

HOPE WINS PT. 2
RESILIENT HOPE
HOW HOPE WINS WHEN THINGS GO FROM BAD TO WORSE
4/19/2020

I. Introduction

- A. We began a series called “HOPE WINS” last week. We want to learn how to let God unleash the incredible power of hope in our lives. We shared that if we have enough of God’s hope we will win in any situation.
- B. This is so important to us in this time because God’s heart is for all of us to be overcomers. I felt, prophetically, the Lord was telling me that my assignment at this time was to help to lead an army of overcomers in a world full of people who are feeling overcome.

If I could share my heart with you, it would be this:

1. My first concern is that no one would lose their faith. *Faith is the victory that overcomes the world. (I John 5:4)*
2. That we wouldn’t just settle to survive but thrive. I really believe that God has always intended for crisis to be the churches’ finest hour.

I could say it this way: People will end up in one of three places during this time. They will: **dive**, **survive** or **thrive**.

I believe thriving is based on hope. As we hear and read every day, we are so aware that there is a lot of suffering going on out there. But the truth is there is also a lot of overcoming. People are not just getting sick; they’re getting healed. They’re not just getting knocked down; they are boldly rising up.

I read about a 90-year-old lady, who recovered from the virus and how she received healing power from the Lord.

There are so many promises in the Bible to overcomers, especially that we will reign with Jesus in new ways and greater capacity to hear His voice and exercise His authority.

- C. The key is to learn how to be filled with hope. I love this verse in Zech 9:12, *Return to your fortress, you prisoners of hope, even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you.*
1. That’s the inheritance to those who stay chained to hope.
 2. What we are going to begin to talk about today is **RESILIENT HOPE**.

Resilient hope is the hope Jesus gives us by the victory of His resurrection. Because Jesus lives in us now, we have access in our spirit to connect with Holy Spirit and His power to rise above hurt, discouragement, failure, setbacks, and put downs of any kinds.

I like to say Jesus was broken for us so that things that broke Him on the cross don't have to break us. We have the power in us to bounce and not break. We can be like a ball not like an egg.

(I Corinthians 4:14)

Paul is talking about how we are knocked but never knocked out, pressed but not crushed, persecuted but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed, In vs 14, he says, *“Knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.”*

That's the message today. We can connect with the Holy Spirit in a way that the storms around us don't have to be the storms inside of us. Instead our spirits can rise with God's Spirit in us not only to bring victory in our lives but to other people's lives around us.

I love to recall a story my Dad tells when he was on a mission trip to Belize. For almost 2 weeks he was sick with acute dysentery and felt like he was going to die. Near the end of that time the Lord reminded him not to forget who was inside of him, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. My Dad began quoting I John 4:4, “Greater is he that is in me, than this sickness and all that is in the world.” Gradually God's Spirit helped him rise-up and he was healed.

II. Today, we want to look at how this worked out in the Apostle Paul's life, when he faced a literal storm and one of his darkest days (Acts 27). I wanted to come back to this story because I think you will see so many parallels with our circumstances today. We want to see how Paul not only survived but ended up saving the lives physically and most likely spiritually of 275 other people on a ship through a shipwreck in the Mediterranean Sea on the way to Rome.

A. Circumstances we can all relate to:

1. Paul is in a situation that wasn't his fault.

What is so beautiful is that though Paul is a prisoner, he never saw himself as a prisoner but as a representative of God. Overcomers never get their identity from their circumstances but who they know themselves to be on the inside. We are not victims, folks, we are **OVERCOMERS** and God's **AMBASSADORS TO THE WORLD**.

I think I told you the interesting study Wendy Bauchland referred to when they studied millionaires who lost it all but ended up recovering and

becoming millionaires again. One of the interesting observations was that those who did this repeatedly said they saw themselves not as people trying to earn money to become millionaires, but as people who earned and made money because they were millionaires. It wasn't just what they had; it was who they were!

I believe because of this; Paul didn't become bitter or blame people when they didn't listen to him.

2. They started out with things looking so nice.

(verse 13) *When the south wind blew softly, supposing they had obtained their desire, they put out to sea.*

Many of us can relate to how nice and ordinary things seemed just 6-weeks ago.

