

GOD OF HOPE

Do you feel sometimes that you are losing hope in your life? I would like to tell you a story of Hope. It is my story...

I was born and raised in a religious home. My parents were devout Catholics. We would go to church every Sunday and pray the Rosary every day during Lent. Then one day during my teenage years, someone told me what the Bible taught about God's plan for this world and for His people. They showed me from scripture that the end of the world may possibly come during my lifetime. Hearing these things for the first time created in me an appetite for Bible teaching that I had never felt before. I never forgot what that man told me.

Some years later in college, I attended a spiritual retreat. There I heard this verse quoted from the book of St. John, chapter 3, verse 16...

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

That same weekend, out in the woods near Burton, Ohio, I asked Jesus to “take over my life.” I always believed in Jesus, but I had never received Him personally into my life. In the book of St. John, chapter 1 verse 12, it says...

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:”

From then on, I began to attend a church where the Bible was given the place of highest esteem as being the final authority for our faith and conduct. As I learned more about God's Word, I realized that one of the main reasons I felt distant from God was because of my own sins.

In the book of Isaiah, chapter 59, verse 2, it says,

“But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you”

I embraced this truth and God began to remove things from my life that the scripture called “sinful”. The result was that I could feel the presence of the Lord more clearly. As my friendship with the Lord grew in my heart, I found that I no longer needed the activities that before had brought me comfort. My pleasure in drugs and alcohol was transferred to a pleasure in God's company!

Over these past years, I have learned two wonderful truths that have helped me greatly when difficult times threaten to steal my hope. The first truth is that the light of God's Word drives away the darkness! When I have struggled with pain or fear, I have learned to take the promises of God written in the bible and repeat them as a prayer. This always

helps me to see the Lord's face more clearly again and regain my hope. One of my favorite promises is in the book of Romans, chapter 15 and verse 13...

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Another Bible verse that has given me peace in times of anxiety and discouragement is found in the book of Philippians, chapter 4, verses 6 and 7...

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

A second truth I have learned in my walk with Christ is that the practice of worship brings the presence of God! I believe that musical praise is a gift God has given us by which He desires to draw us “under His wing”. There at His side, singing of His love and power, I feel the peace, the joy and the hope, which I so long for.

My friend, do you have that peace, that joy and that hope? Do you have the assurance of going to heaven? In the book of First John, chapter 5 verse 13, God tells us that we can have this assurance:

“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life...”

If you do not know for certain if you really have a personal relationship with Jesus... if fear and pain are a frequent visitor in your heart...why not ask God to replace your fear and pain with hope for tomorrow. Here is a prayer that I encourage you to pray...

“Oh God, I know I am a sinner. I am sorry for my sins. I am willing to turn away from them if you will help me. I believe Jesus acted as my substitute when He died on the cross. I believe His death and His resurrection is for me. I now receive you, Jesus, as my Lord and Savior. I thank you for forgiving my sins, and for the gift of sharing heaven with you forever. Amen.”

If you were encouraged by my testimony, you may want to access our web-site. There you will find many other such stories of men and women who have come to know the same wonderful God in the same way, through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, His Son. Or come visit us sometime at our church.

May God bless you as you seek Him,

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