

## A Hope and a Future

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### Scriptures:

Jeremiah 29:11

Matthew 6:25-34

John 1:1-5

1 Timothy 1:1

Did you ever think about the future when you were a young child? Clearly, it is not easy to remember our thoughts as very little children, but I don't recall thinking of more than one day at a time until I was about 8 or 9. Strangely the first incident that made me think about the frailty of our future was an aeroplane disaster in Munich when many of the Manchester United football team were either killed or injured. The reality of death suddenly loomed into my world as we watched the news broadcast on our little black and white TV, and saw the photos in the newspaper of these young men whose lives were now over. For years after that, I remember most nights questioning my mother about what happens after we die. Her answers only ever pointed one way, straight to God.

Jesus knew how easily we humans become anxious about our future, and He never castigates us for being so. He simply and clearly pointed us to His, and our, Father, telling us not to take any anxious thoughts about tomorrow, it is all held in God's Hands. Some Bible translations substitute the word "worry" for "anxious thoughts", yet there is such a vast difference between these two concepts. What Jesus was warning us of was the gut wrenching, soul destroying anxiety that our enemy uses to destroy hope and convince us that our future is unsure or bleak. Jesus tells us to look at the most insignificant of birds, the sparrow, and how God looks after them. Yet sparrows don't just sit around and expect worms to suddenly appear so they can be fed, they go out and seek for them, but with no anxiety at all. So it is with us. God has a plan for each of our lives, a plan that He knows is best for us, and that plan includes us using the gifts of physical strength, intellectual ability and common sense that He has given us. I know God holds my future safely in His Hands, but I'm still going to plant vegetable seeds in my garden, bottle the fruit that is abundant in summer so that my family can enjoy it in winter and give praise and thanks to Him for His wonderful provision while doing so.

Our beautiful, but broken, world is rife with anxiety. There are dire predictions about the effects of mutations of the corona virus, in addition to the inexorable results of the obvious climate changes that are the outcome of man's greed and lack of care for our planet. Wherever you turn, someone is pointing out something designed to raise these anxiety levels even higher. It is at times like these when, more than ever before, we need the foundation of the solid Rock of Truth, Jesus Christ our Lord, to stand firmly upon.

Our future is not to walk in the darkness or gloom of uncertainty and emotional upheaval, Jesus tells not only that He is the Light of the world, but so are we. We carry the Light of Life, but so often we focus on the darkness far more.

John's gospel begins with an assurance that is one of the most beautiful promises for our future: *"5 The Light shines on in the darkness, and the darkness did not understand it or overpower it or appropriate it or absorb it [and is unreceptive to it]. (Amplified)*

God does not want us to look at all the promises for our future to make us feel guilty that we so often fail to act on what we know to be true, He wants to reassure and comfort us. His Word is never to be used as a weapon to whip ourselves, or others, with. We all only have a grain of mustard seed, yet in His Hands, this tiny iota of faith allows Him to step in then permit us to use His Faith, which is boundless and eternally sure. The only way is to surrender and place ourselves the safest place in the universe, the Hands of our Father.

**Prayer:** Father God, our future is assured, You and You alone are our future, our hope and our only source of Life. Grant us the grace to keep our eyes fixed on You whatever may befall us. Amen

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