

Grace Energized Men Finishing Hopefully in a Despairing World Titus 2:2

As we open to Titus 2, we are considering the power of hope. When things get darkest in life, what one truth keeps folks going? It's the word: hope.

Someone once described how dependent we are as humans on the presence of hope:

Humans can live 40 days without food; and
3 days without water; and
8 minutes without air;
But only 1 second without hope!

A Hopeless World Needs Hope-filled People

The closer we get to the end of days; and the more difficult the world or our part of the world may get; and no matter how much bad prevails all around us, God's plan never changes. His plan has been the same for Christ's church for these past 20 centuries.

When the world is sliding towards ruin, God always wants: ***His children finishing hopefully in a despairing world.*** And that is the final quality we find in Titus 2:2

Of all the words we have looked at over the past few weeks that describe a grace-energized man of godly influence in Christ's Church, no word is bigger in the scope of God's Word than this word we look at today.

At the end of the sentence in Titus 2:2, the last word that God's Spirit inspired Paul to write in the Holy Scriptures is the Greek word: ***hupomeno***. This word is HUGE in both the Old and the New Testament.

This inspired word was chosen by God to show up in some of the best-known verses of the Bible, and also in some of the most strategic passages such as those that teach the perseverance of the saints. So listen carefully to all God has to say to each of us through His Word today!

*Titus 2:2 that the **older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience;** NKJV*

“**[sound in] patience**” is how this Greek word **hupomone** is translated in the NKJV and KJV; or by these words in the other main English translations: “steadfastness” in ESV; “endurance” in NIV; and “perseverance” in the NAS.

The bottom line this word communicates is that God wants older men in Christ's Church **FINISHING HOPEFULLY IN A DESPAIRING WORLD.**

God wants men who persevere through all the hard times life will always bring—and then model that triumphant hope Christ alone can bring. Among the aged who are often characterized as fretful and down-hearted, these men radiate hope. Here is how one writer describes men living out this quality:

“They are to exhibit the ability to endure hardship, to accept disappointment and failure, to be satisfied despite thwarted personal desires and plans. They have learned to graciously live with such difficulties as physical weakness, loneliness, and being misunderstood and unappreciated. They do not lose heart when things do not turn out the way they had hoped and expected, but have the perfect confidence “that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28).”¹

That is:

The Power of Godly Hope

Each of us, the older we get, have a choice: either give in to **idleness** through inactivity, and **despair** through a lack of being needed; or we allow the Spirit of God to energize us by His grace to live in hope.

A life of hope can temper us to become like steel, so we can hold up under the troubles life constantly pours out upon us. That is what God's Word illustrates as we examine Biblical hope. Turn with me back to Isaiah 40.

A careful study of the usage of **hupomeno** in the Scriptures gives us great depths of meaning. This word means: “to cling, holding on tight or holding on for dear life”. This is the word that God uses in one of the most well known verses in the Bible which is Isaiah 40:29-31², turn there for a moment with me.

*Isaiah 40:29-31 He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, 31 But those who **wait** [hupomeno LXX] on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.*

¹MacArthur, John: *Titus*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, electronic edition, in loc.

²The Hebrew word qavah (Strong's # 6960) is translated by the LXX with the Greek word hupomone (Strong's # 5278). This Hebrew verb qavah literally means to 'twist and or stretch'. In the Old Testament world it was used of making rope by twisting and stretch many weak strands into a strong rope. Then this concept of rope making became a metaphor for waiting and receiving strength during weak times to endure stretching, twisting, and painful times in life.

Those who trust God enough to accept His help in our weaknesses, find that His grace energizes hope that makes us strong. That is why He even allows all these problems, struggles, trials, and unexpected reversals into our lives. To twist and stretch us into those who will finish hopefully for Him before a watching and often despairing world in need of hope!

Did you know that anything that the Lord wants us to do, He shows us how to do? That is one of the greatest purposes for the thousands of people described in the Old Testament, they are illustrations of either resisting or welcoming God's grace to help in times of need.

So for overcoming a hopeless world by hope, God has given us a life to examine. As we open to Lamentations 3, we need to get to know:

The Prophet of Hope Named Jeremiah

Lamentations 3: 21-26 This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. 22 Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. 23 They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. 24 " The LORD is my portion," says my soul, " Therefore I hope in Him!" 25 The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, To the soul who seeks Him. 26 It is good that one should hope and wait quietly For the salvation of the LORD.

There is probably no greater illustration of the power of hope in all of God's Word than what we have in a biography of Jeremiah. Jeremiah's woes were unimaginable to our relatively peaceful lives. He lived through the death throes of the nation of Judah.

