

Shelly Snow-Hope
Zoom Meeting
April 18, 2021

It is so good to be together today. No doubt everyone that is in these little boxes that I am seeing, everyone is going through things. But aren't we so glad that we have a God that carries us and takes us and encourages us and helps us? I'm so encouraged today, it's beautiful. I'm probably going to say a couple things I've said before because I can't seem to get off of 'hope' and this pregnancy. Without hope we would be in big trouble and we use the word hope so flippantly like "I hope it doesn't rain so I can plant my flowers", and it's not really the kind of hope that the Lord gives us. The kind that He gives us is a confident anticipation and expectation.

I love this excerpt I copied from CS Lewis, "Hope is one of the theological virtues. This means that continually looking forward to the eternal world is not as some modern people think, a form of escapism or wishful thinking, but one of the things a Christian is meant to do. It does not mean that we are to leave the present world as it is. If you read history, you will find that Christians who did the most for the present world were just those who thought the most of the next." And I love that. Those who think the most of the next world. That this is not all there is. That God has a calling and a purpose. That He wants to bring everything into Himself. He wants to bring all things to Him. And that all things have to start in us.

Another quote, if you can indulge me for a moment is by someone named Dory Halbert who said, "Hope is a rope" And I thought that was interesting because I had just read that hope in the Old Testament is the word tik-vaw and it means "a cord or rope, to bind or to wait for or upon. Jeremiah 29:11 says 'for I know the plans that I have for you declares the Lord. Plans for welfare and not for evil. To give you a future and a tik-vaw A cord you can hold onto. "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Romans 12:12-that verse is written to a group of people who lived in the midst of chaos, struggle and persecution. To hope in something or someone means that I live in expectation that something I desire or long for will happen. To hope means that I trust that there is something more that I can see touch or feel. To hope means that I don't give up even when I cannot see what is ahead. To have hope results in the belief that my life is not worthless because God put me on Earth to be worthwhile and one of the ways I do that is to add meaning and richness to the lives of others." If you don't go away with anything else today let that be our focus. That we're not here for ourselves. We're here for others. We're not here with a hope being only 'I will attain' although we certainly do that. But our hope is that I might express Christ and that I might express Him in a way that actually brings liberation and deliverance to those I come in contact with. And that I don't in any way feel like I could take the credit for it. God has put a hope within us that goes deep. It's a deep hope. When you're pregnant you don't just say 'I hope I have this baby' You know you're going to have the baby. It's coming. You hope that you will provide the nourishment and the environment to bring that baby forth in a healthy way. And that's what we want. We want a full-grown Christ, a healthy Christ living in us that can be expressed to a lost and dying world. So it's not just a hope like 'I hope it doesn't rain so I can plant my garden.' The hope God has given us goes much deeper than that.

That cord, that word, rope or cord, for hope in the Old Testament is the same word that was referred to with Rahab and her scarlet cord. It was the sign that there was a promise made that if she did this then this would be done for her. When something like that happens, the cord

doesn't just happen alone. It happens when you interact with other people. And God has put us in the midst of a people that He's given us opportunity to interact with. Maybe it's just interacting with people on your job, or wherever. I don't know but we are here to make a difference and the only way we can make that difference is if we are holding onto that cord. And that cord is our hope. The Lord said 'I am your shield and exceeding great reward.' That's what our hope is. Our hope is that He will be our reward, not that we're going to get some other reward. We want Him to be our reward. We want the character of the Lord to be our reward. That's what we want. That's the hope we have, that we are vessels that would express, because of our connection to Him because that cord has bound us together, us with our Lord, that that cord can then extend to others. That cord can be a hope for someone else. We're all going through things and it's difficult when you're having a baby, there is no focus on anything else. Everything else has faded away. That is the only thing. Men, ladies that have never had babies, I'll just let you know. You don't have a focus on anything except bringing that life forth. That is your only focus and when that deliverance comes that is where your attention is and it's not a fun experience. No! It's a trial. It's a test. That fire that we just heard about in this song, the fire is to bring forth the life, to burn away everything else and bring forth that life. We're pregnant with this man child life. We're ready to be delivered. I look at Jesus when it said he was in the garden and it said he cried out with strong crying and tears to Him who was able to save him from death and he was heard in that he feared.

