



## DUDLEY'S MONTHLY MESSAGE

ROMANS 15:4

FEBRUARY 2020

### IS IT SAFE TO HOPE?

---

*As we approach this new year and decade, we hear many voices encouraging us to feel positive about our future. I have heard some playing on the idea of 20/20 eyesight, saying that 2020 is a year of corrected vision and clear perspective.*

---

Others build their hopes on positive thoughts and words that they believe will actually create circumstances that are better. Of course, every new year brings with it resolutions and promises to break bad habits and live better than we ever have. All these mantras, tactics, and promises fall on the eager ears of people who want the future to be better than the past. I certainly fall into that category. The last year was a hard one for me and my family. Along with other difficult obstacles, my precious wife and partner for 52 years died on July 30, 2019. Adjusting is a challenge, to say the very least. But, is there reason

to hope that things will be better in 2020 than 2019? I don't want to base my hopes on the wishful projections of those who have no real reason to say so. And, of course, there are those who are convinced that things are not going to get better, but will instead get much worse. They project that judgment and wrath are in our immediate future because of God's anger at our presumption and sin. Their hope is that when things reach a certain level of "bad," God's chosen will be delivered out of the mess by a rapturous experience with the returning Christ. Until then, however, we must hold on and look up.

*(continued next page)*

With all these projections and predictions, it is our concept of God's nature that ultimately determines the nature of our hope. It seems to me that an honest survey of the Scriptures reveals a God who expects things to get better. In fact, almost every page loudly proclaims that the best is yet to come.

*For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*

(Romans 15:4 ESV)

In the Garden of Eden, God expressed the hope that humans would, in his presence and through sharing his life, subdue the whole earth. After Adam and Eve's fall, he still guaranteed a future where the seed of woman would crush the head of the Serpent. When he found Noah and conscripted him to build an ark, he was planning for a better future. When he appeared to Abram and promised a son to a childless couple, he was promising more than

the immediate joy that comes from a child being born to a sad and lonely couple: Isaac was both joy-giving to Abraham and Sarah at the time, but also joy-giving as a promise to a world that was alienated from the Father. When God appeared to Moses in Midian, his promise was more than alleviation from a meager and lonely job working for his father-in-law. It was about delivering the captive people of Israel from Egypt. Moreover, it was about a coming deliverer who would liberate human captives from the bondage of sin and shame. The best was yet to come, even after the great Exodus. When God promised David that his son would sit on the throne governing God's possession, he was speaking of greater things than the majesty of Solomon. He was looking at the future day when Jesus, as David's greater son, would defeat the enemies of God through his own death and resurrection and ascend to the right hand of God. The best was ahead. Even after the people of the old covenant disobeyed and were taken into captivity, the prophets heard the word of God promising

a day when everything would be restored, and his people vindicated. It had immediate but partial fulfillment when Cyrus permitted a remnant to return to the land; the future fulfillment came not in rebuilding old Jerusalem, but in a new creation starting in the resurrection of Jesus, the corporate people of God.

So what about today? Is our hope in the past? Since Jesus is the fulfillment of all the promises of God in the past, do we have anything to look forward to? Some would quickly say, "Heaven." That is not to be discredited. The eternal life we share will continue past death with vistas of glory yet to be seen. But that eternal life is for now as well. We are continually and progressively experiencing the "better" that Jesus accomplished. We are daily discovering that he is bigger than we imagined, and that his goodness far exceeds anything we could ever conceive. We are being made aware of how blind we have been about the nature of truth and how slow we have been to see what he is willing to show us. We have settled

to know some facts and information about God, but mostly our concepts of reality are based on looking through a dirty prism called "this world."

*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

(Romans 12:2 ESV)

The thought patterns of the world that exclude God's perspective are molded by the five senses and the observations available to the rational mind. We believe what we can experience and verify by our own understanding. It is the result of our first parents choosing to live by the tree of knowledge of good and evil, rather by trusting the loving creator to share what we need when we need it. The veil that covers the eyes of "worldlings" prevents humans from seeing the whole realm of reality. Blindly, we categorize such knowledge as spirituality, mysticism, imaginary, fantasy, and less trustworthy than empirical facts. We are left to define and limit

reality by what we experience. We have trouble distinguishing between real and true. We might have traumas that are real but the interpretation of them is not true—much like the interpretation the Serpent gave Eve of her dilemma in the garden.

*. . . these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. . . . Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.*

(1 Corinthians 2:10, 12 ESV)

Our hope includes the continual unveiling of the things God has for us as his redeemed children who still have the mandate to bless the world. We look forward to each day when *“beholding the glory of the Lord, [we] are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit”* (2 Corinthians 3:18 ESV). The more we see truth as he reveals it, the more we realize we are loved

with a transforming love. This unconditional, unending love empowers us to love the same way; and surprisingly, the result is the earth begins to show the effects of redeemed humans actively engaged in seeing God's will done on earth as in heaven.

Yes, it is safe to hope—if your hope is based on the person and program of God. For him and for always, the best is yet to come. Don't miss it. Ask the Spirit to make real for you what is true of him.



P.O. Box 2022  
Colleyville, TX 76034  
(817) 267-9224  
Fax: (817) 354-5522  
Email: [Mail@KerygmaVentures.com](mailto:Mail@KerygmaVentures.com)  
[www.KerygmaVentures.com](http://www.KerygmaVentures.com)