

Solution for Life



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 Dear Friends,

Have you ever had a dream, hope, goal, or plan for your future? Of course we all have and we've probably all been disappointed (especially this year!) when something didn't play out as we had hoped. In this newsletter we want to talk about the in-between time, the waiting, and how we can experience hope and peace while we wait. Waiting can be exciting or it can be scary depending on the situation. A bride making plans and hoping for her future experiences excitement while she waits. Waiting to hear back on a job application or test results from a doctor can be difficult. In either situation - joy or struggle - we find our hope in God and trust that He will give us peace as we wait. We pray that, as you read our messages, you will be encouraged and filled with hope and peace as you trust Jesus.

Blessings, Jessie

Foundation for Hope | by Daniel Westlund

We live in troubled times and we need hope for something better. The dictionary definition of hope is, "A feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen, to cherish a desire with anticipation." Hopes and dreams are a part of life. Hope for a good life, a husband or wife, job, success, recognition, health, friends, respect, or fame. Today most are hoping COVID-19 will come to an end. In life, if we achieve any of these, we feel like we have accomplished something and have been blessed by God. However, no matter how good you may feel with your hopes fulfilled in this life, it is all fleeting.

In the final scene of the movie "Patton," we see George Patton walking with his dog across an open field with snow covered mountains in the background. He had just been

removed from his command of the U.S. Third Army that had victoriously moved across Europe to defeat Germany. As he walked, his voice conveyed his thoughts about how Romans would celebrate their great victories and military leaders with a parade through Rome before the tumultuous, cheering crowd that lined the street. The commander rode in the lead chariot, followed by his officers, soldiers and the spoils of war. Standing next to him was a servant who would whisper in his ear, "all glory is fleeting."

In God's Word, the Bible, the Greek word for hope is *elpis*. It means a favorable and confident expectation, a happy anticipation of good. In life we can face great disappointment when our hope is based on what is passing and not on the eternal. The key is the object of our hope. For the

believer, Christ is our Hope, I Timothy 1:1. True hope is in and flows out of our life in Christ, "the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the Hope of glory." (Colossians 1:26-27) "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness." (II Peter 1:3)

A few weeks ago, I woke up in the morning singing, "My Hope is Built on Nothing Less." It is an old hymn, one that is being lost to the younger generation, written back in the early 1800s. The words and melody ring in my heart day after day.

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CONTACT US AT:

P.O. Box 3510
Carmel, Indiana
46082-3510
Phone: 317-289-5896
email: sfl@solutionforlife.org
www.solutionforlife.org

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My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name.

When He shall come with trumpet sound, oh, may I then in Him be found. Dressed in His righteousness alone, faultless to stand before the throne!

On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; all other ground is sinking sand, all other ground is sinking sand.

In Proverbs 23:7 we read, "As a man thinks, so is he." (KJV) and in Colossians 3:2-4 we read, "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When

Christ, who is your life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."

In I Corinthians 13:13 we are told three things remain, "faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." However, love is not separate from our faith and hope. For by faith in Christ we personally experience the love of God and it is through hope in our Lord Jesus Christ we press on even in the face of adversity "while we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ." (Titus 2:13)

What is the foundation of your hope? To have a secure and lasting hope that

ends favorably, it must be Christ. In college I had drifted from the Lord. One spring day as I walked alone across the campus of the University of Minnesota, an individual stopped in front of me, looked me in the eyes, and said, "What are you going to do with Jesus?" Stunned, he walked past me, I turned to answer him, and he had disappeared. It was a short time later I chose to put my life, my future, my hope in Christ. That was over 49 years ago and on Christ, the solid rock (foundation) I stand and live my life. You have a choice; make Christ the foundation of your life, your true and lasting Hope.

Solution for growth

New Normal | by Stephen Westlund

Jesus said, "In this world you will have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

Why are we so surprised when troubling times come? The Lord said they will come. The current troubles we see in the world, in our country, and in our communities are causing fear to rise, and common sense to fade. People are running to and fro over toilet paper, hand sanitizer, and face masks. We are left to wonder, when will this end? What will our new normal look like?

But the troubles of this life are part of the fallen, imperfect world we live in. "In this world, you will have trouble." Troubles are normal. But we don't want trouble. We long for a place of peace, free of trouble. This longing is a God-given desire, for He has placed eternity in the hearts of all. (Ecclesiastes 3:11) But until we enter our eternal rest, what do we do? Do we wait for the media and the politicians to explain to us what our new normal in this world looks like?

