

# Abounding Hope

by Alan Martin

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of hope in the Christian life and how to achieve the full assurance of hope by focusing on God's promise and not on circumstances.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 78:22, Proverbs 13:12, Romans 8:24-25, 1 Thessalonians 1:3, Hebrews 6:11, Hebrews 6:18, 1 Peter 1:8

**Topics:** "Hope"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of holding fast to hope in order to strengthen one's soul. He compares the value of a diamond to the value of a mature, consistent, and complete walk with God. The speaker also shares personal experiences of overcoming challenges and finding victory through God's power. He highlights the unchangeable nature of God's oath and His inability to lie as the foundation of our hope, serving as an anchor for our souls.

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## Transcript

off my heart to make sure that I impart some spiritual gift to you. Something you can take and hold and keep. Something that will strengthen your soul.

Strengthen your soul so that you leave here with a renewed heart and inspired hope. And that it will cause you to reach for, to lay hold of what God has for each of you. If I were to have the Hope Diamond in my pocket and just set it here on this tray or put a little table right here, would it be a very remarkable thing to you in this setting? Not really.

What makes a diamond special? What is it that makes a diamond attractive? And does it have it here so you wouldn't be able to fully appreciate it in this setting? When they set up a display case for the Hope Diamond, what's the critical aspect of that display? Light. Light. Light is shed upon the righteous and joy on the upright in heart.

And when the light of God illuminates a truth and when you see it clearly and you are captivated by its beauty, then you're able to fully appreciate what God has done. Something can have a value and not even seem that spectacular to you only because the light of God has not yet shined upon it in a way that has totally captivated your own attention. That's why I long and I long in my own heart to lead with you and experience with you light being shed upon one of the greatest gems we have, one of the greatest treasures we have.

A way of God that I don't think I for years I did not fully understand, but once I began to receive light on it, I was enriched and I have not gone back. I can testify by the grace of God, my life is stable. Christ is sufficient to me every day.

It is not a double-minded life. It has become from glory to glory. The backslider in heart has his fill of his own ways.

And his own backsliding punishes him. But the Lord, this is what the promise of the Lord says, I will save them from their sinful backsliding. And I've been saved from backsliding.

And life has become to me a life of from faith to faith, from glory to glory. And this is one of the things that when life began to be shed upon this element of our relationship with God in my life, it was a major key in my beginning to abound in my Christian life. Abound.

Every day abound. Gone went irritability. Gone went anger.

Gone went depression. Gone went this weakness. And each day became from victory to victory.

And I began to experience the reality of what Paul said, that although we're hard pressed, we're not crushed, we're broken, but we're not destroyed. In all these things, in all these things, even though what I have is just in an earthen vessel, what begins to be seen is that the all surpassing power keeping me from being crushed is of God. And in all the things you and I begin to experience when we really fully appreciate what God has done for us, and when we see what I want to talk about this morning, it's going to produce in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer.

I don't know about you, but I've not experienced this in a while. But it's still precious. I appreciate it.

I was tired of being defeated by things and circumstances. And if you're tired of being defeated by circumstances and you want to overwhelmingly conquer in all things, then he who has ears to hear, let him hear. Hebrews chapter 11 verse 1 says this, faith is the substance of hoping.

It's literally a participle. You've probably heard it said faith is a substance of things hoped for. It's really not the best translation.

The very substance of hoping is faith, meaning that if you really have faith, if faith is something that's really in your heart, here's what is going to produce the ability to hope. And why is that? Why is that such a key element in the Christian life? That's what I want to talk about this morning. May God give us this morning the spirit of wisdom and revelation on the importance of really fully learning how to hope upon the Lord.

Open your scriptures if you have them to 1 Peter chapter 1. 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 13. No, let's start in verse 9, 8 or 9. Yeah, let's start in verse 8. 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 8. Whom having not seen you love, and though you do not see him now, yet believing. What's the result of when you really are believing according to verse 8? What is it? Okay, if you are really believing, if right now you are currently believing, here's the manifestation it should be producing.

You should be being filled with joy inexpressible and full of glory. And so if you are lacking in joy, what's an indication of? You are weak in faith. Where is your faith? Because genuine faith at work produces such a joy.

That's the natural result of genuine faith that's at work. Believing you rejoice with joy inexpressible, full of glory. Because verse 9, you are obtaining the outcome or the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

And then I want to jump down to verse 13. And let's read this together. Therefore gird up the loins of your mind and be sober and fully hope upon the grace that is being born to you in the revelation of Jesus Christ.

What does it mean to gird up the loins of your mind? In the days of the scripture, back in the days of Jesus Christ, for their warmth they wore robes to look close to their feet. That's how, especially during the season when it's cold, that's how they maintain their body temperature. They tried to keep the air from getting up from under, so their robes were long.

