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# Hope

We saw this past week that we can live perhaps fifty days without food, eight or so without water, and before brain damage we can even live about four minutes without air, but we can hardly live without hope. That four-letter word "Hope", Webster defines - "to desire with the expectation of fulfillment."

There is a desire or a longing for something then there is an expectation, an anticipation of that something happening. Combined together that's hope! That's one of the few things that we all have in common, we all have a hope about something. If the truth were known, perhaps you once had more hope than you do now because hope can be dampened. We can lose that sense of anticipation and that can have a devastating affect on life. Hope means that you can keep living in the anticipation that someday you will receive what you have been anticipating. The opposite of hope is despair, and who hasn't wrestled with feelings of despair?

PRO 13:12 "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but desire fulfilled is a tree of life."

It is so easy when we are in those straight and tight circumstances to forget that our God is always there. We speak to Him in prayer though we have never seen Him. It is comforting however to remember verses like HEB 11:6 "Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

God has given us His word to keep our hope alive. These inspired writings, chapters, verses, that we read and study will come to your rescue and keep your hope alive.

We saw two such scenes this week in the seventh chapter of Luke, different stories running one after the other. In fact, the second story, verses 11 through 17, is found nowhere else in the entire Bible. It is unique to Luke's Gospel. These scenes took place in two different cities; (verses 1 and 11).

LUK 7:1 "When He had completed all His discourse in the hearing of the people, He went to Capernaum."

In LUK 7:11 "And it came about soon afterwards, that He went to a city called Nain;" These cities are some 20 to 25 miles apart. Don't let them remain Capernaum and Nain or they will mean nothing to you. Make them your city! Imagine yourself being one of these

individuals who are living with an impossible situation if God doesn't intervene. Place your life in this passage and personalize it in that way.

In Capernaum, we have a man who never actually looks at Jesus face to face. He is called a certain centurion. The need on his heart has to do with one of his workmen called here a "slave" who was highly regarded by the centurion, but he was sick and about to die.

Capernaum was the base of operations for our Lord and it was a place of a Roman military installation. Thus, the appearance of this centurion and how he became a mature believer. In LUK 7:2, this centurion's slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die. Now, the centurion was a Roman officer. To the Romans, virtue meant reverence and devotion to the authorities over the Roman's at that time. In the spiritual realm, this included respect and loyalty toward God, which is revealed by the exact performance of all that God requires. This is one of the reasons why this centurion was such a winner believer.

In the Roman business world, a man's word was his bond and they didn't need signed contracts. If a man gave his word, that was it! So by virtue they meant what we would call faithfulness or the ability to fulfill one's obligations and keeping one's word. In fact, the Romans had a saying, which said in the English translation, "Nothing is too difficult for the power of the faithful!" Now, this is the basis for understanding the man in our passage. And so there was a great affinity or resemblance in this man and the Lord Jesus Christ inasmuch as both men were under authority.

Our Lord Jesus Christ being God and man placed Himself willingly under the authority of His Father. The interesting thing here is the confidence this man in the Lord. Notice also, that it was not on his own behalf that the centurion made this request but on behalf of another. It was a request to heal a patient out of sight. This centurion has heard of the kingdom of heaven and he knows that this is the King. Reasoning from what he knows of the Roman kingdom and how orders are given from a central authority and how they are followed out and executed, the centurion concludes that the Lord Jesus Christ, the king of the spiritual world, must have His own means of giving orders and having them followed without Him having to be there. Therefore, he knew it was only necessary that the Lord speaks the word and the command would be followed. He was a man who understood authority!

To the Jews, our Lord touched and cured, He preached personally to them; but to the paralytic Gentiles, He cured at a distance; He did not go in person but sent His word and healed them; and yet in them He was more magnified.

PSA 138:2 "For Thou hast magnified Thy word above all Thy name."

We have the completed canon of Scripture called the Bible and fantastic invisible assets to handle every problem in life. During the Old Testament, Jesus Christ was present many times on earth, including his incarnation. In the Millennium He will be on the earth ruling for 1000 years. However, today it is not necessary for our Lord to be here, because

the provision for the royal family of God is infinitely greater than any grace provision of any other dispensation in history.

To operate in faith and to trust God at His word is much greater than having the Lord come and visit you personally, Joh 20:29. Therefore, the Centurion sends elders to Jesus and they misrepresent him. They tell the Lord all the reasons why the centurion is worthy to have this request granted, when he says of himself, "I am unworthy". Our Lord knew that the Jewish elders were misrepresenting the true views and feelings of the centurion. The last thing in the world that the humble centurion would have pleaded would have been his own personal worthiness. The centurion recognizes the authority of the Lord and the uniqueness of Jesus Christ in hypostatic union.

