

J Slavich - Hope

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All right, well, we're just going to go over our agenda real quick. We're going to talk about faith and hope real quick. That's important. Just serve as a basis for us going in here, and then we're going to share some just different hopeful concepts.

And you see them on the screen here. Hope for the unconsecrated, Hope for young consecrated. We're going to venture into some unsolicited advice. Hope for the earth, hope for Israel, and hope for a sinful world.

So let's start with faith. It's hard to talk about hope without talking about faith. Faith and hope have a relationship with each other, and our discussion today about hope assumes some things. It assumes a faith in God, assumes faith in His Word, in His promises and his son.

You know, Hebrews is a great book to see where this interrelationship between faith and hope is spelled out and to define faith and some of its requirements, let's look at Hebrews 11. 1. Now, faith is a well grounded assurance of that for which we hope and a conviction of the reality of things which we do not see, and so when we look at that, and we like the Weymouth translation on here because a well grounded assurance, a conviction in the reality of things we do not see, and we'll get into that a little bit more when we talk a little bit more about hope, but think about those things.

That's an interesting thought from Weymouth. I like how he phrases that, and then in Hebrews 11:6 we get some additional requirements. Without faith it is impossible to please him being God. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek Him.

So, you know, it's impossible to please God without faith.

So we have to believe in him and he's going to reward us for seeking after Him. So those are some just basic elements of faith, and now when we talk about hope, we might ask what is the basis for our hope? And we really appreciated a talk by Brother Bill Gill, the basis for hope given at the Hope 2024 convention, and I really recommend you looking it up on Christian questions.

And we enjoyed it greatly, and the main point that we heard from Brother Bill was that the resurrection of Jesus is the basis for our hope, and when I heard this, I said, oh yeah, that makes a lot of sense. I agree, and you know, if we look in Hebrews 6 and going back to Hebrews, we see that God promise to Abraham is secured by two things.

First by an oath, and second by the fact that God does not lie. So we have to have faith in God, right? That one, he's given his word and two, he doesn't lie, and so by these two immutable things, it says in Hebrews, it says the hope set before us, which we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and entering into the veil which is within the veil, whither as a forerunner Jesus entered for us. It's Jesus the anchor of our hope, right?

And I sort of tempted to have a picture up here of the tabernacle, like a side cut view and say there's a new piece of furniture in there, right? It's an anchor. This is right here. It's our anchor for our soul. It's that Jesus gone before us, he's opened that new and living way for us.

And when we examine that basis for hope, it means we have to have a faith and assurance in God that he had the capability to raise someone from the dead. Not only from the dead to life, but from

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earthly body to a spiritual body. We have to have faith and assurance in God's word that provides the promise that he would raise Jesus after three days, just like in the sign of Noah or Jonah, and in Jesus own words, right? That the temple would be rebuilt in three days.

What about faith in God's promises? That God promised a seed that would crush the serpent's head. Jesus is that seed and faith in Jesus himself, that Jesus remained perfect and sinless until the end of his earthly life to pay the ransom price and that his resurrection was proof of God's acceptance.

So it seems that our hope, our main part of our hope is based on that belief in the resurrection of Jesus. Well, is that a well founded hope? You know there can be, we can have hopes in life. We can hope to be a billionaire, the president of the country. Are those well founded beliefs or hopes?

Not really. This hope has a well founded belief. Apostles and the disciples preached about it for years on end, facing tribulation after tribulation. Let me put in the words of somebody, Brother Brad Sweeney had sent me this quote, and it's from Charles Colson, and I wasn't familiar with him, but he was part of the Watergate scandal and went to prison for it.

And I think he had a conversion while in prison, and this is a quote subsequent to this says, I know the resurrection is a fact and Watergate proved it to me. How? Because 12 men testified they had. Oh, how?

Because 12 men testified they had seen Jesus raised from the dead. Then they Proclaimed the truth for 40 years, never once denying it. Everyone was beaten, tortured, stoned and put in prison. They would not have endured that if it weren't true. Watergate embroiled 12 of the most powerful men in the world, and they couldn't keep a lie for three weeks.

You're telling me 12 apostles could keep a lie for 40 years? Absolutely impossible.

All right, we have our basis for hope covered. Let's talk about the hope for the unconsecrated. How can we give comfort and encouragement to our unconsecrated friends? We have many friends of the truth. Are we able to comfort them with words, especially in this time, if we think we are in the time of the end?

This scripture in Zephaniah 2, 3 is special to me in this way. Seek the Lord all you humble the land who do his just commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility. Perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the anger of the Lord. That's a powerful promise.