- From an earthly perspective **Jeremiah's life was a failure**. During his lifetime he watched the decay of God's chosen people, the horrible destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of the nation to Babylon.

Lesson: **We can hope even when we feel like our life is a failure.**

- He preached for 40 years and **saw no visible result among those he served**. Instead those countrymen he warned for God sought to kill him if he wouldn't stop preaching doom (Jeremiah 11:19-23). He had virtually no converts to show for a lifetime of ministry.

Lesson: **We can hope even when we see no results for all we try to do for God.**

- He **had no one to find joy and comfort with** as his own family and friends were involved in plots against his (12:6). He **never had the joy of a godly home** because God never allowed him to marry, and thus **he suffered incredibly agonizing loneliness** (16:2).

Lesson: **We can hope even when we are alone.**

*Jeremiah 12:6 For **even your brothers, the house of your father**, even they have dealt treacherously with you; Yes, they have called a multitude after you. Do not believe them, Even though they speak smooth words to you.*

*Jeremiah 16:2 "You **shall not take a wife**, nor shall you have sons or daughters in this place."*

- He **lived under a constant threat of death**, as there were plots to kill him in secret so no one would find him (18:20-23).

Lesson: **We can hope even when we are close to death.**

*Jeremiah 18:20-23 Shall evil be repaid for good? **For they have dug a pit for my life**. Remember that I stood before You To speak good for them, To turn away Your wrath from them.*

- He **lived with physical pain** while he was beaten severely and then bound in wooden stocks (20:1-2).

Lesson: **We can hope even when we are filled with pain.**

*Jeremiah 20:1-2 Now Pashhur the son of Immer, the priest who was also chief governor in the house of the Lord, heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things. 2 Then Pashhur **struck Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks** that were in the high gate of Benjamin, which was by the house of the Lord.*

Jeremiah Had a Nearly Hopeless Situation

- He **lived with emotional pain** as his friends spied on him deceitfully and for revenge (20:10).

Lesson: **We can hope even when we are sad and disheartened.**

Jeremiah 20:10 For I heard many mocking: "Fear on every side!" "Report," they say, "and we will report it!" All my acquaintances watched for my stumbling, saying, "Perhaps he can be induced; Then we will prevail against him, And we will take our revenge on him."

- He **was consumed with sorrow and shame** and even cursed the day he was born (20:14-18).

Lesson: **We can hope even when we are sorrowing.**

Jeremiah 20:14, 18 Cursed be the day in which I was born! Let the day not be blessed in which my mother bore me! 18 Why did I come forth from the womb to see labor and sorrow, That my days should be consumed with shame?

- **His life ended with no relief** as he was falsely accused of being a traitor to his own country (37:13-14). Jeremiah was **arrested, beaten, thrown into a dungeon**, and starved many days (37:15-21). If an Ethiopian Gentile had not interceded on his behalf he would have died there.

Lesson: **We can hope even when we find no relief.**

*Jeremiah 37:13-16 And when he was in the Gate of Benjamin, a captain of the guard was there whose name was Irijah the son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah; and he seized Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "You are defecting to the Chaldeans!" 14 Then Jeremiah said, "False! I am not defecting to the Chaldeans." But he did not listen to him. **So Irijah seized Jeremiah** and brought him to the princes. 15 Therefore the princes were angry with Jeremiah, and **they struck him and put him in prison** in the house of Jonathan the scribe. For they had made that the prison. 16 When Jeremiah entered the dungeon and the cells, and Jeremiah had remained there many days,*

In the end, tradition tells us he was exiled to Egypt. While faithfully preaching God's Word to the exiles he was stoned to death by his own people. We can hope even if it:

Hurts to Even go on

Have you ever felt life was too painful to even go on? Jeremiah did, and in the Old Testament without all the benefits and blessings we have today in this church age—he lived through all that pain and had ending hope.

Look at Jeremiah's testimony again in Lamentations 3, because right in the midst of that passage we return to our Titus 2:2 word **hupomone**. The Lord wants to live His grace-energized hope through us. Listen to what came out of this broken, crushed, and neglected man's heart:

Lamentations 3:21-25 This I recall to my mind, **Therefore I have hope** [**hupomene** in the LXX]. 22 Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. 23 They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. 24 "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "**Therefore I hope in Him!**" 25 The Lord is good to **those who wait** [hupomene in the LXX] for Him, To the soul who seeks Him.

