

The Difference Between Hope And Faith

Mixing The Two Hinders Our Walk

By B. D. Tate

Many of us are mixing these two powerful gifts given to us as sons and daughters of God. Paul wrote:

1Co 13:13 And **now abide faith, hope, love**, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Abiding with us always are faith, hope, and love. These spiritual blessings are ours in Christ Jesus. God's love has been poured out (Rom. 5:5). We have His acceptance always. We are beloved as much as Christ:

John 17:23 "I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, *and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.*

There is no greater gift and position to be in than God's love. We are loved with a divine love that ***is eternally constant*** and in Christ unconditional.

Seeing The Difference

Faith and Hope abide with us too. It is important to distinguish between them because when we mix them up we *lose power and purpose in both*. It is like mixing or interchanging unbelief with doubt. They are similar but are applied differently. When we understand the difference it sets us free and empowers us to overcome both (see booklets "Understanding Doubt; Understanding Unbelief).

Faith and Hope are often interchanged as if they are the same. In practice hope is more often what we are living to rather than faith. In ignorance we have often claimed we were in faith when actually we were in hope. *Faith works differently than hope*. Hope gives us vision,

direction, expectations, and enduring life. Faith is a gift given to empower us to live in grace. Hope is about the future *guiding our way*; faith is about now *empowering our way*.

Looking At Hope

Hope is about the future and provides strength to live in the now. Without hope we'd fade, give in, give up, quit, and lose out.

Eph 2:12 that at that time you were **without Christ**, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and **strangers** from the covenants of promise, **having no hope and without God in the world**.

1Th 1:3 remembering **without ceasing your work of faith**, labor of love, and **patience of hope** in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

Heb 10:23 **Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering**, for He who promised is faithful.

Without hope we quickly fade and die away. Many people give up on life because they have lost hope. Without hope we have **no patience**. There are stories of prisoners who have survived great suffering enduring for years their captivity because they did not lose hope! There are other stories of prisoners that once they lost hope they quickly faded and died.

Jesus is our blessed Hope (I Pet. 1:3)! Jesus has taken us out of the kingdom of darkness where hope is fleeing, flittering, and changing all the time. The hope of the world is conditional and vulnerable. When the stock market crashed in 1929 thousands of distraught people committed suicide because their hope was lost. If our hope is in material things (things of this world), it is built on sinking sands (Luke 6:49).

Proverbs teaches us about hope:

Pr 13:12 **Hope deferred makes the heart sick**, But when the desire comes, it is a tree of life.

When our hope is built on opportunities, money, position, and even relationships in this world, *they are vulnerable to being dashed*. When our hearts are set on certain dreams, visions, or goals and they keep being put off, delayed, and strung out, our hope is being tested. When hope is deferred, denied, and kept from fulfillment it makes our heart sick. We become immobilized, discouraged, disillusioned, and die inside. The death of hope is like the death of the soul. We are sapped of strength, fortitude, endurance, and leadership—we become desponded.

God's warning to all of us is very straight forward regarding our hope. He warns us to put our desires, dreams, and goals upon Him and His kingdom. Do not be lured by the desires of this world (Mark 4:19). Do not be misled to place our hope in things that cannot satisfy.

Ps 42:5 Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? **Hope in God**, for I shall yet praise Him For the help of His countenance.

Or as the Old Testament passage relates:

Isa. 55: 1 "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price.

2 Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance.

It matters greatly what we put our hope in. Our hope is to be fixed in God's salvation. This salvation is both for the future and for today. Our hope is built on nothing less that Jesus Christ and His righteousness. Our hope is in God's word, will, and promises.

Hope then, is about our understanding and placing our trust in what is good, holy, righteous, and eternal. Our hope is to be fixed on values, desires, and visions that cannot be changed. Our hope is in Jesus. The power of hope is the position of right believing, right understanding, and right discerning of the truth and of future expectations. Hope in God is about having the right foundation *guiding our decision making, our life's direction, and how we live it*. Hope is the blueprint, the directions, the focal point guiding our way through life. **Hope is about the future guiding the present.**

Looking At Faith

Future hopes and expectations *lead us* to live in the now. Hope however, is not faith and that sometimes is hard to grasp. In general, hope is about tomorrow things not yet fulfilled; faith is about today things already provided in Jesus. **Now faith is** the evidence of things hoped for...

Heb 11:1 Now faith **is the substance** of things hoped for, **the evidence** of things not seen.

Faith is substance and evidence in our heart (witnesses within) occurring now about something not seen yet. It is the witness and conviction established in the heart about God's grace becoming manifest in the now. **Hope is about God's future actions. Faith is about what God has done.** When I use hope to acquire or seek after things that God has done in His grace I am missing something. When I try to exercise faith for something God hasn't done yet I am missing something again.

The scriptures testify that the just shall live by faith (Hab. 2:4). To live in this present age I need faith to bring God's grace into my life. If I try to use hope to bring into my life God's grace I am misappropriating.

Let me try to illustrate this. If someone has prepared a dinner for us and they ask us to come and eat what do we do? We recognize that the dinner is already prepared. We acknowledge our invitation. We then

thank the person for preparing and inviting us to eat. We act upon it by moving towards the dinner table. Then we eat the dinner. Faith recognizes what God has done. Faith acknowledges that God has given them to us. Faith thanks God for what has been done and then walks towards it as if it is done. Faith then eats what God has done.

Hope responds differently than faith. Hope would say to the invitation, “I hope you would invite me. I hope that you would prepare dinner for me.” When invited to eat hope would respond, “I hope to come.” **There is this sense that it is never actually accepted.** It is always a future expectation to the relationship. I hope God forgives me. I hope God loves me. I hope God takes care of me. I hope God heals me. All of this expresses something to happen in the future and does not acknowledge what has been done.

