

Joyous Hope in the Promises of God



Marian

Scriptures:

John 16:33

Matthew 28:19-20

Romans 8:38-39

Many years ago whilst teaching a group of young children in a little thatched roofed chapel in Bedfordshire, I felt God was calling me to teach the children how to turn their Christian belief into caring for others, especially the elderly, the lonely and the sick. I sought Him in prayer as to how I might do this, and at that time I was also visiting a lovely kind old lady we all knew as Mum Wells. One day, whilst enjoying a chat with her over a cup of tea, she brought a little box from her bedroom to show me. She told me it was her Promise Box. She opened it and invited me to remove one of the little scrolls and read what it said. Each little scroll had the words of a promise from Scripture and she found great comfort in opening one each morning after her prayer time.

At that time I was nursing on a Cancer Ward in our local hospital and I was deeply concerned for a dear woman in her 40's who was in the final stages of an incurable cancer. Terror was written all over her face bless her. Many of us, including the Chaplain tried to console her, but she remained deeply troubled, uncertain of her future, very understandably. I prayed earnestly that she would encounter Jesus whilst there was still time, maybe in a dream, or through the witness of someone she trusted.

The following Sunday morning I told the children about the wonderful little promise box my old friend had shown me. I suggested that we should make one together and I would take it to the lady in Hospital who was dying, but didn't yet know Jesus. One little girl had just lost her Grandpa to cancer, he was a Christian so she found great comfort in knowing he was now safe with Jesus in Heaven. All the children loved my idea. I had already prepared by typing and carefully cutting out a 100 promises from the old and new Testaments. The children loved rolling them up into little scrolls. From a large piece of cardboard I carefully cut out the box lid and base for them each to draw a little picture or pattern on before we folded and glued it into shape. The completed box was beautiful, and the children decided they also wanted to make a special big card to go with the box, telling her we were all praying for her to know Jesus who would take care of her in Heaven. Children are so openly wonderful in their faith and they blessed and encouraged me so greatly that day. The joy of HOPE, even in the face of adversity shone through their trusting young eyes.

The following day I popped into the hospital, even though not working, and when I got to her bed, I found her sleeping peacefully. I didn't want to wake

her from that place of peace, so decided I would leave the little box and card on her locker. An elderly lady in the bed opposite called me over and asked if I was a Christian. When I told her I was, and who the little gift and card were from, she beamed and said, "Oh this is SO wonderful. I have been praying to Jesus to give me an opportunity to tell that dear lady about Him before it is too late. You and those little children are an answer to my prayer." I was overjoyed and told her she was also an answer to my prayer. We prayed together before I left the Ward knowing she would explain who the card and Promise Box were from. I wasn't in again until Thursday, and when I arrived the Nursing Sister told me the poorly woman had died peacefully in the night. She then added that after I left the gift and card from the Sunday School children, the patient had come to a place of deep peace, so much so that her husband wanted to know what had happened! The old lady in the bed opposite was able to tell me that she had spoken with her and led her to Jesus, and that she had found deep peace in hearing the promises of God being read to her after choosing a few each day. The card and Promise Box were given to her grieving husband who was extremely grateful. I never saw him again, but I love to think that he too found Jesus through the loving gift the children made for his dear wife in her hour of need.

The Bible is full of promises. Some we love more than others which seem more like a warning, but Jesus didn't promise we would have a trouble free life. Indeed, the Bible teaches us that there will be times of great trial this side of Heaven, and Jesus told His disciples:-

"In this world you will have tribulation, but be brave for I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

We are not promised a trouble free life – far from it. However, at the end of Matthew's gospel we read these precious words of Jesus which include a command and a promise.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you, and lo, I AM with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen." (Matthew 28:19-20)

Finally, at the end of Romans chapter 8 we read well known words, written by the Apostle Paul who rejoiced in all his many trials:-

"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39).

Prayer Heavenly Father, we thank You that in Your wonderful promises we find HOPE. Thank You that when it seems all joy is gone, HOPE springs eternal as we remember You are only a prayer away, waiting to raise us up on eagles wings. Thank You that you answered our prayers for the dear

dying woman in Hospital and that in her final hours she found the joy of placing her HOPE in You. Thank You that through her testimony, You taught the young children early in their lives that we can trust you in every circumstance, even when we may not understand. Thank You dear Lord that in You we have a HOPE that is steadfast and certain (Hebrews 6:19). May eternal HOPE become the catalyst that leads us to share the good news of salvation with all who don't yet know you. In Jesus' precious Name I pray, Amen.