

HOPE

Important Words:

Meanings of the Words We Use

OPENING PRAYER

Lord God Almighty, You have given us a hope in Jesus that will not disappoint us. Sustain us in that hope that we may cling to you always. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

1. How is the word “hope” used in daily life? What do people refer to when they use the word “hope”?

This word is used to speak most often about things that might happen that would bring joy to the one hoping they would happen. They talk about “hoping against hope.” They hope their team wins. They hope their garden produces lots of food. They hope their friend or spouse will always be there for them.

2. What is your definition of “hope”?

Answers will vary.

3. How do people in our culture speak of “hope”?

Our culture tends to talk about hoping for things that have no certain fulfillment. They tend to place their hope in things that are earthly and, therefore, less than reliable. Hope is an end to itself in many ways, a happy wish about what could happen, the outcome of a pleasant daydream.

4. What’s the dictionary definition of “hope”?

The noun “hope” is defined at *Merriam-Webster.com* as:

- desire accompanied by expectation of or belief in fulfillment
- someone or something on which hopes are centered
- something desired or hoped for

5. What is the trouble with our hope being in earthly things? Why is hoping in God different and better? Read Psalm 33:17–19 and 1 Corinthians 15:19.

Psalm 33:17–19 says, “The war horse is a false hope for salvation, and by its great might it cannot rescue. Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love, that he may deliver their soul from death and keep them alive in famine.” First Corinthians 15:19 says, “If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.” Both passages tell us that earthly hopes will disappoint, while hope based on Christ will never disappoint us.

6. What is to be our ultimate hope as the people of God? What is meant by “the redemption of our bodies” in Romans 8:23–25?

Romans 8:23–25 says, “And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.” We are to hope for the redemption of our bodies. This means that we are waiting for the day when all things, including us, are made new. We look for the day when we will be raised up from death and given life again because of our Savior Jesus.

7. The Apostle Paul experienced much hardship in his life, and often, the things he hoped for in this world did not materialize. But when those hopes were crushed, what hope remained? Read 2 Corinthians 1:8–10. What does this mean for us?

Second Corinthians 1:8–10 says, “For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.” Paul’s hope that God would bring ultimate deliverance never changed. We too, while having some hopes in this world, must make sure our primary hope is grounded on Christ’s solid promise to deliver us both now and on the Last Day.

8. Why is our hope so certain, according to 1 Corinthians 15:20–23?

First Corinthians 15:20–23 says, “But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.” Our resurrection is as certain as Jesus’ resurrection. Since He has been raised, so will we. This is why at the grave we say as we lay the remains in the ground that we do so “in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life.” Our world’s hope is often short lived, based on nothing more than wishful thinking, and in the end it disappoints. The hope we have is eternal, based on the certain promises of God and the resurrection of Jesus, and in the end it brings eternal joy.

CLOSING PRAYER

Merciful Father, this world offers much and delivers so little. Grant us to know that what You promise You also deliver. As You raised up Your Son from the grave, raise us up also on the Last Day according to Your promise. Amen.