What does it require of somebody to be hidden on that day of anger to seek righteousness and humility? How about another promise? The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble. He knows those who take refuge in him.

Do you think that might be a comfort and encouragement to those that for whatever reason, if they have not looked in their lives or been called by God to consecrate, but if they are still seeking after God, this can be a comfort. What about this principle in Psalm 34, 14, 15, 17? Turn from evil and do good. Seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are attentive to their cry.

The righteous cry out and the Lord hears them. He delivers them from all their trouble. Psalm 34, 14, 15, 17.

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What not to rely on. You know, in Ezekiel 7:19 it says, they shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed. Their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord. So I don't think it's material possessions in the end times that's going to provide comfort and shelter.

Do the right thing and remain humble. It's character. Isn't that interesting? Possessions versus character. God says, I want character.

You know, that's a message of hope that we can share with others. I even had a recent chance when we were as we were getting ready for this talk and we're getting ready for general convention and I was a work call with somebody and for whatever reason we were talking about some of the challenges of issues going on right now, somehow we started talking about end times and sort of prophecies and where we think we are, and I shared, you know, I think there's a. There's a hope. There's a hope for a better day is coming.

But we're going to go through some painful challenges right now, and the more we're talking, somehow we talked about maybe the financial markets or investing in gold, and, you know, we brought up the idea of there's hope for those that do what is right and remain humble, and we were on the teams meeting. He looked up at me and he said, do you see what's written on my shirt?

He says, life is good. He said, I picked this shirt because I was going to go have lunch with another co worker today, and I was trying to pick him up because he had lost someone dear to him. He said, I wanted to remind him that life is good, and it just reminded me when we go out with a message of comfort and hope to the world, they're going to respond.

People want to do good. People are seeking to get to receive that message and show how they are also sharing that message with others.

Share the message of do the right thing and remain humble.

Hope for the young consecrated. You know, at the beginning of our walk, sometimes we can feel overwhelmed.

We might think, is there, we might question, is there enough time for me? And, you know, if the time is drawing short, is there going to be enough time?

Paul says in Philippians 1:6, being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:6.

He will perfect it. He will complete it. Yes, there's enough time. Brethren, if God has called you, he is able to finish that work.

How about if you get those feelings of, I'm not good enough, I'm not ready, I don't have enough experience to do whatever has been laid in front of me. Okay, how about, I can't do it on my own. Even better.

I can do everything through him who gives me strength. Philippians 4:13. It's okay if you can't do it on your own. It's even better if you can't do it on your own. The Lord wants you to rely on the strength of Jesus to help you in your walk.

I've had to learn that over and over again. I'm still learning that.

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It's okay if you can't do it on your own. It's okay if you don't have the strength. It's okay if you don't feel good enough. The Lord is able to build up our weaknesses and use us. So what should I be doing?

It seems so overwhelming. I remember as a young consecrated individual sitting, we'd have testimony meeting occasionally in our house and the brethren would be here and everybody more experience than me. I'm looking at my bookcase, there's all this truth literature, all this Bible information there. So how am I going to know all that? How am I going to get to all these places?

This seems impossible. What should I be doing? Paul again answers this in Philippians 3, 13, 14. One thing I do, forgetting what is behind and straying toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Well, what is this goal?

Love. That's the goal. You've heard it from this platform over and over at this convention.

The goal is perfect love. You know, I reminded of a story that my mother told me when she was first consecrated and she was home as a few months after she consecrated, and she said she was so overwhelmed, what am I going to do? And nobody goes around to ask. She opened up a book and she found a sermon.

It was one of brother Russell's sermons, and she in the very first paragraph, it talked about putting on perfect love and focus, being focused on love. He says, oh, I can work on loving others. That seemed possible and doable. Now we're not going to be at that goal at the very start.

It's a progression. How do we make it there? First, we start with a duty. Love to God, His Son and our fellow man. This is the love we ought to give God because He created us, and to His Son because He loved us first, and to our fellow man, because this is God's will.

Second, not just because it is our duty, but we begin to love God because of his character and all the righteous principles for which he stands. Third, we love our brother finally, and we heard about this this week, didn't we? About loving our brethren. That can be a challenge sometimes.

Finally, we reach a mark of perfect love. Agape love.

Brother Tim Krupa spoke about that, didn't he? A selfless love, and this is how I define it to help me in my mind of what that means. A love that expects nothing in return. So trying to do the most and the best for somebody else and expecting nothing in return.

This perfect love is not only reserved for God, His Son and our brethren. We also must love all of mankind, even our enemies.