When you're on your knees, praying and asking the Lord for help, for deliverance from death, know that he hears you. There is no question. Sometimes we have an enemy, our own mind, that comes and says, 'Yeah right. Sure. Like He's gonna hear you. You're not this or that or you are this or that.' And I've just been encouraged by the Lord and the Word that when I'm praying to know that Shelly was heard in that she feared. When I'm crying out to Him I receive that I am heard because I fear. Do I fear perfectly? Maybe not, but you know what? He knows how to perfect that which I commit to Him. When we cry out, he's hearing us. We don't see the answer right away sometimes. Sometimes it takes time. When you get those first contractions, the baby is not here yet. But it's coming. Just give it some time; patiently waiting. Every time there is hope there has to be patient waiting. That's part of hope, patiently waiting. El-pece in the New Testament is confident expectation of good. Comes from the word elpo, which means to anticipate usually with pleasure. Hope is a substance, it's like gold within us. Gold, silver and precious stones right inside of us. That hope is not just something that's maybe. It's something that we have as an anchor to our soul. And our souls are on trial right now. Our souls are in testing right now. But we have a hope that we can hold onto. It's a reality of Him in us and that He said he was going to do something and that He would doing?' You can commit it to Him every day. Every day. 'Father, you know my frame. You made me. You put me here. You know exactly what's going on inside of me. And I'm crying out to you for help and deliverance to be that expression you want me to be.'

When you're praying, hope is a substance. It's the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. Faith, hope. I sing songs, it's just what I do. Songs can be prophetic. Songs can be a prayer. I don't believe the Lord is wanting us to always say 'Lord will you please do this? Lord will you please do that. Lord could you do this?' He's putting in our hearts, as sons of God, to speak His word, and to speak it with confidence and with the anointing of the Holy Spirit. When you're praying for one another, know that He is working. We see things, things happen. We've seen people sick; we've seen them pass. And we think, well that didn't work but we've got to keep on. We have to keep trusting and believing that God knows exactly what He's doing. And He wants to have sons that speak His words. We're to be

like Him and He speaks the word. That's how He gets things done. So we need to learn how to speak His word. It feels funny sometimes because we aren't used to it. So I'll start with a song. I'll sing it over myself. I'll sing it over others. Sing those prophetic words that God puts in your list. If it comes in a song, if it comes in a scripture, if it comes just by the Spirit speak it. Just speak it out. Don't be afraid. Don't be ashamed. Don't be embarrassed. Speak the word out. I'm seeing power in speaking His word. And He's had to show me through little things.

There was a dog I was responsible for. It wasn't mine but I was responsible to feed and water it. It was tied up and had been tied up its whole life. I would drive over every day to feed and water that dog. The dog didn't like me and I was afraid of it but I did my part. And everyday I would leave that place and I would pray, 'My God! I am believing for a loving home for this dog. He needs to know what love is all about. I'm believing you to provide a loving home for that dog,' I prayed that every day, every day, every day. I didn't know if I really believed He would do something or not. I mean, I did but I thought 'that dog is mean. It's been tied up its whole life. Nobody's gonna want that dog.' I went to work one morning and I got a text from the local animal society that try to find temporary homes and I'm thinking 'oh that dog will bite people and I don't know' and I get a text that says 'we think we may have found a home' and right then my sister called me. And she said 'Do you know about that dog? Has it been fixed? Has it had its shots?' just asking questions. Then she said 'my nephew wants the dog. His wife would really like to have it.' And I thought, 'Lord, this is amazing!' I'm just going to say this is one of the little things. And so now when I pray for people I say 'Lord you loved that dog enough to find it a loving, I mean a LOVING, home.' My nephews' wife adores it and it adores her. That is a small, simple example of the care God has. If He cares for a dog, you KNOW He cares for his sons. Don't think that He doesn't care about every jot and tittle of your life. He cares. He is for you and not against you. Now He certainly wants you to walk in His ways. He certainly wants you to hear His voice and to walk in what He says. Certainly He does. But if on this journey you are stumbling and tripping and falling, get back up and know that He is there. He's ready to help you. It doesn't look like it sometimes. Sometimes it's dreadful. Dreadful! Situations come that are dreadful! They're difficult. They're hard. And yet He sees an end result. He is looking at the finish and He knows that He's already done what it takes to get you there. So we just need to get up and walk. Just continue on this journey. He's for you. Not against you.

One more thing I love that Dory said, "A connected relationship with God is like grasping onto a strong rope. We can cling to it and depend on Him even when we can't see the next step. I need to rest in God, trusting that the issues I'm facing are part of what God is using to transform me. And like Rahab and the spies, I need to rest allowing other people into my life. God really is in control and when I relinquish my anxiety over to Him, I will find the hope, the rope, that I long for in the midst of chaos. Romans 5:1 says 'Through Him we have also attained access by faith into this grace in which we stand and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.' " I know we've heard Brother Gary has mentioned before a few times that one aspect of the glory of God is to have His thoughts and you know the scripture that says 'As a man thinks in his heart so is he'. How are you thinking today brethren? What are you thinking? Are you thinking God thoughts, or are you believing every little thing that comes into your head that says you aren't enough? You can't do it. He's not going to do it. Put it aside. He is going to do what He said He's going to do. You are what you think and if you have God thoughts, guess what? You're going to have God life.

