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HOPE - Embedded in God's Word, and in Your Heart



By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #238 ~

Do you ever notice verses about hope right in the middle of a Bible passage? It happens many times in the New Testament, and nine times alone in the book of Philippians. There's no doubt that hope, looking forward to our future in heaven, greatly motivated Paul to keep living for the Lord on earth. What can you learn from Philippians about living for God and the need for hope?

Philippians 1:6 – *"I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."* This one verse is incredibly instructive and encouraging.

1. Your salvation, from beginning to end, is the gracious work of God. He began His work in you – He justified you, and He will complete it – He

will glorify you. Your salvation is not by your effort, but by Christ's work on the cross and the Spirit's work in you. God gets all the credit and glory.

2. Since your salvation is God's work, then you can be confident that what He started in you, He will finish in you. No person or power can stop God from completely and eternally saving you. When He saves, He justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies. *"These whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified."* Rom. 8:29-30, John 10:27-29, 1 Cor. 1:8-9

3. Your salvation is not completed when you are justified, when you are born again; and it's not completed if you physically die and go to heaven. It's only completed on the day of Christ Jesus, when He returns, for that's when the salvation God planned for you way back in eternity past will be perfected, and you will be glorified and be like Jesus Christ. Phil. 3:20-21, 1 John 3:2

4. One thing that helps you get through trials is remembering the end of the story, that God will finish the work He started in you. If God will glorify you, then surely He will enable you to endure and overcome all the little problems of life. *"If God is for us, who is against us?... In all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us."* Romans 8:31-39

5. The day of Christ Jesus, a key prophecy phrase, refers to the time when you will be glorified, when your salvation will be complete, which happens just before the day of the Lord, a related phrase that refers to God's judgment of the unbelievers. The glorification of believers occurs on the day of Christ Jesus, but the punishment of unbelievers takes place soon afterwards, during the day of the Lord. Luke 17:26-30, John 6:44, 1 Thess. 4:15 – 5:1-11

6. Paul was convinced of God's saving work in himself, and here he expresses his confidence that God would complete His saving work in the Philippian saints. So too, be confident of God's work in you, and

encourage others by expressing your confidence of God's work in them.

7. This truth that God will finish what He started in you appears at the beginning of Philippians. That's because having assurance, being confident that God will complete your salvation, is foundational to all that Paul goes on to tell you about being a growing and fruitful Christian. If you have assurance of your salvation, then it means you are convinced that God truly and eternally loves you. *"Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."* Psalm 23:6, Romans 8:35-39

Philippians 1:9-11 – *"This I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless, until the day of Christ Jesus, having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."*

1. This is an important big-picture prayer. It's about living for God, and knowing that how you live for God will be revealed at the end of this age, on the day of Christ Jesus. *"When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you will also be revealed with Him in glory."* Col. 3:3-4, 2 Cor. 5:10

2. You are to pray that you have an abounding love for God by having His word in your heart. This results in making wise decisions which results in living a righteous, holy, and fruitful life. We can say it this way – *"To live is Christ… will mean fruitful labor."* Phil. 1:21-22

3. You are to live for Christ until you physically die or are raptured. Then, on the day of Christ, you and all believers will be glorified and gathered together to meet Christ. (Matt. 24:29-31). Christ is looking forward to this most special day, and so should you. He told you, *"Behold, I am coming soon, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done"* (Rev. 22:12). The day of

Christ is very important, for all believers will be with Christ, and all who truly lived for Christ will be rewarded. *"Each will receive his own reward according to his own labor."* (1 Cor. 3:8-15). *"Each man's praise will come to him from God."* 1 Cor. 4:10

4. The ultimate aim, the overall purpose of your life is *"for the glory and praise of God"* (Phil. 1:11, Phil. 2:9-11). *"By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit."* John 15:5-8

Philippians 1:21-24 – *"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. But I am hard pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better, yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake."*

1. *"To live is Christ"* – this sums up your life on earth. Christ is to be the center of your life, and it's by His power and for His purposes that you can live for Him. Living for Christ means you are living for others. And living for others means you are loving them, serving them, praying for them, and telling them the Truth. The result is spiritual fruit that remains forever. John 15:16

2. Living for Christ can be difficult – there are trials, sadness, and suffering, and you get sick, old, weak, and tired. And there will be times when you want to leave this world so you can live with Christ. But is this not your God-appointed time to live on earth? And like a vapor, it will soon be over – and so make the most of it. (Eph. 5:15-17). It's infinitely worth it to sacrifice your short life for God – it's for the eternal glory of Christ, the eternal good of others, and your eternal blessing.

