



Hope and a Future

by Donna Pyle

"Plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11b).

What

first comes to mind when you hear the word hope? Webster's defines hope as "to wish for something with expectation." Each Christmas, we celebrate the birth of our Savior. But the world has a different agenda. When we brave the stores and malls, the resounding sentiment is the expectation of what gifts people will receive from one another under their Christmas tree. Their expectations rest beneath festive gift-wrapping and a pretty bow. As Christians, our expectant hope is placed in something far greater than that: Jesus Christ and His atoning, redeeming sacrifice on the cross. (1 Peter 1:13)

Where do you fix your hope every morning?

Open with prayer

Take a moment to pray together
Jeremiah 29:11–12: *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you."* We claim your promise, Lord. Amen.

In this lesson, we are studying **Jeremiah 29:11b**, which states: "plans to give you hope and a future."

As God's people, we have an obligation to live in hope.

Why obligated? Because we are God's ambassadors here on earth. Others glimpse Jesus through our words and actions. First Corinthians 13 reminds us that three things abide: faith, hope, and love. We've heard plenty of sermons on love and read multiple books on faith. But we are strongly urged and encouraged to live in hope as well.

What does **1 Peter 1:13** tell us? _____

The plea and will of our heavenly Father in this verse conveys His earnest desire to shower us with grace. Hope points to the promises of God, ultimately to the promise of that which is eternal (future). We hope for and hope to have what He promises.

Faith grasps the promises and reassures us of them now, before we have fully attained them. Hope looks to (or longs for) what God has promised to do in the future; faith believes God can and will do it because of what He has already done.

In other words, hope expects and faith accepts. So how does that translate into our lives?

1. Place your hope in God.

As God's children, our hope does not rest in ideas, people, and the things of this world. Those things will come and go. Rather, we have hope fully, decisively, completely and to the end in Him who saved us, gives us grace, and will return.

What does **Hebrews 6:18–20a** reveal?

We are to fix our anchor within the veil that holds to the eternal Word of God and His unfailing promise.

His hope is an anchor for our soul.

2. We owe our hope to God.

Our gracious and great God sent His Son as the perfect, atoning sacrifice to forgive our sins. Through that redemptive act, God offers us the hope for those who believe by faith in Christ's resurrection that we will not spend eternity separated from Him.

God has been faithful in the past and will be faithful in the future, so we are called to live in the light of that future with Him. God offers us His eternal hope in Him:

Colossians 1:5–6a _____

Titus 2:13 _____

Psalm 39:7 _____

Psalm 146:5–6 _____

Romans 15:4 _____

Hope in God and His promises should characterize our lives as His children. It is a living hope in the eternal inheritance God promises to all believers through faith.

3. Hope glorifies God.

When we allow our despair over this world's difficulties to rule or overwhelm us, we are saying in effect that we do not trust God.

God is glorified when we hope in His future promise, because we are ascribing to God the integrity of that promise. Our covenant-keeping God keeps His promises. When we trust God for the future, we are affirming by that trust that God is trustworthy. That faith and trust brings God glory.

Abraham provides a great illustration of trusting and hoping in God. Read the record about Abraham from **Romans 4:16–25**.

How do you see Abraham's trust and hope displayed? _____

What was the result of Abraham's trust and hope in the Lord according to **Romans 4:22**? _____

By all human standards, there was no substance or basis for Abraham's hope that he would be a father — much less a father of many nations. But Abraham didn't trust human standards; he trusted God's plans for his future, and God credited Abraham's faith and trust as righteousness.

4. Nothing but Grace.

In **1 Peter 1:13**, God's Word tells us exactly on what we are to place our hope: God's grace. The verse doesn't say fix our hope on the end event, our future reward, or even on Christ. We are to fix our hope on GRACE.

It's only by God's grace that we are even able to have faith!

When we first received the salvation of our soul, we didn't deserve it, earn it, have a right to it, or were even worthy of it. It was purely God's gift of grace. Grace is unmerited blessing.

It won't be any different in the day of Christ's coming either. We will no more deserve the eternal weight of glory than we deserve the indwelling of the Spirit of glory. It's all because of God's grace. Grace is the sweetest, richest, and most wonderful thing there is for a person to ever experience.

Acts 15:11 _____

Ephesians 2:5, 8 _____

1 Timothy 1:8–10 _____

We hope in God's promised plans for our future because, by His grace through faith in Jesus Christ, we are able to. God does have a plan for our lives — and that promise fosters hope. How have you experienced God's grace today? _____

What about last week? _____

Let's review our Bible memory verses for this lesson. Write out **Jeremiah 29:11–12**:

If your joy has diminished about how wonderful your salvation is, if fellowship with anyone here on earth is more desirable to you than fellowship with Christ, it's time to remember the sweetness of God's grace and what awaits us with Him in eternity.

Living in God's grace and the constant anticipation and hope of His future plans for us with Him is the mark of spiritual maturity. So, fix your hope on God and His grace in your life. And God will be glorified!

Close with prayer

Father, when I realize the price You paid to redeem me and the grace You freely bestow on me, I am humbled and awed. I desire to fix my hope on Your grace-filled promise that You hold in Your hands the plans and future for my life. Be gracious to me, Lord, and strengthen me for the days to come so that I may live fully relying on that promised hope. Thank You for the sweetness of Your grace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Closing hymn: "My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less" (*LSB* #575; *LW* #368; *TLH* #370)

Donna Pyle, Bible Study Leader for the 2013 Pittsburgh LWML Convention, is a prolific writer for the LWML and the founder of Artesian Ministries. This Bible study is week three of a four-part series, "Future and a Hope," which is available from the LWML Catalog, #68947.

