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Weekly Encourager – 18 October 2009

IN THE BIBLE, HOPE IS NOT WISHFUL THINKING BUT FIRM CONVICTION

1. **“Remember your word to your servant, for you have given me hope. My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life.” Psalm 119 verses 49-50**
2. **“To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said: If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free ... He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.” John 8 Verses 31-32, & 47.**

Have you ever thought how powerful is the presence of hope in the human spirit when filled with God, the Holy Spirit? People without schizophrenia face hopeless situations and wonder how to carry on. But if you are living with this psychotic bondage and are desirous of breaking through into the freedom which Jesus can impart, you will certainly see the need to keep a real glimmer of hope alive in your life.

How do you do that? There's no better proven way of keeping hope alive than anchoring it in the word of God, the Bible. By that I mean meditating and memorising the promises found in its richly, hope-filled pages. The demonic voices that sometimes assail your mind with outlandish suggestions aimed at harming or even destroying your life can be held at bay, and even defeated, through the power and strength of words of hope found in holy scripture.

I am so thankful that at the beginning of my 26-year struggle, I discovered the daily treasure of reading, meditating and using as prayer ammunition the words found in the Bible. My heart contained no other hope but the hope in God I found as his word buttressed my spirit and gave strength to carry on. I started every day with a time of meeting God and searching the Bible for spiritual food and help.

One day, when I was held in an uncomfortable bondage by demonic voices, it was to the word of God I went for hope, comfort and deliverance. Quoting from Schizophrenia Defeated, Chapter 4: “I went straight upstairs into the bedroom in our home and began seeking God for help in every conceivable way I could think of, in an attempt to get free. I thumbed through the Scriptures anxious for inspiration to pray. I called out to God for help to get rid of this foe within which seemed unshakable! It must have been a struggle lasting two hours, during which time I heard the demon suicide clearly whisper: “Why don't you go and throw yourself in the Dearne? It'll soon be over.”

“The River Dearne was a small distance away and I had a picture in my mind of a certain spot as the demon spoke. I fought on, mustering all the spiritual strength and opposition I could from God's word by repeating Scriptures rapidly as the battle intensified to take my mind. Then, suddenly, it occurred to me to begin speaking in tongues and fight the evil spirits with this unknown strategy demons are unable to understand and cope with. I had received this gift of speaking with other tongues at the Assemblies of God Conference a few months earlier.”

Recounting the incident, I am reminded that it was there in life's pattern of intimate communion of prayer - now contending against evil spiritual forces – that hope was given, kept alive and nurtured. The promise of hope anchored in my spirit fixed itself on the words of Jesus: “I will never leave you or forsake you” – even in the heat of a battle for survival itself.

Commenting on the scripture found in Hebrews 6:19 “This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil,” a well-known American devotional writer says: “Any sailor or fisherman knows the importance of being sure the anchor is

securely tied to the anchor rope or chain. The same is true for the anchor of hope. Prayer is more than throwing out the anchor. It's being held to the Presence. We can ride out any storm knowing that our anchor is sure." Yes, indeed, prayer made in the Presence does give real hope to come through the storm.

You will have noticed as you access this website the words "promised hope through Jesus Christ" underneath Schizophrenia Defeated. I was impressed one day to insert the adjective "promised" in front of the word hope because every one of God's promises found in the Bible are true. He is well able to fulfil every promise contained in scripture. What a supply of hope is there for you right now – no matter what you are passing through. Reach out in faith built on God's word and you will find hope released into your conquering spirit.

IF YOU WISH TO INVITE JESUS INTO YOUR LIFE, DO PRAY THE FOLLOWING PRAYER:

"Lord Jesus Christ, I know I have sinned in my thoughts, words and actions. There are so many good things I have not done. There are so many sinful things I have done. I am sorry for my sins and turn from everything I know to be wrong. You gave your life upon the cross for me. Gratefully I give my life back to you. Now I ask you to come into my life. Come in as my Saviour to cleanse me. Come in as my Lord to control me. Come with the strength of your grace and the power of your Spirit to defeat the evil spirit of schizophrenia that troubles me and so come right through into your glorious freedom. Amen".

**Jesus is King and I will extol Him,
Give Him the glory and honour His name.
He reigns on high, enthroned in the heavens,
Word of the Father, exalted for us.**

**We have a hope that is steadfast and certain,
Gone through the curtain and touching the throne.
We have a Priest who is there interceding,
Pouring His grace on our lives day by day.**

**We come to Him, our Priest and Apostle
Clothed in His glory and bearing His name,
Laying our lives with gladness before Him;
Filled with His Spirit we worship the King.**

**O holy One, our hearts do adore You;
Thrilled with Your goodness we give You our praise.
Angels in light with worship surround Him,
Jesus, our Saviour, for ever the same.**

James Stacey

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