Luk 7:7 "for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but {just} say the word, and my servant will be healed."

What he believed would happen, happened, but God the Holy Spirit is going to reveal in the next example through the widow, how the Lord operates even when there is no faith.

LUK 7:9 "Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the multitude that was following Him, I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith."

This is the only time in the Bible that our Lord marveled and was amazed by the actions of some other man.

The centurion, because he viewed himself as not worthy, didn't need ask the Lord to visit his house. He was content that the Lord should simply speak the word.

#### The Next Scene

LUK 7:12 "Now as He approached the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother,"

If you're not like the man in verses 1 through 10, perhaps you're like the woman in verses 11 through 17. Perhaps you are dealing with a situation that is as good as done or as gone as dead. You find yourself in grief and your hope is over. What you're dealing with now is the reality of recovery because what you had waited for did not happen, your hope is shattered. In the first story there is a request, in the second story, there isn't. Maybe like this centurion you don't feel on speaking terms with the Lord. Perhaps you're the type that would send a friend to come and represent you so you ask for prayer for a certain situation. Or, you may be in the second one, where there is no request at all. Here is a widow in verse 12, the mother of an only son with a feeling of an overwhelming sense of grief and loss and loneliness.

Notice that when the Lord saw her, she doesn't say a word to Him. She never speaks to Him. All we read is that He felt compassion for her, and He said to her: LUK 7:13 "Do not weep." Is that you? Perhaps not a widow but feeling like one? Or, feeling like you're

in a situation where you are all alone in what you're going through. These things are written so that we can look at our Lord's attitude, that's what we're suppose to do! It is through believing and seeing our Lord in action that we begin to experience that life. Our Lord is compassionate! We see our Lord doing things not because people deserved it but because He had compassion!

MAT 9:13 "But go and learn what this means, I desire compassion, and not sacrifice, for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

He didn't just perform miracles to prove His deity or that He was from God, His love and mercy and compassion drove His ministry, (MAT 15:32). For the centurion, just speak the word and He will come back to health. On the other side, for the widow, here is a woman too torn to pray. Both examples of those times in our life when we recognize our unworthiness and helplessness. Those times when we see that God our Father is waiting to help us. The truth of the matter is this;

"God DOES NOT help those who help themselves." "God DOES help the helpless."

ROM 5:6 "For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly."

### The Humility of a Genius

We can see some very interesting principles coming up in Phi 3 that correlate with glorying in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ as noted in the Gospels and putting no confidence in the flesh.

Let's begin with a general description of Paul's human celebrity-ship. Then we will take a look at the celebrityship of Moses and the similarities in the realm of these two great men who both refused that celebrityship for the plan of God. This celebrityship can be a hindrance, it doesn't have to be but it can be. Paul was one of the great celebrities in Judaism of all time. It did not hinder him nor did it hold him back.

Paul is the Roman name of the Jew named Saul of Tarsus. He was a Jew by race but a Roman by citizenship, the greatest Roman. Next to him, the greatest Roman citizen was Gaius Julius Caesar, an unbeliever. Paul was a third-generation citizen of Rome. There have been many famous Roman citizens but Paul and Caesar are by far the greatest. We place Paul above Caesar because he actually did more for Rome than Caesar did. Caesar is responsible for the administration and the political advance of the Roman Empire. Paul is responsible for Rome becoming the first Gentile client nation to God. Between them, these two made it possible for Rome to be the greatest Gentile client nation in all of human history. The basic difference between them is that Paul was a believer with maximum invisible impact; Caesar was an unbeliever with maximum visible impact.

As Saul of Tarsus, Paul became the #1 man in the Sanhedrin. In fact, he held all the offices of the Jews except that of high priest, for which his tribe of Benjamin was not

qualified. Paul was a Roman citizen who was also a Jewish Pharisee Act 22:28; Phi 3:5. He was also one of the most successful young men in the Jewish body politic in Judea. At a very early age, he became a Pharisee.

