HAVE HOPE

Isaiah 64:1-9 | 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 | Mark 11:1-10

Hope is a _____

Hope is a _____

Hope is a daily _____

Let your _____ pull against _____

Permit me a moment of dialoging with you, my imagined reader (if you are still out there after all these months), over the nature of hope, especially hope as a wish. My first assumption is that if you know one Bible verse about hope (you probably know more), and it is probably Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." And while that is more a statement about faith, it does mention hope and with one of those modifiers that is hard to ignore – "being sure" of what we hope for.

You: Dear Pastor, if faith is being confident in that which we hope for, how can our hopes be wishes?

Me: Excellent question, I'm glad you asked it. Tell me, have you ever wished for anything before, and received it?

You: Answer the question I asked first.

Me: Ok. Think about the moment, on your birthday, maybe you don't do it anymore but you should, that moment of *wishing*. You're supposed to do it quietly, in your head. You wish for a gift, or for something (healing?), and you wish with all your heart. Now, for simplicity's sake, let's imagine that you're there with all 5, 45 or 90 candles on the cake in the moment of wishing. And you wish. Then you eat the cake and ice cream, move on to presents. Did you get that which you wished for? Maybe. Maybe not. What makes the difference in whether you get it or not? There seems to me to two main factors: One, the attention that is given to you, the wisher (and in our system, probably before this moment would be a good time for people to pay attention, and not leave at cake time after having a sudden realization that you want new shoes) and two, the ability / power of the giver of gifts to grant that gift.

You: Ok…

Me: Faith is confidence of that which I hope for. And that there is one who is both a) paying attention and b) capable of gifting.