Or do we go to the One who has overcome the world as we make our way through whatever the world tells us that normal is? As for me, I am running to, and leaning into the One that has overcome the world. Wisdom guides

me to stock up on toilet paper and hand sanitizer, and where it is required to wear a mask, or where common sense guides me to do so, I will put a mask on. But I will not be afraid! I am going to hope in Jesus and look forward to the new normal promised to me in the book of Philipians.

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. Therefore... stand firm in the Lord (3:20-4:1)

Yes, in the coming months there will be a new worldly normal, but the only new normal I will focus on is the one where this worn down, broken body that is prone to illness and pain is no more. In the new normal I look forward to, my body is transformed to conform to the body of His glory! The perishable puts on the imperishable and death is swallowed up in victory! (1 Corinthians 15) But until the new normal is here, I will do what Paul instructed the Christians to do 2,000 years ago. I will stand firm in Christ my Lord. Who will stand with me?

Peace | by Kristen Alewine

In my Bible study right now we're learning about control and how frequently we grasp for it. As I've set aside time to think through where I might be trying to control things in my own life, I've been surprised (though I'm sure I shouldn't have been) that it's EVERYWHERE. I try to control my environment, my schedule, my kids, my image, my health. Goodness. Is there any part of me this desire to be in control doesn't touch?

It struck me today that when I'm striving to have things under my control it's because I'm searching for a sense of peace. Unfortunately all I've actually achieved is a kind of fake peace that can be torn away as soon as things stop going the way I planned. I think maybe that's a way we can tell the difference between whether we're putting our hope in our circumstances, our things, our people, or if we're putting our trust in God. When something changes unexpectedly and we end up somewhere we never expected, does our peace evaporate? If so, it's time to examine its foundation.

Jeremiah 17:7-8 "Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, and have made

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Solution for caring

Still Believing | by Jessie A. Westlund

I Still Believe

*Scattered words and empty thoughts
Seem to pour from my heart
I've never felt so torn before
Seems I don't know where to start
But it's now that I feel Your grace
fall like rain
From every fingertip, washing away
my pain
The only place I can go is into
your arms
Where I throw to you my feeble
prayers
In brokenness I can see that this
was your will for me
Help me to know Your near*

*I still believe in Your faithfulness
I still believe in Your truth
I still believe in Your holy word
Even when I don't see, I still believe*

Jeremy Camp sang this song, *I Still Believe*, in the movie “*I Still Believe*.” He found Christ through the witness of a beautiful Christian girl. They fell in love and, soon after they were married, his young bride died from cancer.

These words, “Even when I don’t see, I still believe,” are difficult to live out. Today we are inundated with reminders of the condition of our world and the dangers we face with the pandemic. How do we believe even when we do not see?

I found myself reflecting on a time when I was crushed in my spirit. I was 22 when the phone call came. My

mom, at 45, had breast cancer and it did not look good. This amazing, loving, fun, creative person, always thinking of making her home and relationships special, now faced the journey of her life that eventually took her to be with Jesus at the young age of 52. What was God doing? She had dedicated her life to leading others to Christ and helping the needy have their needs met. Doesn’t that count for something? I asked that question and many more. Thankfully the journey did not end in hopelessness. I had 7 years with her before I said my final good bye. In those years, I learned about hope and peace.

Just before Mother’s Day in 1977, I called my mom as the ambulance attendant wheeled her out of her home for her final trip to the hospital. She whispered, “Bye, honey. Think this is it.” That evening she entered into the presence of Jesus. Through that difficult time, Mom and I learned the deeper truth of peace in the storm. I had seen many people healed and many miracles and I wanted this for her. However, God was teaching me, “Even when I don’t see, I still believe.” This is the path we found ourselves on as her health failed. I learned God is bigger than all we face and will give peace in the storm. Through the years of suffering I learned to be still and seek God for peace and comfort. The scripture, “Cast all your cares on Him for He cares for you,” (1Peter 5:7) became a reality to me.

