

Sermon Series: Living with Hope in a Broken World

To be used with: The Endurance of Our Hope

Sermon Title: Handling Threats to Hope

Scripture: 1 Peter 3:8-17

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study “*The Endurance of Our Hope*,” this sermon seeks to prepare believers to encounter circumstances that threaten to undermine our hope. When facing challenges, Christians can remain steadfast and unwavering in our faith.

Introduction: Having insurance is a means by which we prepare ourselves for situations that otherwise might catch us off guard. We have insurance to protect our health, homes, automobiles, and even our lives, in the event of adverse circumstances. This protection is meant to provide us with a sense of security and stability if something goes wrong.

In this passage, the apostle Peter returns to a subject that he addresses throughout his letter. He discusses how believers are to respond to challenging circumstances as well as any hostility from nonbelievers. Regardless of what we encounter, the way we respond demonstrates that our hope is in God. It is good for us to consider how we will respond to threats before they come.

1. Be ready to encourage others. (v. 8-12)

Some of the earliest lessons we learn during childhood relate to using our manners, sharing with others, and getting along with family and friends. These attributes should follow us into adulthood. This is even more important for those of us who are Christians. Our lives should be marked by the ways in which we better the lives of those around us.

We should seek to get along with one another and show love in a variety of ways. Humbly considering others as more important than ourselves (Philippians 2:3) will motivate us to act in their best interests. Even if these actions are not reciprocated, we must do what we know is right. God has called us so that we may bless others.

2. Be ready to endure suffering. (v. 13-14)

Very few people, if any, look forward to hardship. Difficult periods in our lives can disrupt our plans and upend our vision of the future. In addition, we can become anxious, depressed, or even angry because of our circumstances. We should not be surprised, however, when problems come. Facing difficulties is a part of life (Job 14:1).

Sometimes we must endure suffering because we are doing what is right. Not all problems are forms of punishment. In fact, some suffering can be a blessing. Even being in the midst of suffering can be viewed as an enviable position when we remember that God is with us. We need not fear trouble, knowing that God will work everything out for our good (Romans 8:28).

3. Be ready to give a reason for your hope. (v. 15-17)

Ultimately, we are able to endure our circumstances by keeping our attention on Christ. Recognizing His position as Lord of our lives puts everything else in perspective. When we recall what God has done for us in Christ, we can confidently testify about our faith. We can do this respectfully, without arguing with others who may be hostile to what we have to say.

Taking our faith and our responsibility to treat everyone gently and with respect seriously allows us to have a clear conscience. Even those who would accuse us will end up being ashamed because their accusations will be without merit. God can take what others intend for our harm and use it for good (Genesis 50:20).

Conclusion: Trials will come in our lives, whether they arise from circumstances or interactions with other people. Regardless of the types of situations we encounter, our focus is to remain the same—the salvation God has given us through Christ. We know that God has given us hope now and for eternity, and we should share this hope with others along the way.

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