3. Things changed SUDDENLY

(NLT verse 14) *The weather changed abruptly, and a wind of typhoon strength (called a Northeaster) burst across the island and blew us out to sea.*

I was thinking how 6 weeks ago:

- We were celebrating when our favorite basketball team was winning, now yesterday we celebrated because we found toilet Paper at the dollar store
- Trying to decide if I should go to Supercuts and get a haircut. Now I'm thinking if something doesn't change soon, I'm going to have dreadlocks.
- We were thinking how we hope someday our kids could go to a school like Harvard or something. Now we would be glad if they just went to any school.
- We were thinking about going to Disneyland. Now thinking could we do a family hike in the alley behind Walmart.

It is a good lesson, not to put our hope and faith in circumstances being a certain way. Those who put their trust in favorable circumstances or in their ability to control things, right now are discovering their faith was built upon the sand.

4. The problems went from bad to worse and lasted longer than they ever imagined.

(Verse 20) *When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging*

They went from a time of shock and denial, to trying to get a grasp on what it means to have a new reality. This reality was that human help and solutions might not be enough.

5. **They started throwing non-essentials overboard.**
(vs. 19) *On the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands.*

It's been very interesting to hear the debate on what essential services and non-essential services are. I saw in one state, they decided that liquor stores were essential services but church services weren't.

Can I just say that what we decide is essential and non-essential is going to have life-long implications? Friends, the Church of Jesus Christ is essential; your community of faith is essential. People being plugged in, a decision to do more than just watch a service online is essential. The decision to find a way to stay in community with the church is essential, even if you have to learn inconvenient skills like Zoom groups, even if you have to risk getting out to drive through prayer, or find ways to be the church by calling and reaching out to others. This is spiritually defining. Learning to have a family altar and study God's Word for yourself is essential.

6. **People started to give up hope.**
(vs. 20) *When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.*

This is why the church is so essential and you are so essential, Christian. We live in a world where people every day are giving up hope. It could be related to the virus or even other things.

People give up hope that their marriage could ever be better.
People give up hope that their the kids will turn out.
People give up hope that they can physically, spiritually, or emotionally recover from some hurt.
People give up hope on the church, on God, on their dreams.

This is not the time to give up hope; it is the time to find hope. It is the time where more than ever we have to show, shout, and demonstrate that Jesus is the Hope of the World.

7. **A seventh thing that happened was that the character, commitment, and convictions of people in the crisis were revealed.** Crises don't make you a certain way, but they do reveal you in a real way. In a crisis you see the PLAYERS and the PRETENDERS. Foundations are revealed.

For many, what is being exposed is like the parable of the wise and foolish virgins. It is being exposed that many believers were borrowing and depending on the oil of others instead of knowing how to go to God for

their own oil. Many have depended on the church to spiritually train their kids instead of knowing how to teach their families about Jesus.

III. The good news is that in this very environment, we see one person who had no title, no power, no money was able to rise and make an incredible difference through the power of hope.

Let's observe three ways hope was able to win in and through the Apostle Paul.

- A. **Hope won because Paul connected with God.** Paul decided to refuse to be the prisoner of the circumstances but let his spirit connect with Holy Spirit in prayer and faith and rose up to be bigger on the inside than all the chaos and trouble there was on the outside.

(Verses 22-25)

But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. Last night an angel of God to whom I belong stood beside me and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you,' So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me."

1. Hope will win in your life, family, our city if we connect with God not only for ourselves but others around us.

What I want you to see that hope is not hype and inspiration; it is habitation and impartation. It is letting the Holy Spirit fill you. I gave you the illustration last week of blowing up that balloon so that what is in you causes you to rise above the circumstances around you.

That happened not because Paul was pepped up, but because he was prayed up.

Four things about Paul's prayed

- a. He prayed diligently not only for himself but others. He wasn't "me" focused in his prayer.

He saw and claimed the victory of others. We are all in this boat together; if the boat sinks, we're going down together.

- b. He expected to hear a word from God and he did.
An angel of the Lord spoke to him. Maybe we dismiss that, like assuming an angel would never speak to you. Why Not? Maybe the problem isn't that God doesn't want to but we haven't

learned to expect that. Maybe we haven't downloaded the app that the Lord says is available in our spirit.