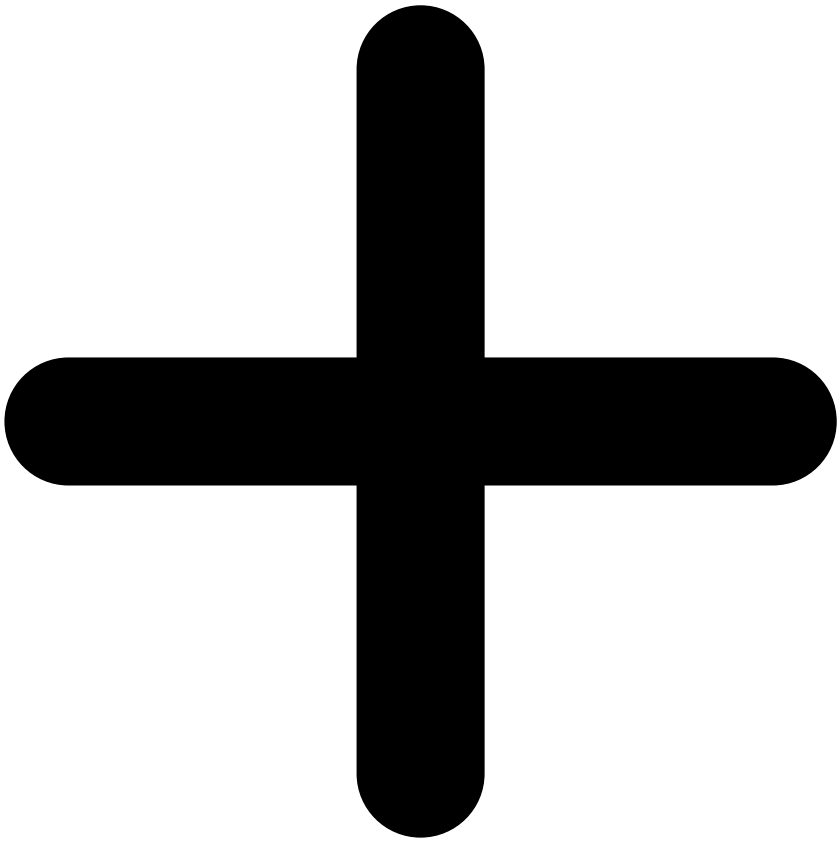
3. *"To die…"* The vast majority of Christians die during this church age, but I believe some of us will be raptured on the day of Christ Jesus. Just think, you may never die, but be *"caught up together with them* (those who have died) *in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air."* 1 Thess. 4:17

4. *“To die is gain.”* To die – that’s wonderful! It means no more sin, pain, sickness, or sadness. It means your hopes are beginning to be realized. It means the next phase of your eternal life has begun. It means you are in heaven, an utterly magnificent place. Most importantly, it means being with Jesus Christ, the One who loves you far more than anyone else. Job 19:25-27, Rev. 21:3-7

5. At times you feel hard-pressed – you know the importance of staying on earth, but you really want to be in heaven with Jesus. And that’s a godly feeling, a good tension, a righteous desire. But now you are alive, and you have more work to do. It won’t be long before you leave this earth and are in heaven with Jesus, *“… that where I am, there you may also be.”* John 14:3

Living on this earth is to be God-exalting, is for the progress and joy of others. While you live on earth, be filled with hope, with the amazing truth of God’s future for you in your heart, and *“press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”* Philippians 3:12-14

P.S. Might God help you notice all the hope verses as you read through His word, and see how they fit in the text and fit in with your life. Here are two recent posts on this same subject – *“Philippians – Running to Win the Race”* and *“Ephesians 1 – A Big-Picture Prophecy Passage.”* I encourage you to read them, and I am sure they will be instructive and encouraging.



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