David talked to his soul. And he encouraged himself in the Lord. He reminded the Lord, and himself, that his hope was in God. He said it over and over and over. Look through Psalms.

'Boy I'm in trouble, but my hope is in you' 'Boy, things are not good but my hope is in you' Let's not stick with the 'boy things aren't good' part. Let's just go to the 'my hope is in you' part. That's what we need to capitalize on. Psalm 43:5 "Why are you cast down oh my soul?" Have you ever done that? I do. Sometimes I talk to myself, I talk to my soul. "Why are you cast down oh my soul? Why are you in a turmoil within me? Hope in God for I shall again praise Him, my salvation and my God." He is out to save. He is out to save us. He's out to save us from ourselves. He's out to save us from anxiety and depression and addiction and whatever it is. Hopefully most of us are not encumbered by these sort of things but maybe someone in this Zoom meeting is still struggling with something. He's out to save us. He's out to save us from ourselves. All of Psalm 119 is basically talking about the word of God. 'I hope in your word' It's not in just the word written in ink, it's not in just the spoken word but my greatest hope is that as I come before Him and I give myself to communion with Him, that my hope is in what He's speaking to me on a daily basis. If He's not doing that, then start today having some time out. Time with the Lord. Get off Facebook, get off whatever. Get time with Him. Because He wants to encourage us that He is going to do what He said He was going to do. If you don't hear Him speaking in your spirit at least read the written word. That's so important. Once the written word is sown in your heart then it can start to be watered, it can start to grow and bring fruit. But it must be sown first. You can be like Mary who said "Be it unto me according to thy word." She had to have heard the word before she could say "Be it unto me" So we have to have that open fellowship, that open relationship and be bound to Him by that cord.

Martin Luther said, "Everything that is done in the world is done by hope." When you start out doing anything that you do, you have to have a hope that it's going to be accomplished before it's actually finished. Romans 15:4 "Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction that through endurance and through the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope" Hope indicates waiting so get ready to wait. That's where patience has to come in. Tribulation works patience, patience experience, experience hope and hope maketh not ashamed." What does that word experience mean? It means a trial. The trial of your faith. Experience is 'proving, trial and tried character.' Hope then makes not ashamed. Sometimes voices say, 'Who do you think you are you little people out here on this little hill? Come on.' But He says that hope makes not ashamed. That He is going to produce in us a life that's going to be able to be expressed and the whole world will come and say 'teach us. Teach us about your God. Show us.' And the way we show them is by walking in a love that no matter what somebody does, it doesn't shake us and it doesn't move us. Having that confidence that His character, His love was such that Jesus said "Forgive them Father for they don't know what they do" 1 Thessalonians 5:8 "Since we belong to the day, let us be sober having put on the breastplate of faith and love and for a helmet the hope of salvation" Of course the helmet is what goes on your head and that's talking about your thought life. So don't let a thought come in and just play around and leave. Nab it. Brother John Hinson said "Ya know, when a thought comes I make it bow to the name of Jesus." and that's what we need to do with our thoughts. Hebrews 6:18-19 "So that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge in the name of the Lord in the strong tower, the righteous can run into it and be safe." What a refuge! We have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul. A hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain.

When you're having a baby, one thing you've got to remember when you are into this deliverance, into this delivery is you've got to keep your eyes on your coach. And the Lord is our coach. You keep your eyes on the coach and you do exactly what he says. When he says

breathe, you breathe. When he says pant, you pant. When he says relax, you relax. This morning as we were praising the song came to me, and I think it's a scripture, 'The Lord your God is in your midst. A warrior to save. He will renew you in His love. He will exalt over you with shouts of joy.' The Lord wants to shout with joy over us. We have the God of creation that wants to sing over us. So sing over each other. Sing over yourselves. Speak life to yourself and to others. As you get before the Lord let Him put the words in your mouth and heart. When you're in your prayer closet let Him speak through you because there's power. There's power to go anywhere on the earth from your knees. There's power to do abundantly above all we can even ask or think. There's power to create. God put His creative word in us. He's put His creative power in us. And He wants us to be His mouth, to be His expression. Ultimately He wants us to be His body and expression. To have His heart pumping through our veins. To have His eyes to see people with. To have His nature and character.

I just want to encourage everyone to just hang onto that cord, to that hope. Sometimes it might feel like you are on the precipice and you're getting ready to fall, but hold on to that cord. It would be nice if everything in life would be easy but it is easy for the Lord. So when we find ourselves in Him it becomes easy. To our outer man, it's not easy. But keep moving. Hang on to that cord, it might look like you're going over the edge, but hang on to that cord. That cord is our hope. Don't lose your hope. Our hope in the Lord has substance, the gold and silver and precious stones that He has put inside of us and are part of our character.