So we've given some pieces of hope, hopefully to the ones that maybe some of our young unconsecrated or those that are newly in the truth and working through their walk, and now we want to offer some unsolicited advice and more geared to some of our younger brother, and I sort of chuckled because I had this in my outline and I was listening to the panel the other day and brother Obi and brother Nathan, they said be careful about the advice we give the brother.

Duly noted.

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I am not going to try to give advice on all of these things, but I see these that we've listed here as challenges. Challenges especially they're challenges that everybody can face, but I think they're challenges that our younger people can face.

Work. What career do I take? How about relationships? Relationships, just like it could be in the workplace, it could be with friends, it could be with girlfriend, boyfriend, husband, wife. Families.

Do I start a family? I have a young family. What do I do? I almost put social media up here, but I just put trial of comparison instead because I think that's what it is. I think it has an old right.

We might have called it by a different name, Keeping up with the Joneses. I think that's a lot of what social media is. It's just a trial of comparison. I'm sitting here and I mean, my LinkedIn is a great example. Wow, look at all these promotions and everybody's being so celebrated.

They're doing fantastic. That's wonderful. Oh, man. I'm still doing the same job I was doing five years ago.

How does that make me feel? Right? It's that like, it's that immediate comparison in the moment. How about battling sin and temptation, addictions, compulsions, bad habits, depression, anxiety from either what's going on in the world, maybe as part of what we are, other mental health challenges. How do we handle some of these things?

What's the advice to give?

I'm going to start with the bottom three. One of the key things is asking for help. It's okay to ask for help. Doesn't mean you're weak. It doesn't mean you're not good enough.

It doesn't mean you can't do it. You're not pleasing to God. Ask God for help. Ask your brethren for help. Ask for professional help if you need it.

It's okay. People like to help other people. It's good work. I'm going to give one quick example here. I graduated college.

I thought, I'm doing pretty good. I got this degree, I'm going to go out in the world. They're going to be lucky to have me.

And then I moved to Orlando, Florida without any hope of a job or prospects of a job. I was going to get married. That's what I was really focused on, and I went for six months and I couldn't find a job. I mean, I couldn't find a job selling candy in the mall like a holiday time.

That's the level of I couldn't find a job. I finally found a job and I was making about 25 cents above minimum wage, packaging up Internet shipment orders. I said, okay, this wasn't where I was planning to be, and I was there for a few months, and then I think my father in law was concerned about what his, you know, the marriage, who he was sending his daughter off to marry and said, why don't you apply for this job?

I said, it's for computers. It's for a computer operator. I don't know anything about computers. He said, why don't you just apply for it? Okay, I'll apply for it.

I always joke that I was the most qualified of the unqualified candidates, and thankfully or miraculously or also through brother Bob's intervention, I'll never know. We got the job, and then

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we proceeded to sit for a year and a half in a very cold environment. It was about 60 degrees and it sounded like this.

It was a server room. It was the data center, and I got there and I was maybe a year in and couldn't meet on Sundays, I couldn't see. I didn't get to see the brother. I had one day off where Anna and I had together and I had a job.

I was thankful for that, right? But at the same time, man, I was down. This isn't what I was planning. This isn't. I wasn't.

How did I get here?

What choice did I make to get to this point?

And then when an opportunity came up, I finally got to the point where I. Right before I sent that resume and hit send, I prayed and I remember praying, saying, lord, may your will be done, and the resume went, and guess what? If I'm remembering right, the door got shut right in my face. Said, you haven't been working here long enough to be able to apply for another internal job.

Oh, okay. Guess that was a no. All right. Another opportunity came up. Will train you.

Okay, sounds good. When do I, you know what, can I start? Okay, I show up first day and say we have one job. There's three of you. None of you are qualified.

It's only a senior position. Oh, okay, how are we going to go from here? And then all of a sudden, I remember I finishing the interviewing process for that position, another position, and I got in the car, literally to come to general convention. I looked at Ann, I said, I don't know if I want that job. It was sort of a tough, rigorous process to get through that.

And then we got here to general convention. Somebody else called and said, hey, we want to offer you another job, and so all of a sudden, from doors being closed in my face or me not being where I want to be now I had two open doors. Which door was I supposed to go through?

Prayer was important. We won't drag on on individual stories from our side on each one of these, but we want to give you three pieces of advice. 1. Pray.

God has done all this so that we will look for him and reach out and find Him. He isn't far from any of us. Acts 17:27. Pray to God to ask his will be done in your life. Your decision or what direction to take.

This scripture is taken from Paul's discourse to pagan Athenians on Mars Hill. God wants us to reach out to him, to search after him, to seek his will in our lives. If you are seeking, and that's a good question to ask, whose will are we seeking? We're seeking our will. Who do we want to please?

