

July 5, 2020 Dennis Gallaher Sabbath Hope

Every year as we observe Sabbath, we take the time to purposely center our attention and our energy on intimacy with God and intimacy with others. This year is already a different time in the midst of this pandemic. Everything has been affected. The economy is a significant source of stress. More Americans are now displaying significant anxiety and depression or both, including chronic fatigue, difficulty concentrating, change in appetite or weight, difficulty sleeping, persistent sadness, feeling hopeless, feeling worthless, and loneliness, etc.

George Everly who teaches Disaster Mental Health at John Hopkins says, "There's no doubt that the Corona Pandemic will be the most psychologically toxic disaster in anyone's lifetime." This has been a disaster of uncertainty that will lead to greater psychological casualties.

Sabbath is a time spent with God and time with others and it produces hope. So let's PAUSE...and talk about Hope - a Biblical and proven antidote for anxiety and hopelessness - a Biblical prescription for hope. John gives us 3 purposes as he writes his letters:

1 John 1:3 *We have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. **TO HAVE FELLOWSHIP***

1 John 2:1 *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. **SO YOU MAY NOT SIN***

1 John 5:13 *I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. **SO YOU MAY KNOW ETERNAL LIFE***

All of these words of John will instill hope in a believer. But the third one is less heard from today - eternity. Look up the words of a great hymn...*This World is Not My Home*.

1 John 3:2-3 *Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

A deep and abiding hope happens with a far-reaching desire to finish the race well and see Jesus face to face. We spend lots of time planning a vacation. We gather information. We get hopeful. Yet, many have spent little to no time exploring and planning for eternity - the culminating trip of our lives.

1 John 3:2 (In Dennis' words) "We can't possibly imagine what we will be. But we know whenever we actually see Him – either coming in the clouds with His second return or when we open our eyes and see eternity and breathe in the celestial air - you and I will be changed in the twinkling of an eye and finally be like the One that we adore, because we will see Him just as He is."

Verse 3 *And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.* Biblical hope begins by setting our hope on something that is absolute. That absoluteness is in the fact the Jesus said He was going to prepare a place for us - us who have served faithfully His Kingdom and His commission. This solid hope of what God has promised for eternity gives us hope for everything else here on Earth. What hope?

- the hope of eternity
- the hope of seeing Jesus
- the hope of really being home
- the hope of purity
- the soundness of mind
- true intimacy with God and others

Everyone who has this hope, purifies himself. Purify means to cast out what is impure within. Hope purifies. The desire and drive for our eternity with Jesus produces a hope that purifies my life here on earth. But there is so much more that this hope gives...

Hebrews 6:9-19 (Living Bible) **Verse 12** *Then, knowing what lies ahead for you, you won't become bored with being a Christian nor become spiritually dull and indifferent, but you will be anxious to follow the example of those who receive all that God has promised them because of their strong faith and patience. By putting our hope in an eternal position with Jesus Christ, with those we love, with God the Father, and with all the hosts of angels, we will not become dull nor indifferent, but will become anxious to follow the path of those before us. Just as Abraham waited patiently for one son, the promise, and resulted with a nation.*

Verse 17 *God also bound himself with an oath, so that those He promised to help would be perfectly sure and never need to wonder whether He might change his plans. All those who flee to God and hope in eternity, will then hear these same assurances from God. He keeps His promises.*

Verse 19 *This certain hope of being saved is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls, connecting us with God Himself behind the sacred curtain of heaven, where Christ has gone ahead to plead for us from his position as our High Priest.*

This certain hope is the hope we have that is not in this world, not in the end of a pandemic, but of an eternity with God. To young people - the devil wants to keep eternity out of your mind and heart and to give you a hopelessness. Hopelessness can only be conquered when you put your hope in God's final destination. Finishing well this life is only possible when our hope is set in eternity!

Hebrews 6:19 *This hope we have as an anchor of the soul...* As we see these things that are taking place today, let the hope of eternity be the anchor for the soul. Again as George Everly says, "This pandemic will be the most psychologically toxic disaster in anyone's lifetime." The emotional trauma shows what a need we have for an eternal HOPE, for a Sabbath rest, for Sabbath HOPE, for a gaze to eternity, for a looking toward what God has for us. HOPE - a solid anchor for the soul.

A Prayer for Hope – Do you need that hope? Have you found yourself discouraged and uncertain of the future? Ask the Lord to give you a view of eternity. Not that we lose site of what is around us, but that we change our view. Go to the Word and ask the Holy Spirit to give us a divine sense of hope and to reveal truths about where we are headed so that we can better care for others, love, do good works, and worship the Lord of great promises.

If you want to know Jesus, just ask Him to take control of your life. Ask for forgiveness of sins and invite Jesus to come and rule your life. Jesus will give you a living hope - an anchor for your soul!

Have you ever felt like your desire to be like Jesus has become dull and like a desert? or found yourself discouraged and uncertain of the future during this time of pandemic?

How can hope for eternity give us an anchor for our souls today?

How are you going to change your focus this Sabbath of 2020?