- c. He chose to do what it took to be aware of the presence of God on the inside even while it was stormy and crazy on the outside.

B. Paul didn't just have faith; He activated his faith.

1. He claimed, spoke, and declared his faith in God to other people. "...for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me." (Verse 25)
2. He took action to obey God in what God called him to do. It's not enough to look for inspiration in a time of crisis, we must move to activation.

One of the things I shared last time is that Hope is the certainty that the future is going to be better than the past and that you have the power to make choices that will allow that to be so.

In a crisis we can be encouraged by what we choose to believe but we will find deliverance by what we choose to do. We can believe that God wants to give us a better marriage, but if we don't make choices to do the things that we say we believe, our faith will lack works and be dead.

3. What could activation look like:

- a. For some it is praising God and making bold declarations even when we don't feel like it.
(Cock-a-doodle-do)
- b. It means being an example and calling others in our boat to come in alignment with God.
 - Paul challenges the men on the boat, to stay on the boat...
(Some of you: God is telling you to keep up your spiritual disciplines, be in the word, join a zoom group, keep giving.)
 - He called the men to eat to act in faith.

- C. Paul showed us how to persevere in hope.** It is one thing to have hope in a prayer meeting, but to choose to persevere in hope is where the battle is really won. (Romans 5:3-5)

HOPE IS NOT A FEELING; HOPE IS LETTING YOUR SPIRIT DOMINATE THE EMOTIONS AND MOODS OF YOUR FLESH, DAY AFTER DAY.

1. We see for Paul this meant receiving a **HARD VICTORY**.

Sometimes God delivers us out of our problems and sometimes through our problems. Paul and the soldiers endured 14 days of tossing seas, the ship falling apart, having to swim to shore, enduring rain and cold, for Paul it meant getting bit by a snake.

But Paul kept pressing through.

2. **Persevering meant staying focused on his mission** when it would've been easier to focus on himself. He was focused not on what he was receiving but what he was achieving to help other people. In all of it, Paul decided to tap into the strength of the Holy Spirit and live by his faith not his fear.

I know that's hard, maybe some of you can relate to this story of *Chippy*.

Chuck Swindoll tells the story of a bird named *Chippy*.

'Chippy the parakeet never saw it coming. One second he was peacefully perched in his cage singing, the next he was sucked in, washed p, and blown over. His problem began when his owner decided to clean his cage with a vacuum. He stuck the nozzle in to suck up the seeds and feathers at the boom of the cage. Then the phone rang. Instinctively she turned to pick it up. She'd barely said 'hello' and them 'sswwwPPPP!' Chippy got sucked in.

The owner gasped, dropped the phone and snapped off the vacuum. She unzipped the bag and there was Chippy alive, but stunned; covered with heavy black dust. She grabbed Chippy and rushed to the bathtub, turned on the faucet full blast and held Chippy under a torrent of ice-cold water, power washing him clean. Then she did what any compassionate pet own would do: she snatched up the hairdryer and blasted the wet, shivering little bird with hot air.'

Swindoll closes his story with these words: *'Chippy doesn't sing much anymore.'*

Many of you feel like you've been through something like that. Paul must have felt that, but he persevered. He chose to get up.

All of us would rather have what someone called, a "Drive through Breakthrough."

Or in the words of Lucy from Peanuts, "I don't want ups and downs, I want ups and ups."

It seems like for many of us, God has chosen a different kind of breakthrough in this crisis. If we will let him, He will allow all of this to grow in us spiritual muscles. We will discover that each time we get up from another hit, we aren't just overcoming but another level of faith is coming in us. The result is that we not only grow, but have breakthroughs in others around us.

I believe that it is in times like these, we are going to see the biggest impact not only in terms of our own growth, but in terms of our families, our church and our mission in the world. With each step of faith, we will grow like never before and our capacity to influence others will become what it has never been before.

I loved something John Maxwell read, describing the challenge before us like a Mount Everest.

“You are bigger than me right now, but I am growing on the inside. Every day I go to the gym of adversity; I lean into God and He is stretching me and empowering my heart and my mind. I may not be big enough for all I will have to face right now. But the One who lives inside of me is bigger. By His power I am growing and I am rising. I will overcome with Him and plant His flag of victory on the top of this hill for my family, my church, my city, and my world!”