Our own? Somebody else? Or God? So if we pray to God and seek his will and his direction, all that story, that Taikima job. This was long before I consecrated another piece of advice.

Search the Scriptures. Everything in the Scriptures is God's word. All of it is useful for teaching and helping people and for correcting them and showing them how to live. 2nd Timothy 3:16. The Bible is the best instruction book you will ever receive on how to live your life.

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I challenge you the next time you have a decision you are making or you are not sure how you should respond, search the Scriptures. Study it out inside the whole instruction book. Did you know there's a quick advice section? Like a quick reference section? It's called Proverbs.

Try reading one chapter a day. You will complete it in a month. To become familiar with scriptural advice, I have a lot of stories along this line. So if you want to ask another time, I'm happy to share more stories where that's been so helpful. Ask for help.

As I said before, it is okay to ask for help. This may seem like an odd scripture to pull in for this topic and it says, do your best to come to me quickly. Get Mark and Bring him with you because he is helpful to me. This is 2nd Timothy 4, 9, 11. The great apostle Paul wrote this at the end of his ministry.

Apostle Paul needed help, and he wasn't afraid to ask. Ask God for help. Ask the brethren for help. If you need some type of professional help, ask.

All right, let's get into more general hope topics. How about hope for the earth, Hope for the land, the water and the air. You know, I think this can trouble us a lot when we see pollution occurring in our world, when we see the challenges that our earth is facing. I know Anna and I have gotten asked before by a dear brother saying, are you concerned about for yourselves and your children and what's going on in the environment? I think Anna and I's perspective on it has been.

We know that there's a promise that things are going to work out. I don't know that abstains us from not doing anything right now. I'm not going to get into that. We. What I want to remind us of is from Acts 3:21, that there's a time, the times of restitution is of all things, and God's spoken of it through all this holy prophet.

Since the world began, everything is going to be restored. It might be hard to look at right now sometimes, but the work of the kingdom is to restore all of it. How do we know that? Psalm 67, 5, 6. Let the people praise thee, O God, let all the people praise thee.

Then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us. Almost gives us some timing of when that increase might occur. Right? When is everybody going to praise God? It's going to be sometime toward the end of the millennial kingdom.

I would think there's going to be a process to get to there. Think about what will have to transform in our world to allow that to occur. We had a fun opportunity at the Bible camp with the teenagers and one of their studies, and they got to envision what work has to be done on the earth in the kingdom. It was fascinating to hear their example. So ask sometime, you know, what are you going to do about the water?

What about housing? What about food? The earth will give her increase. Of course. Isaiah 35 is.

We know this promise very well. Thirsty deserts will be glad. Barren lands will celebrate and blossom with flowers. Deserts will bloom everywhere and sing joyful songs. Water will rush through the desert.

Scorching sand will turn into a lake, and thirsty ground will flow with fountains. You know, sometimes now it's hard to envision that because we almost seeing the reverse of that in some places, right. I think of in the Sahara, how it's like margins are expanding. The Sahel, it's getting drier and drier. We have a promise that it's going to get better, brother.

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God promises that earth will be restored. We can share that promise with others.

Now, this has been a topic of our conversation at convention this week, hasn't it? Hope for Israel. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she hath received a Jehovah's hand double for all her sins. Isaiah 40:2.

I really had to put this in here because, you know, the other day we're. Every once in a while we'll turn on the nightly news. Sometimes I don't like to, and that night we turned it on. There was a video of.

I don't know if this reminds you, there's a. A train, a subway car in New York City asking the Zionists to get out, and everybody's a Zionist. Get out, and there's times now in our world where I have to turn and look to my children and tell them this isn't normal and this is not good.

We grew up experiencing things, having that news brought right to our kitchen or living room, and growing up, but not in the rapidity and the speed at which it is today. I would say that that's different, and the tenor of what's being spoken against Israel and the Jewish people is hard to watch. But that doesn't mean there's not hope.

There's hope. Promise. A promise of a permanent regathering to their land.

Amos 9, 14, 15, and I will bring back the captivity of my people Israel.

They shall no more be plucked up out of their land, which I have given them, saith Jehovah, thy God.

We know we're at a time where they're being regathered. We see it with our very eyes. The incredible thing about the promise is that it says, never again.

That's a promise to share.

Is it just in one place in Amos? Do we need more verses? Oh, good, there's more verses. It's throughout the Old Testament and the prophecies that this is promised to the nation of Israel. How about a promise of God's protection?

Ezekiel 34:28, and they shall no more be a prey to the nations. Neither shall the beasts of the earth devour them. But they shall dwell securely, and none shall make them afraid. Zechariah 14:3.

