jesus is the only channel through whom love from God and hope from God can come into our lives.

The third feature of this hope is that it is a gift. But how do we

receive it? By grace. Paul says God gave us “eternal comfort and good hope by grace.” Please remember that grace cannot be earned.

Anything that can be earned is not grace. The gifts and blessings that come by grace can only be received by faith. Therefore, you need to receive this hope. You simply cannot try to earn it.

It does not come by trying to work out whether you are good enough. Nor does it come by trying to reason within yourself to find some rational basis why you ought to be hopeful. Hope can only be received as a gift of God's love – given by His grace.

Fourth, together with that phrase, “good hope,” Paul says God has given us “eternal comfort.” With hope there comes a comfort that goes beyond time. Our expectations, our anticipations, our satisfactions are not limited to this brief span of time. They possess an eternal quality. That word, “eternal,” is such a rich word, such a vast word.

Eternal hope lifts us out of the confinement of this prison of time and puts us onto a different level – an eternal plane of living. We are no longer slaves of time; we have been liberated by the gift of hope – given to us through God's grace.

Finally, hope makes us strong for holy living. After Paul has spoken about the eternal comfort and the good hope, he says that God will “comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good word and work.”

Let's be honest: hopeless people are weak people. They don't have any real motivation. When the going gets tough, they have nothing to make them hang in there. Their hands fall slack, they shrug their shoulders, and say, “Well, I suppose it's no use.”

But people who have this kind of eternal hope we are talking about have strength and resolve. In times of hardship and trouble, those people endure. They hold fast. God strengthens their hearts through eternal hope.

Taken from **Unshakable Hope** by Derek Prince

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