

HOPE IS COMING DEVOTIONAL

By Madeleine Wiedemann

WEEK 1

HOPE IS WHAT WE NEED

Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God’s anger, just like everyone else.

But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God’s grace that you have been saved!) For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus.

“God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

Don’t forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were called “uncircumcised heathens” by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts. In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope.”

Ephesians 2:1-12 (NLT)

“I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Romans 15:13 (NLT)

We live in a society where mental health disorders are rife, so much so, that we have a term for people who end their lives because of a lack of hope (‘deaths of despair’, the number one cause of death for Australians ages 15-44, [LINK](#)). We need real hope; we need an anchor for our restless wandering, a secure foundation to rely on when we are lost, broken and hurting.

When Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus, he reminded them of their state without Jesus; before God, they had no hope (Ephesians 2:12). This isn’t meant to be a discouragement, but a reality check. Without God, we find ourselves unmoored, unhinged, without hope. All people from every time and nation need Jesus because, without Him, we look inside to find assurance and find ourselves wanting. That promised Hope has already come and has already been given to you. It’s already under the Christmas tree. Jesus wants us to live hope-filled this Christmas season; it’s what He came for. God has always been the God of Hope (Romans 15:13), and He always planned to send Jesus so that we, who are created in His image, could live lives marked by and fuelled by Hope.

REFLECTIONS

- Can you remember a time when you lived ‘without hope’? (see Ephesians 2:12)
- Can you see the difference between a life lived with hope and one without?
- Do you believe in a God of hope, and do you turn to Him in your hopelessness?
- How could you be a Hope bringer this Christmas season to those who are without hope/God?

CHALLENGE

As you plan your activities/events/holidays this Christmas season, stop and pray and ask God to help you to be a hope bringer into all the contexts you find yourself in.