



HOPE
OHIO
COLUMBUS

LeaveAMark

A 20 DAY
DEVOTIONAL

FROM LeaveAMark

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FROM LeaveAMark

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Columbus, OH 43207
LeaveAMark.org

DAY 1

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” 1 Peter 1:3-5

Our hope is alive because the Source of our hope is alive. For the child of God, hope is more than a desire for something good to happen in the future. Biblical hope is a confident expectation for something good for the future. We see in 1 Peter 1:3-5 that our confidence does not rest in the circumstances of this life but rather in an inheritance that awaits us in heaven because Jesus rose from the dead! Read these verses again and stop for a moment and thank God for what they say about your inheritance as a child of God. Ask God to remind you, even in the darkest moments of this life, that as a child of God you have a secure hope that this world cannot take away. Chose to live today by faith in the finished work of Jesus that gives you a living hope!

DAY 2

“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.” Colossians 3:1-2

As a follower of Christ we have 2 options about where to “set our minds;” on things above (heavenly) or things below (earthly). This idea of “setting our minds” comes from a Greek word that literally means to have your whole disposition oriented toward something. Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, reminds us that if we have truly trusted Christ as Savior it changes our whole disposition. We have a different perspective, think different thoughts, desire different things, and live a different way. It is so easy to “lose hope” when our disposition is oriented by the value system of this world. Stop for a moment today and take a careful look at what your mind is set on and ask God to show you areas where you are consumed with what this world says you should value rather than having your mind set on Christ. Confess those areas to Him and repent of them. Chose to orient your whole life toward the things that glorify God.

DAY 3

“Having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His great might.” Ephesians 1:18-19

Our eyes and our hearts can play tricks on us. Difficult circumstances that we see around us can cloud our perspective and the roller coaster ride our emotions take us on at times can leave us feeling overwhelmed. I love that this Scripture calls us to an outlook that sees beyond circumstances and emotions. Our perspective as a follower of Christ should be based on the HOPE that we have been called to something so much better than temporary circumstances and changing emotions. We have an inheritance in heaven that this world cannot take away, and we are held secure by a power that is far greater than this world. Stop for a moment today to examine whether you are trying to find hope in your own strength or whether you are resting in the strength of your Heavenly Father who has already provided everything you will ever need. Thank Him for His strength that is working for you and for the inheritance that is yours as His child. Choose today to interpret your circumstances and emotions based on the truth of what God’s Word says about you rather than let your circumstances and emotions direct your life.

DAY 4

“For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.” 2 Corinthians 4:17-18

There is no denying that we live in a fallen world. A fallen world means that we will face affliction. There is no escaping that reality. As Christians we don't bury our heads in the sand and live as if the trials won't come, but rather we choose to remember the important truth of this Scripture as we walk through them. Meditate on the beauty of this passage today. Your affliction is “light and momentary.” You are being prepared for a “glory beyond all comparison” that will last for eternity. Allow God's Spirit to breathe hope into you with these truths. Lay the afflictions that you are wrestling with today at the feet of Jesus and choose to set your heart on the eternal glory that is yours as the Child of the King.

DAY 5

“Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure.” 1 John 3:2-3

“Beloved, we are God’s children now...” Our human minds cannot comprehend the richness of even the first words of this passage. There is no greater hope for us as sinful, broken people than to know that the very moment we put our faith in Christ’s work of redemption we become children of God! As incredible as this truth is, the beauty of the gospel is that it only gets better for the child of God. Our hope rests in the reality that Christ is returning, and when He does we will be made whole in the presence of our Savior! The sin that we wrestle with is now gone! The issues that plague our physical bodies are gone! The sorrow and grief that a broken world has brought into our lives is gone! The famous hymn writer, Fanny Crosby, said it like this, “But purer and higher and greater will be, our wonder, our transport, when Jesus we see.” Until the day that He returns we have the amazing privilege of looking into the face of Jesus as we read His Word. Stop for a moment today and meditate on the truth of this Scripture. What does it teach your about our Savior, Jesus Christ? Spend time in prayer thanking God that you are His child, that He is at work in your life now, and that there is coming a day when you will see Him face to face! Allow the future that awaits you as a child of God to impact the way you live your life today.

DAY 6

“What shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?” Romans 8:31-32

We established at the beginning of our “20 days of hope” journey that biblical hope is a confident expectation for something good in the future. This passage reminds us where that confidence comes from. The death of Jesus Christ on the cross that should have been ours, shouts to us that God is for us! If God the Father allowed God the Son to suffer and die on the cross so that our sins could be forgiven and we could enter into a relationship with Him, there is no possible way that He will ever forget us or abandon us. He is the only one who can condemn us and instead chose to allow His Son to pay our debt so we could be set free. Stop right now and rejoice that God is for you! Allow His Word to remind you that you have been given “all things” in Christ that you need to enjoy fellowship with your Creator and Redeemer! In moments today when life seems overwhelming stop and pray this promise from Scripture to remind your heart just how much your Heavenly Father loves you!

DAY 7

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, ‘For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.’ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:35-39

We have all heard the question, maybe we have even asked it in the midst of a really dark moment in our lives, “If God really loved me, why would I be going through _____ right now?” The absence of trials in our lives is not the proof of God’s love. The presence of trials in our lives is proof that sin has corrupted the perfect world that God made. The proof of God’s love is that He does not leave us to walk through trials and tribulations alone but promises to walk through them with us and to redeem us from this sinful world. The proof of God’s love rests in the finished work of Jesus Christ for you and me. Our hope is that NOTHING can separate us from His love because He conquered every enemy of our lives. Stop today and celebrate that your victory doesn’t depend on what is going on in the circumstances of this life, but rather your victory rests in a hope that this sinful world cannot touch. You are a child of the King! The love of your Heavenly Father will never leave you! Find hope in this promise today! Live as a conqueror because the enemy of your soul has been defeated by the Lover of your soul!

DAY 8

“The mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to His saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Colossians 1:26-27

When we look through the lens of the gospel, the past 2000 years of human history have been the most hopeful that the world has ever known. Prior to the incarnation of Christ we read the Old Testament Scriptures and see a promise of hope that was to come. Everything about the promise of Christ was concealed in the pages of the Old Testament. Then when Jesus, God in the flesh, stepped into time the promise of hope was no longer concealed but rather revealed so that all might know that Holy God made a way for us to receive eternal life! Our hope isn't just that Jesus came, but rather our hope is that by trusting in Him alone for salvation we have His Spirit IN us! Our human minds cannot even begin to grasp how rich and beautiful and incredible it is that the Spirit of God resides IN us. Pause throughout your day today and meditate on how blessed you are that God chose to reveal His Son so that you could experience the riches of salvation. As a follower of Jesus how can you better reflect the glory of the One who lives within you? The “hope of glory” that dwells in you needs to shine through you so that others might see the hope they need which is found only in Jesus.

DAY 9

“And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” Philippians 1:6

One of the most damaging lies that a child of God can believe is the one that says “I need Jesus to save me but I have to depend on my own strength to keep myself saved.” People who believe this lie will live frustrated, defeated, and hopeless lives because it is impossible for any of us to live a godly life in our own strength. Every time we yield to the same old temptation that seems to jump up and grab us at the very moment we are at our weakest, every time we have to struggle with the consequences of a mistake that we (or someone else) made, or anytime we go through a trial that shakes us to our core it is easy to lose hope because we don’t have the strength within ourselves to keep going. Today I hope you see the precious promise of this Scripture. The good work of sanctification (making you more like Christ in your daily life) that God began in you the moment you trusted Jesus as your Savior, is a work that HE will complete in you. You don’t complete it in your own strength. You yield and surrender to Him and HE does the work. How incredible the promise we read in this verse that reminds us that God ALWAYS finishes what HE starts!! As you go through your day, ask God to reveal areas of your life where you need to yield and surrender control to Him. Rest in the promise that through the strength of God’s Spirit at work within you, your life is a work in progress that HE will complete.

DAY 10

***“But now thus says the LORD, He who created you, O Jacob, He who formed you, O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.”
Isaiah 43:1-2***

There is so much confidence for the child of God in these verses because these verses teach us so much about His nature. He not only created, He created as an artist forming a one of a kind masterpiece. He redeems us, He knows our names, He never leaves us alone in the midst of trials and He promises ultimate victory over them. As we have already seen in our journey of hope, confidence in what God has done, is doing, and is going to do is the difference between what the world calls hope (a wish) and biblical hope (confidence in God). Spend a few moments today meditating on the richness of who He is. In moments where fear tries to rob you of hope remember the character of your Heavenly Father! You can trust Him.

DAY 11

“Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to Him who has no might He increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for 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.” Isaiah 40:28-31

There is not one of us who hasn't had a moment where we have felt like we had nothing left to give. Emotionally, mentally, physically and even spiritually. Times of exhaustion can produce some pretty dark and hopeless moments in our lives. How do we cope when the circumstances of life drain our strength? Isaiah tells us the answer is to WAIT for the LORD. How do we wait on the Lord? Prayer, Bible study, and meditating upon God's Word are essential. To wait on the Lord we need a heart that is responsive to the Word of God, a focus on the things of heaven, and patience rooted in faith. Waiting on the Lord is all about actively seeking Him. Have you been trying to navigate life in your own strength and as a result you are feeling weary and hopeless? Begin renewing your strength today by renewing your commitment to waiting on the Lord.

DAY 12

***“The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. ‘The LORD is my portion’ says my soul, ‘therefore I will hope in Him.’”
Lamentations 3:22-24***

Feelings of hopelessness can overwhelm us because of circumstances we deal with that occur through no fault of our own. Sometimes feelings of hopelessness can be even more crippling because they stem from the consequences of our choices. Has guilt, regret, or shame from continuing to battle the same habits and addictions over and over again left you feeling defeated and hopeless? The promise of these verses speak life and hope! The MERCIES of the Lord never end. A simple way to remember mercy is this, “Mercy is everything God withholds from our life that we deserve.” Aren’t you thankful that Scripture promises that God’s mercy never comes to an end? He demonstrates His love for us by showing mercy to us! You don’t have to stay in the pit of hopelessness because of mistakes you have made. Every day that you wake up is a reminder that you are the recipient of the mercy of God. If you have fallen down, get back up. God is not angry with you. God poured out His wrath toward sin on Jesus so that He could extend mercy to those who call upon Him. Stop today and meditate on all of the ways you can see God’s mercy on display in your life. Rest in His mercy and allow it to breathe hope into you today and everyday!

DAY 13

“The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness; He will quiet you by His love; He will exult over you with loud singing.” Zephaniah 3:17

I love this verse! Everything about it is beyond my comprehension. He is not a God who is far off and distant, He is in our midst. His ability to save and rescue and redeem us is not in question, He will save. God rejoices over us. Wow! The all powerful, holy, creator of the universe rejoices over us as His children. He quiets us with His love. As frail human beings we are so often consumed by fear and worry and doubt, but this picture of our Heavenly Father gives us such comfort to know that He longs to quiet our hearts with His love. As if any one of the things about Him in this verse is not overwhelming enough, we also read that He “sings” over us. I have such great memories as a child of my mom and my grandfather singing to me. When they sang to me I knew they were happy, I knew I was loved, I felt secure. It was such a special thing to me that when I became a dad I did the same thing with my daughters. There is something so intimate about someone singing to (or over) you. All of these pictures of how God feels about us ought to reassure our hearts and cause us to not lose hope. Pause right now and read this verse again and let the words penetrate deep into your heart and mind. Read it several times throughout the day. Perhaps you should commit it to memory. Rejoice that your Heavenly Father loves you in such a powerful way and let it fill you with hope!

DAY 14

“Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.”

Deuteronomy 31:6

Change is difficult. In this passage the children of Israel are at a time of huge transition. Joshua is about to lead them into the Promised Land.

Acquiring the Promised Land would be no easy task. There was a mighty river to cross, a walled city to conquer, giants to defeat, and more. All of this was to be done without their mighty leader, Moses, who had led them through many challenges for the past 40 years. How could they have courage at a time like this? Moses reminds them of an important truth that is essential for us as well. Our hope is not in ourselves or others. God was the one who had led the children of Israel, not Moses. God used Moses and God would use Joshua to carry out His plan.

Individuals can come and go in our lives. Even the best of people can let us down. Our Heavenly Father will never leave us, He will never let us down. Stop and evaluate where you place your hope. Have you been placing it in people rather than the Lord and as a result experienced disappointment when they could not fully meet your needs? The strength and courage to walk through life is found when we place our hope in Christ alone.

DAY 15

“You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in Your word.” Psalm 119:114

When we think of a hiding place and a shield we think about safety and protection. The writer of this Psalm is making it very clear that he is trusting (hoping) in the word of the Lord to watch over and guard his life. This is a great reminder for us today of how essential the Word of God is for our lives. Throughout the Psalms we read about the incredible treasure that the Word of God is for us. God’s Word is our guide (Psalm 119:105). Knowing God’s Word allows us to resist sin (Psalm 119:11). In Psalm 19:7-11 describes all of the blessings that the Word of God brings into our lives. These are just a few, but the message is clear. The hope that we are looking for in our lives will not be found apart from the Word of God. How committed are you to spending time in Scripture? Charles Spurgeon once said, “A Bible that is falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn’t.” If you don’t already have a plan for spending time in God’s Word each day I challenge you to start today. If you are unsure how to do it, we are available to help you here at LeaveAMark.

DAY 16

“O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with Him is plentiful redemption.” Psalm 130:7

This verse speaks to the greatest needs of the human heart; love and redemption. People who are convinced they are in hopeless situations would most likely feel they are lacking one or both of these things. Each of us needs to know that we are loved unconditionally and loved forever. We all need redemption (rescue) from the things in our lives that seek to destroy us. Don't miss the adjectives that describe love and redemption in this verse. God wants us to know that His love is steadfast. As a child of God you are the recipient of a love that is immovable and unchanging. You never have to worry if God is going to love you less or stop loving you altogether. He loves you because He IS love, not because of what you have or haven't done. The Lord also wants you to know that His redemption is plentiful. It is abounding, it is more than enough, it never runs out. How many times have you worried that because you struggle with the same temptations over and over again that one day God is going to give up on you? Don't believe that lie! The precious blood of Jesus purchased your redemption and nothing can separate you from Him. The greatest need of every human heart can ONLY be found in the LORD. In moments where you feel alone or unloved remember the depth of God's love for you. Stop right now and recite or read John 3:16 and rejoice in the beauty of it again. In moments where you are discouraged and defeated thinking your failures are final remember that the mission of God is a rescue mission! Jesus came to seek and to save (redeem) the lost! Don't live in defeat. The blood that saved you from the curse of sin is able to save you from the power of sin. Confess it and seek out other followers of Jesus to walk with you and find victory over those things that try to rob you of experiencing the hope that is yours through Christ!

DAY 17

“All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ‘Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel’ (which means, God with us).” Matthew 1:23

When Matthew is writing his account of the birth of Jesus, he makes sure to remind the reader of an important truth. 700 years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, God gave the prophet Isaiah an incredibly important message to proclaim about HIS plan of redemption that was wrapped up in a name; **Immanuel**. Don't miss what God was communicating 2700 years ago through Isaiah and what He is still communicating today. Jesus IS Immanuel. He is God with us!! God's story of redemption, His message of hope for a broken world is that He is Immanuel. Every other religion in the world is about mankind trying to work their way to God or some kind of perfection. The message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is that He came to us! He stepped into our brokenness and He lived the life of perfection we could not live and He died the death that we deserved so that we could have a right relationship with God. We find so much hope in the fact that He is Immanuel. Stop right now and thank Him that He is, "God with us." How should this truth change the way you live each day?

DAY 18

“For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.” Galatians 5:5

None of us like to wait. We live in a world that is all about instant gratification. We want to watch our favorite TV shows all at once, we order curbside grocery pick-up, and pay extra for same day delivery for our online shopping. Waiting is a bad word in our 21st century vocabulary. Learning to wait, however, is a virtue that a follower of Christ must cultivate. When the Apostle Paul wrote to the Galatian church he reminded them that as followers of Christ they were waiting for the “hope of righteousness.” What does that mean? Paul is explaining that as Christians we don’t attempt to produce perfect righteousness in our lives through our own efforts because our hope is not in ourselves. Instead we are to “eagerly wait” for the day when Christ will complete His work of righteousness in us when He calls us home to heaven or when He returns. Until that day, following Christ is a journey of faith that places hope not in what we do but in what Christ has done for us. Find hope in surrendering to the work of the Holy Spirit as He does the work of sanctification in your life during this time of eagerly waiting. Take time today to examine your own heart and allow God to show you areas where you are trying to do things in your own strength rather than waiting on Him to do His work in you.

DAY 19

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.” Romans 15:13

If we could total the amount of money people spend each year searching to find peace and happiness, I imagine the results would be staggering. There is a need in each and every one of us to have both of these things. The Apostle Paul reminds us in this verse about the source of both. Only God is able to fill us with joy and peace and He does so when we believe (put our hope) in Him. Yet even the ability to hope in Him is a gift of grace that He pours out on us. How amazing is our Heavenly Father! He gives us the ability to hope in Him which is the very thing that fills us with the joy and peace we desperately long for. Are you guilty of looking to something other than God to give you peace and joy? Are you hoping in a career, the amount of money in your bank account, a relationship, entertainment, or a hobby to bring you peace and joy? What adjustments could you make in your life to depend on Christ alone to fill you with these things?

DAY 20

***I sought the LORD, and He answered me and delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to Him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed.”
Psalm 34:4-5***

As we conclude our “20 days of hope” I am reminded of the words of this Psalm. We have learned that biblical hope is a confident expectation in God. Over the last 20 days we have seen many wonderful promises of Scripture that remind us why we can confidently trust in Him. The difference between whether these 20 days were a time when you absorbed a lot of information about hope or whether they were the beginning of experiencing a lifetime of hope comes down to what this verse says the Psalmist did. “I sought the LORD.” Matthew 6:33 says, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

There is a direct correlation between what we seek and hope. Only hope placed in Jesus Christ will not disappoint, so if we are seeking anything other than Him we will find disappointment. The Psalmist said seeking the Lord brought deliverance from fear and shame.

Matthew said that in seeking the Lord we would have all we need. It is so easy to get it backwards. We spend so much of our time and energy seeking things that we think we need, when Scripture teaches us that if we will seek the Lord, He will give us the things we need in this life. As you conclude this 20 day devotional, decide now to keep going. Continue seeking the Lord because it is the key to a lifetime of hope. Seek the Lord through the pages of Scripture each day. Seek the Lord by doing life with other followers of Jesus. Seek the Lord by calling out to Him in prayer. We cannot have a confident expectation in God if we aren't increasing our understanding of who He is. He is the author of hope who created you, who sent His Son to shed His blood to pay the price for your sin, who was buried and rose from the grave to defeat death, who placed His Holy Spirit in you as the seal of the promise He made to never leave you or forsake you, who breathed the pages of Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16) so that you could know the one true Holy God and place your hope in Him alone! As you walk through life continue seeking Him each day and watch as He fills you with hope that will NEVER disappoint!