

I. Introduction

A. The nature of hope

1. Hopelessness

- a. Hopelessness fuels destruction.
- b. People who are hopeless are self-destructive.
- c. People who are hopeless don't make plans.
- d. Hopelessness rejects anything that would suggest otherwise.

2. Hope

- a. Hope fuels dreaming.
- b. People who are hopeful care for themselves.
- c. People who are hopeful make plans.
- d. Hope receives - both good and bad - and lives in the hopeful tension.

B. The struggle of hope

1. Easier to be hopeless (I naturally have a phenomenal success rate for quitting.)
2. Hope requires intentionality and an anchor beyond circumstances.

*Here's the thing about hope, you can't power through to hope. You can't buck up, get over it, and be hopeful. Hope is something that has to be seen and then received and then acted on. We don't produce hope.

***Recognizing God's hand of providence is what reminds us that hope is not dead.**

C. The makeup of hope

1. **Divine Surrender: you and I trusting in God's sovereign mercy and His goodness toward us in spite of what we see or experience.**

*We trust that He will do what is right for us whether we understand it or not.

2. **Strategic Righteousness: how we participate in what God is doing in our lives. We make strategic plans and take action on what we know is pleasing to God and that which complements His character.**

*We do the next right thing - it could be a movement of action or patience - but it is a movement with our Father. (video)

II. Hope Acts in Ruth

A. Naomi (Ruth 3:1-5)

1. Divine Surrender

- a. Maybe, just maybe, God is on the move and I can trust Him.
- b. I will recognize that God may have provided Boaz as a redeemer.

2. Strategic Righteousness

- a. Wash up.
 - b. Put on some perfume.
 - c. Get dressed up.
 - d. Etiquette/custom training
 - e. Let him take it from there.
- B. Ruth (Ruth 3:6-14)
- 1. Divine Surrender
 - a. Did what Naomi asked/told her to
 - b. She believed and trusted that God could speak through a woman who has lost hope, given up and given into bitterness.
 - 2. Strategic Righteousness
 - a. Rather than go after him like a contestant on the bachelor, Ruth presented herself in an honorable way.
 - b. "Spread your wings"
 - 1) Ruth 2:12
 - fully entrusted oneself to God for His protection and provision
 - Positionally, you are declaring your belonging to God.
 - 2) Ruth 3:9
 - not just relational, sexual, marital
 - you are an extension of God's hand of blessing in my life
- *Recognition that God's hand of provision had come through Boaz and she is responding in gratitude and honor as she wants that to continue on a deeper level - committing herself to him in marriage.
- C. Boaz (Ruth 3:6-14)
- 1. Divine Surrender
 - a. Boaz was very attracted to Ruth.
 - b. He had an opportunity to "put a ring on it" right then and there.
 - c. Yet again, he honored God rather than looked out for himself.
 - 2. Strategic Righteousness
 - a. He accepted Ruth
 - Because you take refuge under God's wings, you are the kind of woman I want to cover with my wings.
 - b. He assures Ruth
 - In order to be worthy of your love and loyalty I must maintain my integrity.
 - But know that I want to and will, if I get the chance, do all that you ask.
- D. Where we are in the story
- 1. Surrendered to God
 - 2. Recognizing community
 - 3. Maintaining righteousness

*Not out of the woods yet, but they are now characterized by hope rather than hopelessness.

III. Application

A. Hopeless or hopeful?

1. Divine Surrender?

Is my trust in Jesus dependent on my situation in life?

Do I believe that God is merciful and good to me in spite of what I see or am experiencing?

2. Strategic Righteousness?

Am I making plans for the future?

Are the plans I am making pleasing to God and consistent with His character?

B. Me and you