Then shall Jehovah go forth and fight against those nations as when he fought in the day of battle. Now, that last one, I believe some of the brethren talked about a future time of final conflict. I think that last one is pointed toward that. But that nation that's being regathered will never be plucked up again. Eventually, God will fight in a way that they will recognize that he is their God.

More verses for it, too.

Promised a new covenant. Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, with the house of Judah.

I will put in my law. Put my law in their inward parts and in their hearts. Will I write it? It's the new covenant, isn't it? What's he going to write there?

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The law of love, the one we're working on right now. That's why it's so important for us to learn that law.

Because while we're working on putting love in our heart, we're going to be helping the whole world, and it's going to start with Israel. More verses. Yep.

It's full of the promises of a new. Of a new covenant with them. Promise that the nations will seek out Israel to learn of God. I think to me this is one of the most magnificent ones. I can hear certain brethren saying this scripture right now.

Zechariah 8, 22, 23. Yea, many peoples and strong nations. Nations shall come to seek Jehovah of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of Jehovah. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts in those days it shall come to pass that 10 men shall take hold out of all the language of the nations. They shall take hold of the skirt of him.

That is a Jew saying, we will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you. I haven't seen this happen yet. I'm looking forward to when it does. It's going to happen. This isn't the only promise.

We have promises throughout that says, let's go up to the house of the Lord, up to the people of Jacob, right, that believe in God. Let's go learn from them.

Isn't that going to be a marvelous time?

How about hope for a sinful world? And this, brethren, is a hope that you know very well about.

1 Timothy 2:4. There is one God and one mediator between God and men. The man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified. In due time.

In due time we will. All the world will eventually see this. But that price he paid wasn't just for us. It wasn't just for a select group. It was for everyone because of that price he paid.

Jesus himself said this before he died. Do not marvel at this for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out. How powerful is that? That's some hope. 2nd Corinthians 5:18 through 19.

And this was brother Obi or no, Brother Tom, I think was talking about this, that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them, and he's committed to us the message of reconciliation.

Why does God allow Satan to have influence during the period of the present evil world? This was a question asked by one of our young people in Orlando and thought it went well with this portion of hope. It's because God allows Satan influence now so we all can learn how much sin hurts. What is the best way to learn? We can learn through observation, seeing what others do.

We can learn through instruction. We can learn through experience. I think God shows us that experience is the best teacher. Think about playing an instrument like a piano. Do you learn best about it by reading a book about it or watching someone else do it or listening to someone play it?

No, actually sitting down and playing the instrument. That's how you learn. Bess, do you have a memory in your mind how you know what hot means? We asked some of the teenagers that came

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up the other day. Can you think of that time when you could take hot and actually think about the experience of what that meant?

For me, it was touching a curling iron accidentally while trying to dry my hand from my mother's curling iron. I got like, a mark for, like the next year or two. Oval mark on my wrist. Ouch, that hurt. Hot.

Don't do that again. I think God is providing the lesson of right and wrong to all people now by allowing Satan to have influence during this present evil world. In Romans 7, the apostle Paul tells us that the law was used to instruct who was right and wrong, and through each individual's experience, they learned how difficult it was to keep the law. Through his experience, Paul is able to say, now we can see how terrible an evil sin really is.

Adam and Eve would provide us another clear biblical example. You must not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, or you will surely die.

Why did God allow Satan to tempt them? Because God knew the instructions alone were not enough. We needed the experience to go along with it, so we would never want to repeat that experience again. Just like touching the hot iron or stovetop we would never desire to feel burned like that again. Mankind will have a chance to learn how much sin hurts.

Sin hurts us. If it hurts others, it is committed against it is costly. It clearly says in the Bible that the price of sin is death. That is why people die. If this were the end of the story, this would be a sad place to end.

But it's not. God has a plan. He has given us hope. God plans for all things to be restored on the earth. He plans for the resurrection of the dead.

He plans to bring back every willing human being into harmony with Him. When I think of all the pain and suffering that has been brought about by sin, I think of this promise of the kingdom. God's home is now with his people. He will live with them, and they will be his own. Yes, God will make his home among his people.

He will wipe all tears from their eyes, and there will be no more death, suffering, crying or pain. These things of the past are gone forever. We have a message of hope. A better day is coming.

Mankind's long experience with sin, sickness and death is coming to an end. There will be some difficult days ahead, but a better day will come. One where righteousness will rule. Death, sickness, sorrow and pain will be no more. We need to share that message.

I'll throw this up here real quick. We're running out of time to do any type of review. So for each of these bullets, we tried to review for you, where we've gone, what we can do, and we'll share with you this final scripture. 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.