



First United Methodist Church of Hanford

*Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.*



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## HOPE

What are you hoping for? Well I know that we can all agree that we are hoping for an end to the Coronavirus pandemic! The end of institutional racism! Hope to see Christ in everybody's faces! I know, I know...

I have been using the word "Hope" to much lately. But we tend to use the term "hope" to refer to wishful thinking, fantasies, and the like, but many of us do not actually understand what true "hope" is. Hope from a Biblical perspective is a belief grounded in faith and based upon the promises of a God who never lies and who always keeps His word.

Romans 5:3-5 says, " Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts..." Hope enables us to keep going long after we think we can because it holds promise of better days and brighter horizons. If we are still breathing, there is hope. God never withholds what is good from us, so we can have hope that He will provide what we need and He will sustain us through trials.

These current circumstances may try to keep us in bondage to fear and anxiety which can lead to discouragement, despair sadness, and depression. We read too, in Romans 15:13: May the God of hope wants to fill us with all joy and peace as we trust Him, so that we may overflow with hope."

It is interesting that this verse combines the words hope, joy/happy, and peace - all in one thought. To me this means that without hope you can forget being happy and you might as well drop the idea of peace. The presence of hope opens the doors to happiness and peace.

The old hymn say: "My Hope is build on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand."

Hope is with us as we deal with this current situation we find ourselves in. Hope is not something that happened only in the Bible, nor is it something that only shows up at weird times if we keep all the rules and behave ourselves. Hope is ours for the taking every single minute of every day. It's the assurance that things will eventually make sense when right now there is no sense to make of them.

And hope is alive in the church - even though we are not physically together. We can spend more time in prayer and devotional time. We can pray for our Siblings and for our country. We should not just sit and feel sorry for ourselves. We pray that suffering will be eased, that challenges will be overcome, that lives will be spared.

Hope is the unbreakable spiritual lifeline that will hold us securely through every earthly danger. In every difficulty we have hope in God's promises.

Do not abandon hope! Hope is irreplaceable. But unless that hope is founded on Christ, it is just wishful thinking. So, let us praise God every day for the hope He has given us - hope that has been with us through our past, hope that is with us in the present, hope that will be with us in all our tomorrows. May the hope of our Lord be with you today and remind you that "... in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us!" (Romans 8:37). Amen.

"Be a Channel of God's Grace"

Pastor Pablo

July 8<sup>st</sup>, 2020

## Online Devotionals

To grow in your relationship with God and others, it is important to have some spiritual disciplines in your life. Below are some helpful websites that will lead you to read scripture, pray, and focus on God.

**UPPER ROOM DAILY DEVOTIONAL** <https://www.upperroom.org/devotionals>

A daily devotional including scripture lesson and story.

**UPPER ROOM DAILY REFLECTIONS** <https://upperroombooks.com/neweverymorning/>

Daily words of wisdom and faith including quotes, scripture, questions, and the lectionary bible readings.