

BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF ERIE
SERMON OUTLINE
By James M. Duncan, Pastor

DECEMBER 24, 2017

“God’s Unspeakable Gift of HOPE”

Galatians 4:4-7; 2 Corinthians 9:15

Rom. 15:13 says:

“Now **may the God of hope fill** you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may **abound in hope** by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Titus 2:11-13 tells us:

“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, **looking for the BLESSED HOPE and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**”.

If we were to take a survey today, we would find that hope is hard to find during the holidays. Yet it is something we need all year long. It’s tough to sing “**Joy to the World**” when there’s so much junk in our lives.

Remember our theme for this Christmas series is *2 Corinthians 9:15*; “**Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable/indescribable Gift.**” Well this Christmas eve morning we are going to talk about that wonderful gift of **HOPE**.

So first let’s talk about . . .

I. The Definition of HOPE

I came across a couple Bible-based definitions of hope that are very helpful: Hope is a future certainty grounded in a present reality. Here’s another one: Hope is wishing for what God has already promised us.

In the Old Testament it means “**to bind together, often by twisting.**” It refers to the process of making a rope by taking at least two strands of material and twisting them together, like these two pieces of rope I have here.

Understood in this way, hope means that I bring **my pain to the Lord on the one hand** and on **the other hand, I hold specific promises of God. To hope means to wrap my problems together with God’s promises.**

We could say it this way: **Hold on to the rope of hope when it’s hard to cope.** *Ecclesiasts 4:12* adds God’s provision to His promises and our problems. “*A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.*” Notice now this third strand in our rope which is Christ who is Immanuel – God With US. So, this three-cord rope represents: Our **PAIN**, His **PROMISES**, and **JESUS** our Lord.

Secondly we see about the “*Unspeakable Gift of HOPE*” . . .

II. The Dimensions of HOPE

By its very definition hope is something that is invisible. *2 Corinthians 4:18* urges us to “*Fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen.*” *Romans 8:24-25.*

When your grip begins to slip, hold on to...

Past Promises - *Isaiah 64:1* longingly pleads

Present Help - *Psalms 46:1*

Future glory - Lucy says to Linus . . .

III. Decisions for Hope

If you want to cope, then hold on to the rope of hope and wrap yourself in these three numbers.

#1: Get wrapped up in Scripture.

Romans 15:4

#2: Get wrapped up in the Savior – *Matthew 1:21, John 1:14*

#3: Get wrapped up in salvation - Do you ever ignore the gauges in your life those warning lights? Do you have any warning lights flashing right now?

Maybe you’re at a place where you now realize that it’s time to hold on to the rope of hope because you don’t know how to cope.

Admit your sinfulness. *Ephesians 2:12*

Ask for help.

Accept Christ as your Savior

We don’t know what life will hold in 2018, but we can know the One who holds us; the one who lovingly wraps his blanket of love around us.

Today can be the day that you change as well by making Christmas personal. If you’re ready you can do so right now, today by praying this prayer with me.