

What gives you hope?

Does the answer to that question depend on the situation? Is it different in a medical situation than at work or in your family life or at church? Do you have hope when things are going as planned or expected? And is hope lost or challenged when they do not? Well, it depends on the source of your hope.

I cannot tell you how many times I have sat with a doctor and family members who are concerned about a patient “losing hope” if they are given the truth of their terminal medical situation. It depends on what their hope is in: Is their hope in recovery when that isn’t realistic? They are going to be disappointed. Is their hope in being surrounded by their loved ones for the duration of this life? The family might be able to make that happen. Is their hope in the presence of a loving God no matter what? That hope will be fulfilled.

In other circumstances, I have talked to sailors and Marines preparing for combat that hope they can do what is necessary and know the best course of action in the moment. This is different. This is the action of hoping. This is about wanting something very much and having a mixture of confidence and doubt that one will ever be able to have or achieve it.

If your hope is in Christ, it never changes. If your hope is in something else, all bets are off. You see, hope in Christ isn't something you do or feel. It is something you are given. It is there for you. Trusting in it is another thing,.. not everyone is good at clinging to it, or even believing that it has really been given to you; even Christians. Our hope isn't that God will keep us in this life forever, but we often act like it is. Our hope isn't in God's efficiency as a delivery service, bringing us whatever we order, but we sometimes catch ourselves thinking that way. Hope can't be bargained either, but we often try, saying, "Let _____ happen and I will _____."

Hope is a gift from God. The source of hope is the cross. God loves us. God desires our good. Jesus went to the cross for our forgiveness. Nothing changes that. Ever.

Grief, sadness, discouragement, hurt and all kinds of other emotions are very real. Emotions are dynamic and temporary, however, not eternal. Please recognize that hope is eternal... no matter what. Hope that is in God's eternal love never changes. The decision to use it or not is ours, so cling to it.

He [Jesus, The Christ] was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.

--1 Peter 1:20-21