If you take a few moments to look at the verses surrounding this confession, it becomes clear how powerful hope can be in our lives. Few of us will ever get close to the intensity of troubles Jeremiah faced and endured by the power of hope in God!

When Life Overwhelms us

A look through Lamentations 3, reveals to us what are the pains in life that God uses, manages, allows, and most of all—pains that HE can handle. And then as we read of this growing list of elements that should lead to a crescendo of hopelessness, instead it builds into a crescendo of overflowing hope:

1. **God's promised Hope helps me face the PAIN OF BROKEN PHYSICAL HEALTH:** Lamentations 3:4 He has aged my flesh and my skin, And broken my bones.
2. **God's promised Hope helps me face the PAIN OF DEEP EMOTIONAL STRAIN:** Lamentations 3:5 He has besieged me And surrounded me with bitterness and woe.
3. **God's promised Hope helps me face the PAIN OF PERIODS OF DARK DEPRESSION:** Lamentations 3:6 He has set me in dark places Like the dead of long ago.
4. **God's promised Hope helps me face the PAIN OF DESPERATION AND BURDEN OF BEING TRAPPED:** Lamentations 3:7 He has hedged me in so that I cannot get out; He has made my chain heavy.
5. **God's promised Hope helps me face the PAIN OF FEELING OUT OF TOUCH, DISTANT FROM GOD AND LEFT BEHIND IN LIFE:** Lamentations 3:8 Even when I cry and shout, He shuts out my prayer.
6. **God's promised Hope helps me face the PAIN OF FRUSTRATION AND CONFUSION:** Lamentations 3:9 He has blocked my ways with hewn stone; He has made my paths crooked.
7. **God's promised Hope helps me face the PAIN OF ANXIETY AND SADNESS:** Lamentations 3:17 You have moved my soul far from peace; I have forgotten prosperity.
8. **God's promised Hope helps me face the PAIN OF PHYSICAL WEAKNESS AND HOPELESSNESS:** Lamentations 3:18 And I said, "My strength and my hope Have perished from the Lord."
9. **God's promised Hope helps me face the PAIN OF BITTER AFFLICTION AND AIMLESSNESS:** Lamentations 3:19 Remember my affliction and roaming, The wormwood and the gall.

Now look at the crescendo. It is not Jeremiah collapsing into despair, it is Jeremiah:

Hoping in our God of Faithfulness

What a God we serve. And like He offers in Lamentations, allow God to be what you need to make it through life on hopeless earth. Whatever lies ahead in the world speeding towards the end of days—God offers us hope.

*Lamentations 3:21-25 This I recall to my mind, **Therefore I have hope** [hupomeno]. 22 Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. 23 They are new every morning; **Great is Your faithfulness.** 24 "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "**Therefore I hope in Him!**" 25 The Lord is good to **those who wait** [hupomeno] for Him, To the soul who seeks Him.*

Whatever comes into your life this week, this month, or this year—God offers hope. Let Him weave your weaknesses like fragile fibers in with the countless strands of His promises in the Scriptures and stretch and twist you into waiting hope.

And then when the troubles only increase, let Him bring you a fresh portion of His hope and goodness as we wait, **hupomeno**, enduringly hope in HIM!

Living the Life of Hope Daily

Here is a check up to see if you are taking steps to live a life of hope. First, open your purse or wallet today and check—is there a Gospel tract in there? Second, flip through your Bible, are there any new verses marked, underlined, and noted because they have blessed your heart? Third, did you break into an overflow of praise to God while you read or listened to the news this week? Those who are headed towards Finishing Hopefully in a Despairing World should be doing all three!

Why not get started in three simple habits to Finish Hopefully for the Glory of God:

1. **Share a tract with the Gospel Message:** if you do not have a Gospel tract in your wallet or purse, how will you ever obey Christ's command to be a vital part in sharing the Gospel with every person on Earth?
2. **Share an encouragement with a verse of Scripture:** each day try to find, mark, and note a verse that speaks to your heart, and try at least once each week to unleash the powerful encouragement of that verse on someone else by sharing it with them!
3. **Read the news with Prophetic glasses:** If you don't remember the 10 trends that Jesus said would be all operating at His Return, go back and review the

What's Next Series and then each time you see one of those trends in the news:
REJOICE, our Redeemer draws closer!

Finally, all of this living is an overflow of a life of worship. Join me in offering worship to the God who is Faithful and showers us with His daily portion of Living hope!

Please open in your hymnbooks to a testimony, that became a song based on Lamentations 3. It is hymn # 43

Great is Thy Faithfulness

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be.

Refrain

Great is Thy faithfulness!
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Refrain

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!