

Jeremiah 33:14 "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

33:15 In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

33:16 In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'

33:17 "For thus says the LORD: David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel,

33:18 and the Levitical priests shall never lack a man in my presence to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings, and to make sacrifices forever."

A few thoughts on Hope

Let me start by stating the obvious "Hope is how we Cope." Hope gets us through the bad times because we know that the future is going to be better. Some people have said hope is faith in the future.

Hebrews 11:1 *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*

Therefore hope is the belief that in the future our faith will be assured.

However hope in the future alone will not save us, Jeremiah is reminding his audience that real hope is to be placed in the one who controls the future.

Setting the scene

Does anyone remember the movie "A bridge too far"? It is a war movie about the true story of "operation market garden"- the tragic Allied attempt to capture the Arnhem river bridge during world war two. The plan was to land British paratroopers far behind the enemy lines to hold the bridge. The American and British tanks would push through the German lines to meet them. It was the largest deployment of soldiers by parachute ever... But unfortunately when the British landed in Arnhem they did not expect it to be a town in which the Germans were holding a panzer division in reserve. Isolated and cut off the paratroopers quickly run out of ammunition and food. Their health and life is fading and at the end of the film they are only strong enough to sit on the grass tired and wounded as the German soldiers slowly march over to take them all prisoner. But on that lawn outside the hotel Hartenstein the weary soldiers start to sing the hymn "abide with me".

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

When you have nothing left, you have to rely on something outside of yourself. That something has got to be almighty God. The director of the film was trying to convey the idea that there are certain circumstances where nothing else can offer any sense of Hope.

I would go one step further and say there is no real hope apart from God at all.

Jeremiah

Today's passage was written in an even more helpless situation than the British paratroopers had to face. Imagine [if you will] the city of Jerusalem under siege by the Babylonian army, who at this very time are threatening to destroy the kingdom of Israel and to destroy God's Holy Temple. People are starving and scared and the enemy is building Giant ramps of earth outside the city walls to eventually march over. Jeremiah himself has predicted this fall, but the king refuses to hear the truth so he locks Jeremiah in the royal prison. It doesn't get much worse than that.

Helpless but not hopeless situation

- In Prison
- In a city under siege about to be destroyed
- Nobody wants to listen to him

And yet from here, in spite of all the destruction that he knows is about to take place; Jeremiah is told to give a message of Hope.

Now let me ask two questions that will form the basis of the rest of this message

1. What was Jeremiah's message?
2. How can having a living hope keep us fully alive, even while we are suffering?

Jeremiah's message- Hope of salvation and restoration

Judah and Jerusalem will be restored and saved under the new name: The Lord our Righteousness. No one could save themselves and no one in Israel was able to claim any righteousness, but God promises to be the righteousness of his people and anyone who lives in him [that is the New Jerusalem] will escape the wrath that was meant to fall on the ones who broke the law. This prophesy is about Jesus. He was a Judean descendant of King David. He will make God's righteousness available to all the residence of the New Jerusalem [His Church].

Jeremiah then assures us that there will always be a king on David's throne and there will always be a priesthood to offer sacrifices to the Lord. The word "Forever" is used.

Again both of these roles have been fulfilled in Jesus he is the Messiah the king of God's people and he is our great high priest whose sacrifice made it possible for us to be made right with God. His Death was the event in history that all previous sacrifice had been pointing toward. And now he makes petition

Hebrews 8:1 Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven,

8:2 a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man.

8:3 For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer.

8:4 Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law.

8:5 They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, "See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain."

8:6 But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.

How can having a living hope keep us fully alive, even while we are suffering?

1Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

The amazing thing about God's hope for our salvation is twofold. First Jesus takes what we deserve [death] and puts it on himself. Second we get what Jesus deserved put on us [life in all its fullness].

Often we forget the second part of the Good News. But this is what Jeremiah was on about when he said in the New Jerusalem we would be living in the Righteousness of God. He was not talking about a place- he was talking about a way of life. The Israelites had made the gift of the land more important than the giver and so they missed Jeremiah's point.

If you make any finite object or resource the basis of your future hope, then you are doomed to suffer more hopelessness as these things will inevitably be stripped from you. You have to make something infinite the source of your Hope.

God is the only person capable of creating an everlasting hope in us.

We can surmise three things from this claim

1. There is no hope in death [hope is a living word]. **"No hope in hell"**- common expression. **"Abandon hope all ye who enter here"** –Dante's Inferno
2. The only sure hope is the Life giver himself, who can save us from death and hell. All our hope should be firmly set in the Good News about Jesus. Our "Fully Aliveness" must come from Jesus.
3. It is possible and likely that we will place our hope in things [or circumstances] rather than God. We hope in blessings rather than the Blessor. It is this misplaced hope that often lets us down and causes us to doubt that any hope is beneficial.

Case study Viktor Frankl- Hope and Perseverance linked

"Those who have a 'why' to live, can bear with almost any 'how'."
– Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*

Frankl was a Jewish psychiatrist who spent the last year of the holocaust in Auschwitz. He survived. His observations of how people coped with extreme suffering gave him the idea that hoping in the God of our understanding was the only way to ensure that life could be restored. [Jeremiahs idea] Those who lost hope or hoped in deliverance by a certain date succumbed to depression or violent outbursts quickly. Those who placed hope in the fact that their lives would be restored never felt secure ever again and many did not cope with life after they were delivered. But those whose hope allowed them to believe that God had a purpose in what had happened to them and that suffering was part of God's plan for their life, were better equipped to accept the transition from suffering to freedom.

What was really needed was a fundamental change in our attitude toward life. We had to learn ourselves and, furthermore, we had to teach the despairing men, that it did not really matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us. We needed to stop asking about the meaning of life, and instead think of ourselves as those who were being questioned by life—daily and hourly. Our question must consist, not in talk and meditation, but in right action and in right conduct. Life ultimately means taking the responsibility to find the right answer to its problems and to fulfill the tasks which it constantly sets for each individual.

Frankl was not a Christian to my knowledge, but his grasp on having a living hope was thoroughly New Testament. If Christ is the source of our life, then hope in Christ is the key to our perseverance.

Romans 5:1 *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

5:2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
5:3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,
5:4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,
5:5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.
5:6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.
5:7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—
5:8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Application

Jeremiah has pointed out that our hope is in our saviour. Hope is solid and can deflect the blows of life. For this reason Paul teaches us to put on the Helmet of Salvation. It protects our mind and guards our thinking from hope destroying thoughts.

1Thessalonians 5:8 *But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, **and for a helmet the hope of salvation.***
5:9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,
5:10 who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him.
5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

Nothing can pluck you from Gods hand, but the enemy can play merry hell with your hope, with your peace, with your joy and with your ability to love. This will prevent you from being fully alive. So stand firm in what you know, hope and believe.

“What we have at the moment isn't as the old liturgies used to say, 'the sure and certain hope of the resurrection of the dead,' but a vague and fuzzy optimism that somehow things may work out in the end.” — [N.T. Wright](#), *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*

Final thoughts

- In this life you will suffer, it is part of the plan
- How you cope with that suffering is entirely dependent on what you place your hope in.
- Jesus is the most enduring object of hope
- Jesus is the best King [he has got it all under control]
- Jesus is the best Priest [the only one who can reunite us with God]

Romans 8:24 *For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees?*
8:25 *But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*
8:26 *Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.*
8:27 *And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*
8:28 *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*