

HOPE



EMPOWERED BY HOPE
TALK IT OVER
April 18-19, 2020



Empowered by Hope

“Therefore, behold, I will allure her [Israel] and bring her into the wilderness, and I will speak tenderly and to her heart. There I will give her her vineyards and make the Valley of Achor [troubling] to be for her a door of hope and expectation. And she shall sing there and respond as in the days of her youth and as at the time when she came up out of the land of Egypt.” - Hosea 2:14-15 (AMPC)

Hope is one of the most powerful, uplifting, encouraging words in the Bible. In fact, it is a living word.

When hope is present, we become bold, confident and assured of good things being experienced.

Hope is like an inner fountain that fuels our faith and our love.

Hope is – Heavenly Opportunities Prayerfully Engaged

You may not have hope in your current situation, but you should always hope in the Lord.

This is David’s command to us.

Psalms 42:5 (AMPC) – “...Hope in God and wait expectantly for Him...”

Psalms 42:11 (AMPC) – “...Hope in God and wait expectantly for Him...”

Psalms 43:5 (AMPC) – “...Hope in God and wait expectantly for Him...”

“Whatever was written beforehand is meant to instruct us in how to live. The Scriptures impart to us encouragement and inspiration so that we can live in hope and endure all things.” - Romans 15:4 (TPT)

Actually, the Bible is a book of hope, given by God to us as a guarantee of our hope.

The Old Testament proclaims and promises a Messiah who will come from God.

The New Testament reveals this Messiah in word, deed, truth, power, signs, wonders, and miracles.

God gives us hope in our future, so we can be fueled by energy in our present.

Hope is most desired when darkness fills our lives.

It is most personified when we face very trying, difficult and challenging times and seasons.

That is why Hosea 2 is such a powerful message for today.

Israel, God’s people, had forsaken their worship of Him and worshiped Baal, taking what God had given them and offering it to Baal.

In plain language, God says – *“Party time is over. I’m calling a halt to the whole business, her wild weekends and unholy holidays...I’ll make her pay for her indulgence in promiscuous religion – all that sensuous Baal worship and all the promiscuous behavior that went with it...”*

A few weeks ago, God said the same thing to America.

The sports god was dethroned.
The entertainment god was silenced.
Funeral gatherings cancelled.
Wedding celebrations postponed.
Worship services interrupted.

He, God, placed the solitary in families. He caused a divine interruption in our every day lives.
He brought life to a sudden halt.

God must get our ear before He can teach us life's principles.

He always desires to instruct us; but, the noise and busyness of the world is ringing in our ears, and He cannot secure our attention. He must detach us before He can teach us. He has to cut off those things that dominate our thinking.

Suddenly that which was so full of social pleasure is reduced and narrowed down to loneliness.

It is when He stops the activities that we cherish that a sense of isolation keenly strikes at our very soul, and we sense our need of Him.

The darkness of trouble, fear, anxiety, distress give God an opportunity to develop our character.

In these moments, the heart is searched, faith is intensified, love is deepened and our human spirit begins to receive His light. In these moments, God renews our vision, focuses on His purpose, and speaks to us about our mission.

Moses was on the backside of a desert when God spoke to him and commissioned him.

Alone in a mountain cave, Elijah heard His voice.

John the Baptist was in the desert, and Paul spent three years in Arabia.

You can know Him best when all else is shut off.

“Therefore, behold, I will allure her [Israel] and bring her into the wilderness, and I will speak tenderly and to her heart. There I will give her her vineyards and make the Valley of Achor [troubling] to be for her a door of hope and expectation...” - Hosea 2:14-15 (AMPC)

Achor was a code word for “failure, sin.” It was there that Achan stole 200 shekels of silver, 50 shekels of gold, and an expensive robe when those treasures were to be put in the Temple treasury.

For his sin, 36 Israelite soldiers were killed in battle – Israel’s only defeat in Canaan.

God is saying, in the place of your trouble, the valley that doomed 36 of your men, I will bring you deliverance.

At your worst place, I give you a door of hope.

All trouble carries a hidden blessing. We discover that blessing when we turn to God.

In our valley of sin, of trouble, of a COVID-19 virus, God offers us a door of hope.

And that hope will empower us to be better, more, greater as people and as a nation.

Discussion Questions:

- What does Hope fuel in our lives?
- The Bible is a book of _____.
- What develops our character?
- What does Achor mean?
- All trouble carries a hidden _____.
- Hope _____ us.

Notes:
