

Dear Partner,

The bible says that God is love and that God is light. Many people know the bible says “without faith it is impossible to please God.” [Heb 11:6] But sadly, many people do not understand that faith is absolutely useless without hope. Notice the wording carefully in this verse:

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

What is faith the substance of? Things “hoped” for. Pastor Dave Roberson often says it like this, “Without hope, there is nothing for faith to give substance to.” The bible even calls our heavenly Father the “God of hope.”

Rom 15:13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Why is hope so important? One of the best examples of why we need godly hope is Abraham and Sarah. God gave them supernatural “hope” that they would have a baby in their old age. Abraham was 99 and Sarah was 90 years old. There was no “hope” in the natural realm. Sarah had passed the age of the “time of women” meaning, she was no longer ovulating. Abraham’s body is described as “dead” at that age, meaning he no longer had the physical virility to produce offspring. This next passage is so important to understanding how faith and godly hope work together to produce God’s will in the earth:

Rom 4:18-21 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. (19) And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: (20) He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; (21) And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

“Against hope believed in hope.” What does that mean? In the natural, physical realm ... there was no hope. Abraham had to stand against natural “hopelessness” and choose rather to believe in the “hope” that was given to him through God’s word. He chose not to base his belief on his physical circumstances but rather to base his belief on the promise of God alone. This is where faith comes in to manifest the “substance” of the thing that is “hoped” for. Abraham’s faith was simple ... God cannot lie. God is all powerful. God is able to do what He promised. I will believe what God said. Sarah and I will conceive a child in our old age.” And they did!

God’s word is full of promises and each of those promises produces “hope” when we read or hear them. For example, when the lost man hears the gospel for the first time, he receives “hope” that he doesn’t have to spend eternity in hell. Hope alone isn’t enough to save him, however. Hope shows him the promise, the image, the possibility that he can be saved. But then he must act in faith by responding to the gospel, confessing his need for Christ, and receiving Jesus as his Savior. The instant he acts in “faith” to receive Christ, the “substance” of salvation is manifested

from the “hope” of the gospel. The power of God is manifested and he goes from being a child of darkness to a child of light. As Jesus put it ... the man is born of God, born from above, born of the Spirit. Faith brought the substance revealed by hope and the power of God was manifested. I often say it like this: “Faith brings what hope sees. If hope cannot see it ... faith cannot bring it.”

Words produce images in our minds. If I say the word “Chihuahua” you immediately think of a very small dog. But if I say “Big, black, vicious, Rottweiler” you have a completely different image of dog in your mind. Hope has everything to do with what we “see” on the inside. God’s Word is full of supernatural hope because it produces images in our minds. God has not changed. God’s power has not diminished since the time He made promises to Abraham. God has not become a liar over the centuries. His power is still the same to manifest the “substance” that faith produces from godly hope.

We must never let the world tell us what is and is not possible. Like Abraham, we need to let God’s Word define our hope and stand “against” any natural hope to the contrary. We must constantly give glory to God and stand strong in faith knowing that what God has promised, He is also able to perform. Let us start off the new year right by spending lots of time in the Word of God and in prayer. As we do, the God of Hope will fill us with joy and peace in believing.

Mark 9:23 Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things *are* possible to him that believe

Sue and I love you and appreciate you. We thank God for your generous and giving heart. God bless you!

Your friend and co-laborer,

Gary Carpenter