When hope is exercised to things God has already decided and done there is disconnect. I’m not quite standing in the truth. I may seem humble not wanting to presume upon God; but what I’m doing is denying the truth. I am **not accepting** God’s will. I’m not accepting God’s word. I’m acting as if God *hasn’t done what God has done*. Hope then is the wrong response to the things of God’s grace.

When hope is employed for things of God’s grace in Christ it is actually standing in *unbelief*. It is as if we don’t believe what God has done or said. If I said to my wife, “I love you.” Then she responds by saying, “I hope so...” I wouldn’t like it. If when we were standing at the altar on our wedding day and the minister asked me, “Do you take her to be your wedded wife?” If I responded, “I hope so...” That would not suffice. I must say, “I do!”

Faith **stands on the truth as it is a done deal**. Hope when expressed to things faith should be used for diminishes faith. We stand in weakness and confusion.

Hope feeds on God’s plans for the future—His promises. **Faith stands on God’s accomplished work in Christ—it is finished.** I can’t exercise

faith in a future promise; what I can do is trust and hope in it. I can stand in faith only when the Will of God is known and accomplished.

Faith has nothing to work with or stand in without God's word being known. Furthermore, faith must be established in our heart with certainty (Heb. 13:9). We must be convinced of the truth to exercise faith.

When we waver between opinions about God's will and finished work we are not in faith we are in doubt. Doubt receives nothing because it doesn't know God's will. Faith receives, as in accepts and acknowledges, what is done and remains steadfast, unmoving, and fixed. We are fixed upon the grace of God because we already have it.

Faith doesn't move God it moves us to stand in God's grace. Faith doesn't move God it moves the fallen circumstances in life. We speak to the mountain and walk towards it in the authority and conviction of the name of Jesus.

Hope is about what God is yet to do; faith is about us asserting what God has already done. Faith doesn't request of God it declares God's already provided will to be done! Faith believes God has empowered us to act in Jesus' place to do what Jesus did!

John 14:12 "Most assuredly, I say to you, **he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also**; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.

13 "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 "If you **ask** anything in My name, I will do it.

To ask, call for, require, or even command anything in Jesus' name is to know the nature, will, and word of Christ. It is to know what we have already in Him because He is in us (Col. 1:27)! Faith therefore, acts upon the already given authority, power, and grace of God to command His will be done in this world.

Faith stands in the **position of already having it against** the fallen facts and rebellious circumstances of life. Hope has no such conviction but stands waiting for God to act as if He hasn't already helped us.

Conclusion:

Hope grabs onto the *future promises* of God that have not been fulfilled yet—He is Coming Again! **Faith stands in the already accomplished finished work of Christ** for us in this life. I am healed by His stripes (II Pet. 2:24).

Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6)! After all that God has accomplished in the finished work of Christ in our salvation for us to not accept, stand, and assert this truth over the fallen facts of this world does not please God.

Faith knows God's will and grace; doubts don't know God's will and therefore can't or won't stand in His grace. Hope is about God's promised future work; faith is about God's already accomplished finished work in Christ in us.

When hope is exercised where faith should be employed, it is a position of unbelief. Hope does not acknowledge what we have or what has been done (Philemon 1:6). Hope acts as if what has been done has not been done yet. Faith declares and stands boldly believing God and His word and what has been done! Amen.

When hope is employed when faith should be it is because we are living by sight and what is seen, touched, heard, of this realm. Faith sees what God sees; hears what God has said. Faith acts upon the spiritual truth over against the physical realities. Living by hope when we should be living by faith, will keep us from crossing over into the spiritual mind of Christ (keeping us carnally minded).

We cannot use our faith when hope should be employed because faith can only stand on what God has done. Faith can't be used to make God

do anything. Hope stands on what God is going to do by promise—such as giving each of us new glorified bodies just as Christ has when He comes. We can't exercise faith to call for our glorified bodies in this life because that is not what God has done. We can hope knowing that our days in this life are passing away and so also is this world. We can hope knowing that although we may not experience all that life has to offer we know that in the future life we'll have it all. We cannot use our faith to call for things God has not provided. **We use our hope to remain patient until all things are fulfilled.** Amen.

We must understand the differences between hope and faith so that we are effectively using both gifts as God designed. If we mix them we'll not see good consistent results. We'll find ourselves standing in weakness, confusion, and unbelief. **We are to know when hope holds us and when faith frees us. We are to know when hope guides us and when faith empowers us.** We are to know when hope is a rock sustaining us in this day we live in and when faith is the substance of those things hoped for the evidence of things not yet seen. The substance of things hoped for as in not yet manifested! Hope is our holding on to what God is going to do; faith is calling for in this life the things that are already true in the Spirit. Hope holds us focused on future benefits; faith holds onto the truth in grace to bring it to pass in this life.

We cannot get saved through hope! We are saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8). Faith accepts, acknowledges, asserts, and stands in the truth! Faith takes what God has given. **Hope waits for the promise to be fulfilled in the future.** Faith takes and stands in the truth over against the fallen facts—That is how we got saved. **We didn't hope for our salvation; we claimed Jesus is Lord and asserted that we have the right to be called sons and daughters of God (John 1:14).** We don't hope God will save us; we stand in the truth that **God did save us** in Christ two thousand years ago.

The just shall live by faith—taking what God has given and living in it. Amen. The just don't live by hope in some future grace not yet given. Hope guides our life; faith empowers it. Faith stands in the grace freely given.