The eleven apostles who were the apostles to Israel were all Jewish citizens and Jews by race. They did go to Rome, but they were not Roman citizens. So, when God appointed the twelfth apostle, He appointed a Jew by race but Roman by birth. Therefore, only Paul among the eleven had a ministry to the Gentiles, though the other apostles' still had a message for them. He was also a Pharisee, as a zealous Pharisee and an unbeliever, Paul was the greatest persecutor of the Church until his conversion, 1Co 15:9; Gal 1:13. Paul was also the twelfth apostle. There are twelve names written down in the eternal state, Rev 21:14. in genuine humility, Paul wrote that he was the worst sinner who ever lived, and that he was the least of all the apostles' 1Ti 1:15, 1Co 15:9. It's always shocking to the legalist that as an unbeliever, Paul murdered many Christians, yet he became the greatest Church-age believer of all time. From this we learn that humility is the secret to attaining greatness. No matter what the field, without humility, greatness cannot be sustained. However, even though he was such a great man with fantastic accomplishments, in Phi chapter 3, Paul is going to teach that it is a far greater thing that he is doing which is to ignore his human celebrityship, achievements, accomplishments and successes and move forward in the spiritual life. Paul will show us that our achievements, accomplishments and successes can be a hindrance to our spiritual life, it can be but if you have humility, it doesn't have to be. In PHI 3:4-8, we find why Paul had this confidence in the flesh and why he had this celebrity status. PHI 3:4-6; "although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless."

Paul describes what he was like according to the flesh. He doesn't talk about his failures, he talks about his strength and the confidence that he could have in the flesh. You see, his critics all claimed to be great in Judaism. But in the area of human celebrityship, Paul was the greatest of all people in Judaism. He is pointing out that none of those people have attained the ability that he attained in Judaism. All of his critics, his enemies, who were being used by Satan to try and stop his ministry were all wrapped up in the human celebrityship of Judaism, and therefore Paul discusses his human celebrityship quite candidly. He was also a great Roman as well as a Hebrew. This passage should now have so much more meaning to you since we studied some of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, because what Paul is describing is meaningless compared to Him and what we have seen in Him. Though to those who do not know The Lord Jesus Christ, they would be impressed with the genius and the accomplishments of the apostle Paul. In PHI 3:5-6 we find out why Paul had the Human celebrityship. He is going to say in effect, my critics can't even compare to what I was in the flesh. In verse 7, "But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ." He could handle success! This man had confidence in his flesh but he threw away for knowing Christ!

Moses

Moses was very much like Paul in that he had great human celebrityship when he was young and great spiritual achievement when he was older. Moses and Paul are the two greatest ultra-supergrace believers in history. One is related to the great rewards of the Holy City and the other is related to three of the rewards of the Stephanos, the crown or the wreath. Three of the crowns of scripture are related to the maturity barrier.

1. The crown of righteousness, which is for the supergrace believer, 2Ti 4:8.
2. The crown of life, which is for the ultrasupergrace believer, Jam 1:12.
3. The crown of glory which is for the pastor who leads members of his congregation through his teaching to supergrace or ultrasupergrace in breaking the maturity barrier, 1Pe 5:4.

#### Similarities between Moses and Paul

Let's note some of the tremendous similarities between Moses and Paul as unbelievers and then believers. Moses as an unbeliever was a multi-genius but then so are a lot of people in every generation genius. Remember what the apostle Paul said in 1CO 1:26 "For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble." He doesn't say not any wise according to the flesh, or not any mighty, or not any noble; he says not many! Most individuals who are successful in life never become great in the spiritual life. It is very rare for that to happen. However, genius is no good unless you're oriented to life with humility. Now, both Paul and Moses were multi-genius! Moses was a musical genius and could have been one of the greatest people in music in history, however, he chose not to be. Some of the Psalms are written by Moses and some of the Pentateuch are simply quotations from his songs. He was also a military genius. He was being groomed to succeed Thutmose II, to be the ruler of Egypt. He was very accomplished in equitation; he loved horses and knew everything about them. He was also famous in archery, a great soldier, a literary genius and an engineering genius who built the two great treasure cities of the Thutmosian Empire. He did all of this when he was a very young man, before he was forty. And when he had attained celebrity status, he said, "No" to being designated the son of the daughter of Pharaoh or the new king of Egypt. Why? Because it was not a promotion from God.

HEB 11:25 "choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin;"

He selected the option of undergoing adversity along with the people of God rather than to have the momentary stimulation related to the sin nature choosing against God. Like Paul, he refused human celebrityship. He did not want to fall short of his personal destiny as prescribed by God. He kept on looking forward to the things of God and away from all that distracts from being occupied with Christ.

Heb 11:27 "By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen." He thought just like Paul, in PHI 3:7. They both kept on looking toward the reward.

Moses, like Paul, was a genius in human celebrityship and he walked out on it. As a result he cracked the maturity barrier and went all the way to ultrasupergrace. He eventually had one of the greatest deaths in the Old Testament under dying grace. We may safely assume that, Moses, like Paul, experienced providential preventive suffering to prevent arrogance in his life. Moses too, had passed through both providential preventive suffering as well as momentum testing with regard to people. Moses was in spiritual maturity, essentially free from the arrogance skills and was intensely aware of the invisible assets and occupied with Christ, Heb 11:26-27. These two great men regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of this world because they kept looking ahead to their reward.