5/18/20 Devotional

Let us ponder the word of God from both the Old and New Testaments.

*“For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him.”* Ps. 62:5

*“Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God.”* Ps.146:5

*“Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.”* Ro.8:24-25.

What do you hope for? How important is hope in your life? We humans are three dimensional beings; we live in the past, the present and the future. We find at different periods of our lives that we might spend more time in one dimension than in the others. Sometimes our energy is backward looking in remembering and at other times we focus our energy in the future. All three are necessary in the human experience.

We unquestionably need the dimension of hope. Hope is essential. The opposite of hope is hopelessness, despair. We know that hopelessness brings on depression. We cannot live in the darkness of despair for long. God created us with the capacity to hope in the future. God desires that we be hopeful persons.

What is hope? It is a mode of anticipating the future. It may be a general or particular expectation of the future. We of course have hopes that the current situation with the Corona Virus will be safely resolved soon so we can all get back to leading a “normal” life.

As believers we look to the future from the perspective of our Christian hope. The Bible often speaks of our hope in God. God’s covenant with Israel and God’s incarnation in Jesus Christ is the basis for our hope. In Psalm 62 David has composed a song of trust in God alone. The psalm declares that God is our rock and salvation and that our hope is in God. In psalm 146 the psalmist warns us not to place our trust in mortals because human lives are finite. We are instead to put our trust in God who is sovereign and whose reign is forever. The Apostle Paul reminds us that hope is not visible. Nevertheless, though hope is unseen, it is real and we are counseled to be patient in our hope for the future.

What is our Christian hope? Biblical hope is three-fold. First, it refers to God’s activity in our lives in the present. It refers to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives today. It is speaking about God’s activity in accomplishing His purpose in our lives. God is sovereign, active, intentional and merciful. Jesus says: *“I am with you always to the end of the age.”*  How has God been active in your life?

Second, it is the hope of eternal life. The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. God loves us as unique persons. It refers to our hope as individuals. It is the hope of personal salvation. It is the promise that we shall live with God forever. It is the promise of resurrection. Jesus says: “*Because I live you shall live also”* and *“I will prepare a place for you and I will come back and take you to myself so that you will be where I am.”* It is the promise that we shall live with Christ and the communion of saints in glory or heaven.

Third, it is the hope of the Kingdom of God. God also loves the world. It is a cosmic or universal hope. It is the hope of a new world or new creation. It is the hope of world salvation. God’s plan is not only to save the individual person. God’s plan is to save the world. It is the perfection of all creation in the reign of God. This is pictured beautifully in Revelation 21: “*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, see the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.”*

*May the hope of Christ fill your hearts,*

*Rev. Alan W. Deuel*