

We have HOPE in a New Year and in the Good News of Christ

By Pastor Hope Deutscher

In the last few days as we look to turn the page on 2020 and into 2021, I've had people tell me we need to enter the new year with *hope*. We define *hope* as cherishing a desire with anticipation – such as hoping for the best or for a promotion; it's anticipating, waiting and expecting, and watching for something to happen. But in Hebrew, the word *hope* has the same root word as the word for “wait” and also shares the same word as the one for *cord* or *rope*. Hope is more than an emotion. It's an active, expectant state. Hope is like the stretching or twisting of the rope we're clinging to. It's like a rope being thrown to us when we desperately need it. It's hanging onto the rope – even when we don't understand why we're still hanging on.

We all define *hope* differently. In a recent social media post among clergy, when asked *What is Hope?* people answered: hope is persistence; hope is the hands and feet of faith; hope is putting your feet on the floor in the morning, getting out of bed, remembering to breathe, and living one more day because God woke you up in the morning; and another said hope is an old friend calling out of the blue on a really bad day. Women's faith writer Jennifer Rothschild says “Hope means we must be still and wait for what is still unseen.” She encourages us to take rest in God while we are waiting and impatient – but in that moment, God opens his arms and invites us to lay every worry and care at his feet, as we receive the peace that only God can give us.

What is hope for you? What is hope for you as it relates to your faith? This year, our lectionary follows the Gospel of Mark, which begins with these words: “The beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” Mark is excited! We have big news that we will want to share with everyone! Mark, who is writing to Christians in Rome where many gods were being worshipped, writes the whole gospel as a fast-paced adventure! He wants his readers to know Jesus is the one true Son of God! Our hope is found in this GOOD NEWS! It's not some emotional wispy thing about the future turning out alright. Our hope in Jesus Christ is BOLD, strong and grounded in the death and resurrection of Jesus. That ultimate hope helps us transcend all the barriers we face. Yes, we hope that 2021 will bring a lot of new things and maybe return us to some old ways of living. As Jesus says, “With God all things are possible.” Without hope, our lives turn to ashes. Hope sees the invisible, feels the intangible, and achieves the impossible. Every day we are sent and equipped to accomplish the impossible by the grace of God and the power of the Spirit.

May you find true hope in the Good News of Christ entering our story, giving us strength for our journey and walking alongside us as we enter a new year!

God's peace,

Pastor Hope Deutscher