**Hope In Times of Trouble**

Introduction: It is no mystery that we are living in times of trouble. Many are confused, many are fearful, and many are frustrated. The trouble that so many of us are facing in the times we live, have some people asking: Where is God? My goal tonight is to bring to remembrance what God’s will is for His people, even the midst of trouble in the world.

**A major key to experiencing God’s Goodness as a believer in times of trouble is to remember how he delivered you from trouble in the past.**

*Psalm 37:18-19,25 NLT*

*Day by day the LORD takes care of the innocent, and they will receive an inheritance that lasts forever. [19] They will not be disgraced in hard times; even in famine they will have more than enough.*

***[25] Once I was young, and now I am old. Yet I have never seen the godly abandoned or their children begging for bread.***

(Give example of God’s provision after layoff 8 days after the birth of my firstborn...Expound on all that David had seen and experienced that amplifies the impact of his statement in verse 25)

**Another major key to experiencing God’s Goodness in times of trouble is to cultivate hope in your heart.**

*Psalm 33:18-22 NLT*

*But the LORD watches over those who fear him, those who rely on his unfailing love. [19] He rescues them from death and keeps them alive in times of famine. [20] We put our hope in the LORD. He is our help and our shield. [21] In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. [22] Let your unfailing love surround us, LORD, for our hope is in you alone.*

Rev. Jesse Jackson at the Democratic National Convention in July of 1988 uttered a phrase that has been both mocked and held in great esteem. At the end of his speech Jesse uttered the phrase “Keep Hope Alive”. I don’t think we realize how important this concept is.

(Expound on how detrimental hopelessness is vs. the power of being hopeful)

In the world of psychology you can find, a book entitled “Hope In The Age of Anxiety” The authors, Anthony Scioli and Henry Biller, argue that there are nine forms of hopelessness, each related to the disruption of one or more of the basic needs that comprise hope; attachment, mastery, or survival. **The nine forms of hopelessness identified are: Alienation, Forsakenness, Uninspired, Powerlessness, Oppression, Limitedness, Doom, Captivity, Helplessness.**

**I am going to give definitions for each of these nine forms of hopelessness and give God’s answer to each of them.**

1. Alienation (Attachment)

Alienated individuals believe that they are somehow different. Moreover, they feel as if they have been cut loose, no longer deemed worthy of love, care, or support. In turn, the alienated tend to close themselves off, fearing further pain and rejection.

*Psalm 139:11-18 NLT*

*I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night— [12] but even in darkness I cannot hide from you. To you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are the same to you. [13] You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb. [14] Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. [15] You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. [16] You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. [17] How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! [18] I can’t even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me!*

2. Forsakenness (Attachment and Survival)

The word “forsaken” refers to an experience of total abandonment that leaves individuals feeling alone in their time of greatest need. Recall Job in the Old Testament, crumpled over and covered with sores, pleading with a seemingly indifferent God.

*Psalm 9:9-10 NIV*

*The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. [10] Those who know your name trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.*

*Psalm 37:25 NIV*

*I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.*

3. Uninspired (Attachment and Mastery)

Feeling uninspired can be especially difficult for members of underprivileged minorities, for whom opportunities for growth and positive role models within the group may be either lacking or undervalued.

*Jeremiah 29:11 NLT*

*For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.*

4. Powerlessness (Mastery)

Individuals of every age need to believe that they can author the story of their life. When that need is thwarted, when one feels incapable of navigating one’s way toward desired goals, a feeling of powerlessness can set in.

*Deuteronomy 30:19 NLT*

*“Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live!*

(The Power of Choice)

*Luke 10:19 NLT*

*Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you.*

5. Oppression (Mastery and Attachment)

Oppression involves the subjugation of a person or group…. The word “oppressed” comes from Latin, to “press down,” and its synonym, “down-trodden,” suggests a sense of being “crushed under” or “flattened.”

*Exodus 6:5-7 NLT*

*You can be sure that I have heard the groans of the people of Israel, who are now slaves to the Egyptians. And I am well aware of my covenant with them. [6] “Therefore, say to the people of Israel: ‘I am the LORD. I will free you from your oppression and will rescue you from your slavery in Egypt. I will redeem you with a powerful arm and great acts of judgment. [7] I will claim you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God who has freed you from your oppression in Egypt.*

*Colossians 1:13-14 NLT*

*For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, [14] who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.*

6. Limitedness (Mastery and Survival)

When the struggle for survival is combined with a sense of failed mastery, individuals feel limited. They experience themselves as deficient, lacking in the right stuff to make it in the world. This form of hopelessness is all too common among the poor as well as those struggling with severe physical handicaps or crippling learning disabilities.

*Matthew 19:26 AMP*

*But Jesus looked at them and said, “With people [as far as it depends on them] it is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”*

7. Doom (Survival)

Individuals weighed down by this form of despair presume that their life is over, that their death is imminent. The ones most vulnerable to sinking into this particular circle of hell are those diagnosed with a serious, life-threatening illness as well as those who see themselves worn out by age or infirmity. Such individuals feel doomed, trapped in a fog of irreversible decline.

*Psalm 107:15-20 NLT*

*Let them praise the LORD for his great love and for the wonderful things he has done for them. [16] For he broke down their prison gates of bronze; he cut apart their bars of iron. [17] Some were fools; they rebelled and suffered for their sins. [18] They couldn’t stand the thought of food, and they were knocking on death’s door. [19] “LORD, help!” they cried in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. [20] He sent out his word and healed them, snatching them from the door of death.*

8. Captivity (Survival and Attachment)

Two forms of hopelessness can result from captivity. The first consists of physical or emotional captivity enforced by an individual or a group. Prisoners fall into this category as well as those help captive in a controlling, abusive relationship. We refer to this as “other-imprisonment.”…An equally insidious form of entrapment is “self-imprisonment. This occurs when individuals cannot leave a bad relationship because their sense of self will not allow it.

*Isaiah 48:19-20 NLT*

*Your descendants would have been like the sands along the seashore— too many to count! There would have been no need for your destruction, or for cutting off your family name.” [20] Yet even now, be free from your captivity! Leave Babylon and the Babylonians. Sing out this message! Shout it to the ends of the earth! The LORD has redeemed his servants, the people of Israel.*

9. Helplessness (Survival and Mastery

Helpless individuals no longer believe that they can live safely in the world. They feel exposed and vulnerable, like a cat after being declawed or a bird grounded by a broken wing. Trauma or repeated exposure to uncontrolled stressors can produce an ingrained sense of helplessness. In the words of one trauma survivor, “I was terrified to go anywhere on my own … I felt so defenseless and afraid that I just stopped doing anything.”

*Psalm 18:30 AMP*

*As for God, His way is blameless. The word of the LORD is tested [it is perfect, it is faultless]; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.*

**Close with Summary**