

Hope Holds Us Fast

"...remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world."

Ephesians 2:12 (NIV)

"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things..."

Colossians 3:1-2 (NIV)

"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..."

1 Peter 1:3 (NIV)

Sally had the same form of cancer that took her mother's life when she was 12 years old. Now in hospital again, she was fighting for her own life as her husband and three preteenagers waited anxiously at home. On one visit I made to her she asked if I thought she would win the battle with the dreadful disease.

I assured her that I was praying she would be cured and hoped she would be cured but said I was not a doctor and so was not able to offer a medical opinion. She did not like my response. I was not offering her the hope she desired and needed to face an uncertain future.

One of the most fundamental aspects of a healthy mind and a happy life is hope. Those who lose hope regarding their future are susceptible to depression and even self-harm.

Christians have a "living hope" as Peter calls it. Our future is guaranteed by our Lord's resurrection from the dead. Thus, we need to frequently read the Gospel accounts of Jesus' resurrection to "feed" our faith. Such meditation on the historical accounts is an

excellent spiritual exercise for all of us, not just people with depression and hopelessness.

Also, studying passages in Scripture such as Revelation 21 and 22 where the eternal state is described has a profoundly positive effect on us. We need to remind ourselves frequently of our glorious future as we work through the challenges of today.

Today draw near to the God of all hope and receive all the hope and encouragement you need for today and every day until hope and faith become sight.

Day by day,
and with each passing moment,
Strength I find
to meet my trials here;
Trusting in my Father's
wise bestowment,
I've no cause for worry or for fear.
He, whose heart is kind
beyond all measure,
Gives unto each day
what He deems best,
Lovingly its part of pain
and pleasure,
Mingling toil with peace and rest.

Every day the Lord Himself

is near me,
With a special mercy for each hour;
All my cares He fain
would bear and cheer me,
He whose name
is Counsellor and Pow'r.
The protection of His child
and treasure
Is a charge that on Himself He laid;
"As thy days, thy strength
shall be in measure,"
This the pledge to me He made.

Help me then, in every tribulation,
So to trust Thy promises, O Lord,
That I lose not faith's
sweet consolation,
Offered me within Thy holy Word.
Help me, Lord,
when toil and trouble meeting,
E'er to take,
as from a father's hand,
One by one, the days,
the moments fleeting,
Till with Christ the Lord I stand.

-Lina Sandell

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