

HOPE

I often hear church members say, "I hope it will be ok." Hope is the basis for all positive change. But hope expressed in this way has a sense of helplessness about it. Therefore, be careful not to undermine the power of hope - it is a very influential thing. G. K. Chesterton said, "*There is no medicine like hope, no incentive so great, and no tonic so powerful as expectation of something better tomorrow.*" Emily Dickinson, in one of her poems said, "*Hope is a thing with feathers, that perches in the soul.*" Martin Luther said, "*Everything that is done in the world is done by hope.*"

Hope, from the world's viewpoint is a longing for something that may or may not take place. The world sees hope as a fond wish or fleeting desire, but the Bible provides a vastly different definition. Listen to the words of Jeremiah, "***Blessed is the man that trusts in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.***" God's word teaches us that hope is, "*A deep settled confidence that God will keep His promises!*" Hope and faith are inseparable, "***Now faith is the substance of things hoped for...***" (Hebrews 11:1) A literal translation reads, "*Now faith brings into existence the things that you confidently expect from God.*" Another way of putting it is, "*Faith is having absolute trust in the faithfulness of God, and as a result, the things you are confidently expecting will manifest.*"

Are you resting in the "sure" confidence that God will do exactly what He has promised He would do? That is the essence of hope! It is an attribute we all need to have large quantities of. But how do we acquire and develop this attribute? Here are two pointers:

- Our confidence in the Lord provides hope. God has been faithful in the past, so we can count on Him being faithful now. Think of all the things He has done; the victories He has won; the enemies He has vanquished; the mountains He has moved. Think on these things and remember that the God who performed countless wonders in the Bible is still that same God today! That should give you hope and build confidence!
- Our comfort in the Lord provides hope. In Psalm 27:6 David says that he will worship the Lord because of the things the Lord has done for him. Because the Lord has lifted him above the battles; because the Lord has hidden him away in the secret place; because the Lord sheltered him away from the terrors of the battles; he will praise His name! As with David, God has a special place for us – a place of comfort and safety. Therefore, remember to constantly give Him praise.

If we are to possess sufficient **hope** for 2013, we must confidently look ahead (without fear), having absolute trust in the faithfulness of God. Alfred Tennyson said, "Hope smiles from the threshold of the year to come, whispering 'it will be happier!'"