



The Blessing of Hope

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Our Thirsting Condition and the Uplifting Prescription

Psalm 42:1, 5[11]: As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for You O God. Why are you downcast, O my soul? Put your hope in God.

Three human quests that people instinctively seek to answer: 1. How to win **food and shelter?** (survival or lifestyle questions) 2. How are we to **get along** with each other? (social questions) 3. How are we to **relate to the total scheme** of things? (meaning and purpose questions). (Huston Smith, 2001)

- What oxygen is to the lungs, such is hope to the meaning of life (E. Brunner)
- Hope is the key element in the capacity of people to mobilize energies to confront life's challenges (Carter, 1986)
- We must accept finite disappointment, but we must never lose infinite hope. (Martin Luther King Jr.)



"... are we not now duty bound to speak up as scientists, not about a new rocket or a new fuel or a new bomb or a new gas, but about this ancient but rediscovered truth, the validity of Hope in human development -- Hope, alongside of its immortal sisters, Faith and Love?" (Karl Menninger, 1959)

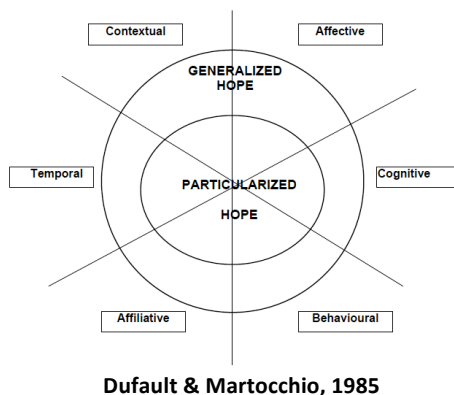
Hope Embedded in Blessing

Numbers 6:22-26 (NIV): The LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron and his sons, 'This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them: 'The LORD **bless you and keep you** (a); the LORD **make his face shine on you** (b) and **be gracious to you** (b, c); the LORD **turn his face toward you** (b, c) and **give you peace** (d).'"

- We have deep longing for: Security (a), Significance (b), Community (c), and Transcendence (d)
- This is Aaronic blessing is for the satisfaction or fulfillment of our human longings. A blessing of embedded hope.

The Nature and Source of Hope: Good Hope through Grace

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17 (NIV): But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God **chose** you as first fruits to be **saved** through the **sanctifying** work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He **called** you to this through our gospel, that you might **share** in the **glory** of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter. May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who **loved** us and by his **grace** gave us **eternal encouragement** and **good hope**, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.



Hope is commonly understood as the **desire for some future good or for some particular good**. Hope isn't optimism, wishful thinking nor is it a matter of crossing your fingers! For example: Optimism expects the best possible outcome whereas **hope "actively surrenders."** Optimism distances us from past negative outcomes (denies reality), **hope uses failure and pain to learn; lives in reality. Hope perseveres and actively waits** when optimism dissipates.

Biblical hope comes by grace as our **moral certainty** and **adaptive confidence** in the trustworthiness of God; a strongly warranted (or rooted), confident expectation and desire for the good to come (Hebrews 6:9-12).

God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble (1 Pt 5:5, Prov 3:34). Humility and reverence before God makes us candidates for His grace and this grace brings forth good hope. We are marked by hope through being chosen, saved, through being sanctified, called, sharing in His glory, standing firm and holding fast to His teachings, and being in His love.

The God of Hope Fills Us With Hope to Overflowing

Romans 15:13 (MSG): Oh! May the **God of green hope** fill you up with **joy**, fill you up with **peace**, so that your believing lives, filled with the **life-giving energy** of the Holy Spirit, will brim over **with hope!**

Essence of Message: We can NOT live without hope. Authentic hope is founded on and in the person of Jesus Christ. As humans, we long for, yearn for and thirst for security, significance, community and transcendence. Only God can satisfy. He is our only hope for fulfillment. We have hope by grace. Grace comes by humility that appreciates that only God can meet our needs. God blesses us with hope. He has chosen us, called us, saved us; he sanctifies us, gives us His Spirit and Truth to believe, and gives us the privilege of sharing in His glory. Hope is a blessing. There is a blessing in the grace that calls us to stand firm, to be mature and to be fully assured of His sufficiency for our present and future. God gives us moral certainty and confident expectation of His abiding presence (hope). This is the blessing of His gracious gift of hope.