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HOLDING ON TO HOPE

It was Dante in his famous “Inferno” who warned, “Abandon hope all ye who enter here.” He was talking, of course, about Hell. But to many people these days living this life has become a living “hell on earth.” Some cities are experiencing nightly violence as peaceful protests turn into riots, buildings and businesses are being destroyed, and citizens and police officers are injured. Looking at what’s going on in Portland, Seattle, Minneapolis, Chicago, and other major US cities it makes me thankful that I’m living in rural Iowa! Given all that is going on it would be an easy choice simply to give up hope for America. The level of pessimism about this nation’s future is alarming...and, in my opinion, overstated. Many people are pessimistic about their own future. We hear it in the way they speak. Their “hope” sounds pessimistic rather than optimistic.

“I hope things work out for me”

“I hope I can pay my bills this month”

“I hope I don’t catch COVID-19”

“I hope I don’t lose my job”

Hope is the last thing that dies in a man or woman...and once hope is gone there is not much to live for. That’s the main reason the suicide rate in the U.S is growing at an alarming rate. But, to the follower of Christ there is hope! Hope for the present...and for the future. Our hope is not pessimistic...but optimistic!! The reason is that our hope is not based on our performance – but in His promises!

It is a secure hope...not a speculative one. So, what has He promised us? Here's just a few things He has promised:

"I will never leave you nor forsake you" Hebrews 13:5

"I am with you until the end of the age" Matthew 28:20

"I will supply all your needs". Philippians 4:19

"I will come again" John 14:3

In Romans 15:13, the Apostle Paul writes, *"May God, the source of hope, fill you with joy and peace by means of your faith in Him, **so that your hope will continue to grow** by the power of the Holy Spirit."*

So how should we define the hope that we read about in the Bible?

Here's an easy way to think about it. Hope is...

Holding On with Patient Expectancy

The hope that we have as Christians is as good as God's promises...and, when God makes a promise...FAITH believes it, HOPE anticipates it, and PATIENCE quietly waits for it. Someone once said, *"Life without Christ is a hopeless end...life with Christ is an endless hope."* During this difficult time, we need someone (not something) to hope in, to hold on to. His name is Jesus!!