There is a truth she taught me in this journey. The day we walked next to

her bed when she was going to surgery for her second mastectomy, she pointed to heaven and said, “Eternity values, Jessie. Eternity values.” To be honest with you, my thoughts were not on eternity, but on wanting my mother to live. As time passed, I began to understand that the way to have hope is to live all of life with eternity in view. So much of my life gets wrapped up in the present. In reality, the time on this earth is so short compared to eternity. My dear mom lived to share Jesus and His hope with others. In our last days together, she talked about what matters. She challenged me to remember what The Lord’s Prayer says, “Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.” She wanted me to love people to Jesus. She said, “love our family in their grief. Help them remember Jesus loves them and would give peace.” That is who Jesus is, and on earth He wants to heal our broken hearts, heal our land and, most of all, for people to experience Him on earth and for eternity. “For God so loved the world he gave his only son that whoever would believe in him would have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

There is a battle playing out in humanity ever since the beginning of time. God’s plan for humanity is to be in a loving relationship with Him and Satan’s plan is to suppress humanity and reign over them for the purpose of destroying their souls. Be encouraged; God is still working even when we can’t see. He will care for us now and for eternity when we only believe.

Peace continued from page 2

the Lord their hope and confidence. They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay free, and they go right on producing delicious fruit.”

I tend to think of peace as a state of not being bothered - quiet, calm, a

little sleepy. But according to this verse in Jeremiah, when we put our hope and confidence in the Lord, we stay steady THROUGH trials (heat, drought), not because we’ve avoided them altogether.

With the world as crazy as it is right now, it’s nearly impossible to achieve even the fake peace of control. That’s

why I’m so thankful the Lord has given us His promise of peace, if we would just take him at his word...

John 14:27 “I am leaving you with a gift - peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give isn’t like the peace the world gives. So don’t be troubled or afraid.”

Solution for the future

Watch and Pray | by Daniel Westlund

In Revelation 13:16-17 we read about the mark of the Beast, the final ruler of the kingdoms of the world, before Christ comes and reigns. The mark appears to be a symbol of submission to this ruler, also identified as the antichrist. We are not told what it looks like or what form it takes, but it is the name of the beast and the mark will be placed on the right hand or forehead of each individual that willingly submits to his rule. The mark of the beast will control all aspects of the economy. No one will be able to buy or sell without it. It appears those who do not take the mark of the beast will face persecution. (Revelation 14:12) We are also told that any who receive the mark of beast will not be in heaven. (Revelation 14:9-11)

For those who live in the generation that will see the return of Christ, this is very significant. For this would be

the last generation marked by the rebirth of Israel in 1948. Many theories have been put forth over the last 2000 years and have increased over the last 72 years with the rebirth of Israel as a nation and with advancements in technology as to the form the mark will take. I do not know how it will look, but I know it will take place. I have often wondered how it will be so widely accepted and implemented. With the rise of Covid-19, I have gained insight into the how: it will be through fear. As I observe what is taking place in the world, fear has gripped people to submit to whatever they are being told, even Christians. The promises of God appear to mean very little as we see in Psalm 91:3, 10 "Surely he will save you...from the deadly pestilence...no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent." Do we really believe this?

I do. Do we believe that "without faith it is impossible to please God," Hebrews 11:6. I do.

In the garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-38), Jesus wanted His disciples to watch and pray. A time of great temptation was approaching, an hour of darkness. An hour of darkness is approaching us. We need to heed the words of our Savior. We need to watch and pray. (Luke 21:36)

We recognize this message may raise many questions. Dan is available to talk with anyone interested. He will discuss in more detail the events from history and what the Word of God reveals will take place before the return of Christ. Contact Dan on the Solution for Life email and we will set up a time to answer questions. (sfl@solutionforlife.org)

Bulletin Board

Solution for the Future: Over and over people ask, "Is the Lord coming back?" Dan is teaching and meeting with people to help talk through this question. What we see in the news is heartbreaking but, if we understand the Bible, we will better comprehend the return of Christ. We are thankful for the opportunity to teach how to have hope and peace even in these days that seem to be like the days of Noah where people did not want God.

Solution for Women: Women's Retreat is canceled for this year. Plans for reaching out to women in the future are in the works.

Coaching: Jessie is coaching those who are seeking a deeper understanding of how to live with hope, peace, and God's plan for their lives.

Message from Dan & Jessie

Thank you for your many texts, notes, words of encouragement and gifts since our last newsletter. It is a blessing to be able to send tangible gifts to support those in need. As we talk with people it has been interesting to hear how the Lord is working in their lives. Even in the difficult times people are telling of how God is meeting their needs. If you would like to share your

story or prayer request please contact us at sfl@solutionforlife.org.

Your gifts are important to the ongoing ministries. Please consider giving by using the enclosed envelope or, for online donations, go to www.solutionforlife.org and the donation tab is in the upper right hand corner. Thank you!

May God bless you and keep you,

Dan and Jessie