

Keeping Hope Alive

When Hoping is Hard

Psalm 40:1-3 - The Message

I waited and waited and waited for GOD.

At last he looked; finally he listened.

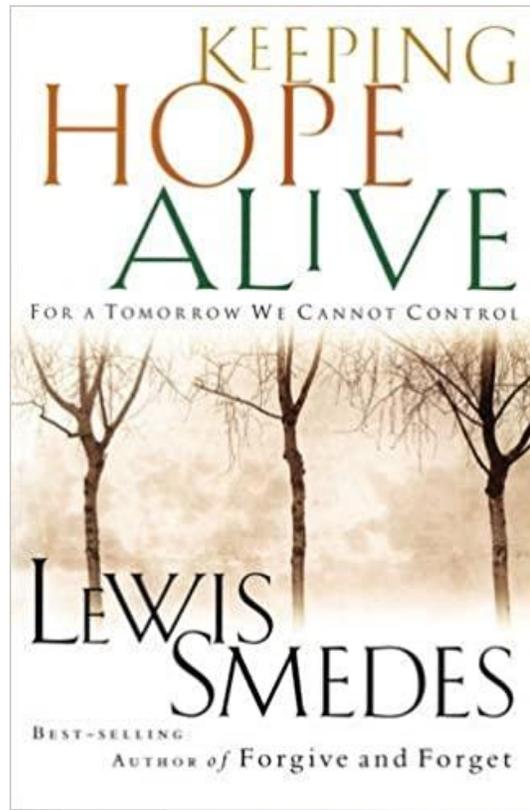
He lifted me out of the ditch,
pulled me from deep mud.

He stood me up on a solid rock
to make sure I wouldn't slip.

He taught me how to sing the latest God-song,
a praise-song to our God.

More and more people are seeing this:
they enter the mystery,
abandoning themselves to GOD.

Keeping Hope Alive: For a Tomorrow We Can't Control



Available on Amazon Kindle. Also available on Scrbd



Hope Means Worrying

Key Idea: Hope is always butting heads with worry. So long as we have something to hope for, we'll have something to worry about. As long as we worry, we'll know the embers of hope are burning.

What do you do with your worries? Do you sit with them, distract from them, talk them through, dream about them, journal them, pray over them? How do you cope with them?

Hope Means Waiting

- ▶ Key Idea: Hope means active waiting, and waiting is a decision. In fact, we have to actively decide, often many times, to keep waiting. Our decision to keep waiting shapes our whole living. And remember: the trick is to be content with your discontent.
- ▶ No one likes to wait when waiting feels like forever. Can you relate to the difference between “twiddling our thumbs” and actively waiting? Which one characterizes you now?

The Limits of Hope

- ▶ Key Idea: There are some limits to hope. One limit is what is possible: it's not wise to hope for what can't happen. Another limit is what is permissible. It's not right to hope for what is wrong.
- ▶ Reflect in your breakout group for a couple minutes on the hope of “returning to normal.” Do you want to return to “normal?” Or do you want normal to be different. What would like to be different in a new normal?

The Danger of False Hope

- ▶ Key Idea: Augustine said, “There are two things that kill the soul, despair and false hope.” They go together. It’s hard to tell the difference between false hope and honest hope. But we have to keep our eyes open and hearts alert, because life is too short for phony hopes.
- ▶ Do any of those false hopes resonate with you? Are you more susceptible to some false hopes than others? How do you keep your “eyes open and heart alert?”

Summing Up

- ▶ Worry is a sibling to hope, just like faith is the sibling to doubt. To combat worry it's tempting to give up hope, become fatalistic, or have a false view of faith. The way forward is simply to accept it.
- ▶ Waiting is the hardest part of hoping. Waiting is not mindless, it's active and it's a decision we make over and over. Our decision to wait give meaning and dignity to our lives.
- ▶ There are times when we should give up hopes, when what we hope for is impossible or shouldn't be. When we let go our hopes, we make room for deeper and better hopes.
- ▶ False hope, which tags along so often with despair, is dangerous. We must be alert to it, so we can reject it. Rejecting false hope means waiting, and making room for honest hopes.

A Closing Quote from Lew...

“I come back again to the secret of being at peace with ourselves when we have to wait a long time for what we hope for: it is the discovery that we can be content with our discontent. Discontent is the way of the traveling life, and we are all born to travel; we are discontent until we get to where we hope to be, but as long as we have the hope of getting there, we can be content with the discontent of not being there yet.”