

# Our Eternal Hope

Finding Hope Despite Life's Heartaches





# INTRODUCTION: Life of Tragedy, Life of Hope



A beautiful, athletic, seventeen-year-old student dove into Chesapeake Bay on a warm summer day in 1967, and it would change the course of her life forever.

Two long years of rehabilitation followed as she endured surgery, traction, therapy, painful processes designed to stabilize her broken body, prohibit further injury, and teach her to live without the use of her arms and legs.



For months she languished in sterile facilities as she came to terms with the extent of her injury.



Death began to look preferable,  
even desirable.



**Medicine offered her no hope. Her spine could never be repaired and her motor functions would never be restored.**



God heard the desperate prayers of Joni  
Eareckson Tada over fifty years ago.



**What came was hope.**



**She began to paint with a brush clenched between her teeth. She began to write her story. She began to study the word of God with a voracious appetite for His truth.**



**“Oh, how we need to grasp the soul-settling hope found in the pages of God's Word – not only grasp it, but allow the hope of God to fill and overflow our hearts, transforming us into people who are confident and at peace with themselves, their God, and their circumstances.”**

Joni Eareckson Tada





**What is this “soul-settling hope” that she writes about and lives out to this day?**





# **PART 1: Hope - Beyond the Platitudes**



***“I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.”***

Psalm 16:8-9





**We throw the word “hope” around all the time, using it in trite little phrases offering well wishes to others and expressing our desire for positive outcomes.**



Then there are the platitudes about hope that you'll find on greeting cards, plaques to hang on the office wall, and inspirational calendars offering words of encouragement.



**But do any of these things describe the “soul-settling hope” that Joni Eareckson Tada found while newly bound to a wheelchair?**



The hope that Joni found is the same hope that David speaks of in Psalm 16 where he declares, “my flesh also rests in hope.”

**This is not the word “hope” used in the  
common language of well wishes and desires.**



# Prayer





**God of all hope, I confess that I use this little word improperly all the time.**



I confess that I too often put my hope in  
all the wrong things.



Hoping in the things of this world  
is a practice in futility.



**You offer a deeper, truer, greater hope.**

Help me to understand this hope as  
I study it here.





## **PART 2: Biblical Hope Defined**



***“This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope.  
It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not  
consumed, because his compassions fail not.  
They are new every morning: great is thy  
faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my  
soul; therefore will I hope in him.”***

Lamentations 3:21-24





When we use the word “hope” in our daily lives, it usually implies a level of uncertainty.

**When we say we are hoping it implies we are doubting, because we are!**



**Biblical hope is more than just crossing our fingers, closing our eyes, and wishing for the best, because it is a hope rooted in the person and character of God.**



God has so many names which all  
reflect his character.



**God is all of these things and so much more.**



**The writer of Lamentations, in the midst of destruction, loss, misery, and grief, finds hope.**

He remembers the mercy, compassion, and faithfulness of God.



# Prayer





Heavenly Father, the hope the world has to offer is always clouded by doubt.



**God, I know that I can have confident hope in you when I root that hope in your character.**



Sin causes me to doubt. Please help me  
remember all that you are and all that you  
have done.



Help me fight the urge to put my hope in  
things that will fail me.



**God, be the God of all hope to me today.**





## **PART 3: A Longsuffering Hope**



***“(Abraham) Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.”***

Romans 4:18





The Genesis account of the life of Abraham teaches us much about hope.

Until God gave them hope.



Gazing at the countless stars in the sky,  
God showed Abraham the vast number  
of his offspring that would walk the face  
of the earth.



**Taking matters into their own hands,  
Abraham fathered a child by Hagar.**



He clung to hope, which increased his faith.

**Paul tells us in Roman's 4 that Abraham's hope was against all hope.**



**But this wasn't a false hope or a pipe dream.**



# Prayer





God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the story  
of these forefathers gives me greater faith  
and hope in you.

Abraham believed you, but he was not perfect.



Help me to not lose hope and take matters  
into my own hands.

Remind me of your love, faithfulness,  
mercy, and grace.



You are the God of all hope and in you  
I put my trust.





## PART 4: Hope in God's Word



***“For whatsoever things were written aforetime  
were written for our learning, that we through  
patience and comfort of the scriptures might  
have hope.”***

Romans 15:4





Laying in her bed in a rehab facility months after the catastrophic accident that left her paralyzed, Joni Eareckson Tada began to find hope.

**The Apostle Paul tells us of the hope found in the scriptures in Romans 15:4.**



**1. He first tells us that the scriptures were written for our learning.**

**We have the whole counsel of God's word to  
instruct us in countless ways.**



**2. Paul then speaks to the patience we can find through the scriptures.**

**3. Finally, Paul tells us that the word can bring us comfort.**



Learning the scriptures encourage us to endure through this life and find comfort in God, which ultimately leads to hope.



# Prayer





Heavenly Father, you have seen fit to give us  
your holy and abiding word.

**Your word is for my instruction, and I have  
much to learn from it.**



I can endure through this life with the  
help of your words.

I am comforted by your word.



By learning your word, enduring in it,  
and finding comfort in it, I become  
increasingly hopeful!





## **PART 5: Hope in the Hardships**



***“...but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”***

Romans 5:3-5



**Holding onto hope in the midst of great suffering is one of life's hardest challenges.**



**Biblical hope held out to a suffering person is  
anything but empty or hollow.**

**It sounds like complete and utter nonsense to speak of rejoicing when we face troubles.**



Suffering produces endurance, that long-suffering patience we've already discussed.

That endurance then produces  
experience, or character.



Character produces a hope that does  
not put us to shame.



# Prayer





God of all hope, you are at work in me in the  
midst of my trials.

**You are sanctifying me through my suffering,  
making me more like Jesus.**



**This suffering is producing endurance in me.**

Endurance through this trial is producing  
character in me.



I have hope in the midst of my suffering  
because you are at work in me,  
and in that I rejoice.





## **PART 6: A Future Hope**



***“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.”***

1 Peter 1:3-4



God's abundant mercy has birthed  
us into a living hope.



Peter could speak of this hope perhaps  
better than anyone.

**This living hope that Peter spoke of is rooted  
in the person and work of Jesus.**



Sometimes we get a little glimpse of our  
future hope here on earth.

**Our living hope is found in Jesus, who endured  
the ultimate suffering on our behalf.**



# Prayer





Father God, according to your great  
mercy you have caused me to be born  
again into a living hope.



**An inheritance awaits me in heaven  
because I have put my faith in you.**

The inheritance you are keeping in  
heaven for me cannot be corrupted  
by the things of this world.



Help me not put my hope in the little glimpses  
of heaven that I see here on earth.

I rejoice in you and your generous,  
lavish love and grace.





## **CONCLUSION: Abiding In Hope**



The hope found in God is impossible for people to understand unless they have experienced His love, grace, and mercy.



**The hope found in God, described all over His word, is eternal because He is eternal.**

When we put our faith in Jesus, we can dwell  
in the hope of His love, grace, and mercy,  
despite the suffering we face.



The joy and peace of God comes  
with believing in Him through the power  
of the Holy Spirit, and by it we abound in  
an everlasting hope.