

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Pro-Choice is No Choice

A Gallup poll from May 2018 showed the citizens of the U.S. evenly divided on whether they consider themselves to be pro-choice or pro-life (news.gallup.com). While there have been legal advancements against abortion protecting the lives of the unborn, there have also been setbacks. One just happened in New York state. Since 2014, "an estimated twenty-five to twenty-seven per cent of pregnancies end in abortion" ("How Abortion Law in New York Will Change, and How It Won't," Jia Tolentino, newyorker.com). The New York state assembly just passed a law that "makes it legal for doctors and other health care professionals, such as midwives and physician assistants, to perform abortions up until birth for any reason" ("New York passes bill allowing abortion up to birth, for any reason," Leonardo Blair, christianpost.com).

New York Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said, "We're saying that here in New York, women's health matters. We're saying here in New York, women's lives matter. We're saying here in New York, women's decisions matter." (Ibid.)

They are also saying in New York the unborn child's health does not matter. They are saying in New York the life of the unborn child does not matter. They are saying in New York the unborn child's right to live does not matter. They are saying in New York it does not matter the unborn are unique human beings (Psa. 139:15-16; Lk. 1:41). Pro-choice (i.e., abortion) leaves the unborn with no choice.

Legalized abortion continues to be a scourge on our nation and the world. It is nothing short of murder as it renders unborn children valueless. No amount of covering this violence against children with the cloak of "women's health" and "women's decisions" changes the obvious fact: Abortion terminates new life. Decisions and choices made by two people result in new life being conceived. If you do not want a child, then decide and choose not to engage in conduct that conceives new life. God gives life, and He strictly charges us not to shed innocent blood (Gen. 8:6).

- Joe R. Price

Hope

Hope is listed by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:13 as one of three things which "abide." "And now abide faith, hope love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

Because of the great sacrifice of our Lord on the cross at Calvary, mankind will always have hope. Until the world ends, hope will continue. But, the concept of the Christian's hope is one that may be unfamiliar to many.

It is important first to define what is meant by the term. Hope is defined by Webster's in the following way: *"to cherish a desire with expectation of fulfillment. Or, as a synonym for trust: To long for with expectation of obtainment."*

This definition is an accurate explanation of the Biblical term as well. The Greek word *elpis*, is defined by W.E. Vine as, "favourable and confident expectation," and states that the term has to do with "the unseen and future" (Vol. 2, p. 232).

While the term is loosely used in our day, often referring to an idle dream rather than an actual expectation, it is important to note its scriptural use, and subsequent impact upon the Christian.

When the scriptures speak of hope, it is not an idle speculation concerning what might happen in the future. It is not a "pie-in-the-sky" gamble, with little chance of realization. Rather, it is founded in the promise of God, and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. As we hope in the promises of God, we truly can expect to achieve the end He has reserved for us.

The reason for the sure and enduring nature of our hope is its foundation. Note Paul's words, "To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).

We use the term in this sense from time to time, in the same way Luke used it in Acts 16:19, when he wrote about the slave owner's loss of profitability because of Paul's exorcism of the spirit-possessed girl. "But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities." The girl was the basis of their hope of profit. Without her ability to tell fortunes, their hope was gone.

In the same way, Jesus Christ is the basis of our hope. Without his sacrifice on the cross, and his subsequent resurrection from the dead, we would be without hope. Paul wrote, "And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who

have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable" (1 Corinthians 15:17-19). Fortunately, Christ was resurrected, "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead" (1 Corinthians 15:20-21).

Because of what Christ has accomplished for us, as the children of God we can reasonably expect to obtain a heavenly reward at the judgment. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:3-5).

The nature of the hope is sure because it is God who reserves it for us. Because of God's faithfulness, we can know that what He promised we will receive.

The object we hope for is of inestimable value, "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven" for each of us. It is this hope which motivates us each day as we live for Jesus. We fix our eyes on eternity, and we steadfastly strive toward that goal. As Paul said, "Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14).

- Stan Cox

Anger

The Definition "Anger" is: a strong feeling of displeasure and belligerence aroused by a real or supposed wrong; wrath.

The Problem. Do you become angry and lash out verbally or physically just to hurt; do you sulk or pout; do you feel sorry for yourself or have temper tantrums; or do you control yourself, but become bitter and resentful.

Have you been on the receiving end of another person's anger? Anger is like a stick of dynamite. It is useful if used correctly, but deadly when used incorrectly. It causes us to do things we would not otherwise do. The Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, contains many verses that teach about anger:

- Proverbs 16:32. "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city."
- Proverbs 29:22. "An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression."
- Ecclesiastes 7:9. "Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, for anger rests in the bosom of fools."
- 1 Corinthians 13:5. "[Love] Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked,"
- Ephesians 4:26-27. "Be ye angry and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath."
- James 1:20. "For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."
- James 3:6. "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell."

We cannot always control what happens to us. But, we can do something about the way we react, and by doing so, change our lives. When we allow ourselves to become provoked over things we can't control, we hurt ourselves and those who are around us. Give your family and friends a gift they will cherish always: a pleasant and loving disposition that makes it a joy to be around you.

People who control their emotions become angry only over important things -- usually, things that threaten others, not themselves. Anger is an appropriate response when the thing about which one is angry threatens harm to the innocent. We exhibit what we are through what makes us angry.

Even Jesus became angry (Mark 11:15-17). And throughout the Bible, we have many examples of God's righteous anger over man's sin.

Dealing with Anger. Christians are different. Ephesians 4:20-32 explains beautifully how God would have us to be after we become Christians. We must learn to control our anger, just as we learn to control other things in our lives.

- Admit there is a problem -- I lose my temper too often and for the wrong reasons.
- Just stop -- when you see it coming, before you lose control. Get your emotions in tow before you say a word.
- Get away from whatever is making you angry. If necessary, go back when you've regained your self-control.
- Take a good look at what makes you angry. Possibly, other problems (jealousy, selfishness, and so on) are involved.

- Do not become obsessed with retaliation. (1 Thess. 5:15: See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.)

- Carolyn Rix

- "Few blame themselves until they have exhausted all other possibilities!"
 - "We are not put on this earth to see through one another, but to see one another through!"
 - "Some people are making such thorough preparation for rainy days that they are not enjoying today's sunshine!"
 - "Not what we get, but what we give, measures the worth of the life we live!"
 - "By perseverance the snail reached the Ark!"
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"Are You A Secure Believer?"* (Text: Jer. 17:5-8); Sunday evening: *"The Trial of Pilate before Christ!"* (John 18:28 – 19:16).