

THE SWEETNESS OF HOPE

TEXT: (Proverbs 24:13-14, NIV)

¹³ Eat honey, my son, for it is good; honey from the comb is sweet to your taste. ¹⁴ Know also that wisdom is like honey for you: If you find it, there is a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off.

INTRODUCTION

1. "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise" (Psalm 111:10, NIV).
2. "Here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for, this is the duty of all mankind. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, NIV).
3. "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Romans 15:4, NIV).
4. "O taste and see that the LORD *is* good: blessed *is* the man *that* trusteth in him. O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for *there is* no want to them that fear him. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good *thing*" (Psalm 34:8-10, KJV).

I. OUR HOPE

A. A Comforting Hope

1. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (I Thessalonians 4:15-18, KJV).

B. A Living Hope

1. "In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (I Peter 1:3, NIV).

C. A Purifying Hope

1. "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good" (Titus 2:11-14, NIV).
2. "Know also that wisdom is like honey for you: If you find it, there is a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off" (Proverbs 24:14, NIV)
3. "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding" (Psalm 111:10, NIV).
4. "Here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind" (Ecclesiastes 12:13, NIV).

5. "But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure" (I John 3:2-3, NIV).

II. THE POWER OF HOPE

A. The Joy of the Spiritually Resurrected

1. "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"
The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 15:55-57, NIV).
2. "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!" (Job 19:25-27, NIV).

B. Hope Inspires

1. "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us" (Romans 5:1-5, NIV).
2. "We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved" (Romans 8:22-24, NIV).
3. "If you find [wisdom], there is a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off" (Proverbs 24: 14, NIV).
4. "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding" (Psalm 111:10, NIV).
5. "Here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind" (Ecclesiastes 12:13, NIV).

III. HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION

1. "In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not *so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also" (John 14:2-3, KJV).

A. Longing for Life Everlasting

1. "If a man dies, will he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait for my renewal to come" (Job 14:14, NIV).
2. "For he (Abraham) was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Hebrews 11:10, NIV).
3. "[The patriarchs of old] were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them" (Hebrews 11:16, NIV).

B. The Futility of This Life Only

1. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (I Corinthians 15:19, KJV).
2. "I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my work, and this was the reward for all my labor. Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 2:10-11, NIV).
3. "Their tombs will remain their houses forever, their dwellings for endless generations, though they had named lands after themselves. But man, despite his riches, does not endure; he is like the beasts that perish. This is the fate of those who trust in themselves, and of their followers, who approve their sayings. Selah
Like sheep they are destined for the grave, and death will feed on them. The upright will rule over them in the morning; their forms will decay in the grave, far from their princely mansions. But God will redeem my life from the grave; he will surely take me to himself. Selah" (Psalm 49:11-15, NIV).

CONCLUSION

A. Jesus is Our Hope.

1. "Eat honey, my son, for it is good; honey from the comb is sweet to your taste. Know also that wisdom is like honey for you: If you find it, there is a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off" (Proverbs 24:13-14, NIV).
2. "The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful" (Matthew 13:22, NIV).