Well, I don't know about you, have you ever tried to run in a robe that's, you know, that's hindering your legs? So before you began to run, you pulled up your robe around your waist and you tied it off, you girded it, you girded it up. We get that English term, girdle, was it something that ladies were trying to gird something else, you know, not to dress it. But when you want to gird that, get it out of your way so you can run well.

Well, what's Peter saying? Gird up the loins of your mind to prepare to do what? According to this verse. Gird up your mind so that you can learn to do what? Fully hope. Fully hope.

What does that tell you right away? That tells you that you don't necessarily hope fully automatically. You know, you can have a partial incomplete hope. It takes, you must gird up your mind in order to fully hope.

Because if you are lacking in the area of hope, if your hope is incomplete, your walk is going to be affected. And you are not going to experience all that God has for you because your hope has not become complete. I want us to look at this in Scripture.

Look in Hebrews chapter 3. Hebrews chapter 3. We'll start in verse 5 to set the context. Moses indeed was faithful in all his house as a servant for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterwards. But Christ as a son over his house.

Whose house we are. We are the house of Christ if. If.

If what? According to this verse, we are the house of Christ if what? If. If indeed we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of hope firm until it says the end. Is that what your verses say? Until the end? Many times this word unto the end is not talking about unto the end of time.

It's talking about unto maturity. Unto a complete, finished, mature state. You realize that you may not be, you may not be holding fast your hope in a mature state.

And if you're not, you know what it looks like? An immature walk. An inconsistent walk. And it looks like an incomplete joy.

This hope must be held fast until it is complete, full, finished. Because it's not. There's a warning verse.

Look in Hebrews chapter 6. The same book. Hebrews chapter 6 verse 11. Hebrews chapter 6 verse 11.

The writer of Hebrews says, and we desire that each one of you demonstrate, in a way, but each one of you needs to demonstrate a diligence towards the full assurance of hope to the end. There's something

that when you have fully understood what God is wanting you, what He's wanting you to accomplish in this area of hope, is He is wanting to make sure you and I come to an area of full assurance of hope completely, but in a finished state, in a mature state. If you fall short of this, here's what's going to happen.

What does the next verse say? In order that you do not become what? Sluggish. So if you are lacking the full assurance of hope, you know what it's going to look like spiritually for you? You're going to become sluggish. The literal word, the Greek word for sluggish means not to push.

And you know how I can tell how a brother's hope is not complete? He's stopped pressing in. He's not pressing in. You know what the runners do that are not the best athlete? That are just, you know, they're the guy that their coach needed to fill a slot in the track team, and they're running the 1600 meter, but there's guys almost a whole lap ahead of them.

They're still running, but they've not run to win. They're not running to win, and they're not pressing. And you know, God knows when you or I have, we are not doing well in hope, and we're just kind of hanging in along with the brothers, but we ourselves are not pressing in.

We're not pressing. What did Jesus say about the kingdom of God? He said, since the days of John the Baptist, the kingdom of God advances how? Violently or forcefully. And he said, and forceful men lay hold of it.

Men that are pressing in lay hold of it. Because it says, strive to enter. Actually, the Greek word there is agonize.

Agonize to enter to the narrow gate, because many shall do what? They'll seek to enter, but they shall not be able. You know why they'll seek to enter and not be able? Because they're kind of coming along with those who are striving, but they themselves are not pressing in fully. And you know why? They have really never come to the full assurance of hope.

The full assurance of hope looks like something in a man. You want to see what it looks like? What does the full assurance of hope look like in a man? If you were to think in the scripture, where it, because it says that through endurance and the encouragement of the scriptures, we might have hope. That's one of the ways we get hope, is through endurance and the encouragement of the scriptures.

All right? From the record of the scripture, where is a man that we can look to who came to the full assurance of hope? Abraham. That's right. Romans chapter four.

Exactly right. Look in Romans chapter four with me. What is Abraham called in regards to us in the matter of faith? What's he called? The father of faith.

It was actually with Abraham that God made the covenant that the law of Moses was only an intermediate covenant. Christ is the seed of Abraham. And so literally Christ for us is the fulfillment of God's covenant with Abraham.

The law was just an intermediate, temporary matter placed there until the seed to whom the promise referred had come. Right? That's why Jesus said all the law and the prophets were until John. He knew that because he was the seed of Abraham.

The law was only given until the seed came. Once he came, Christ is the end of the law. But of course he was, because he's the seed of Abraham and the law was only given to that.

So let's see what Abraham learned in this assurance of hope. Romans 4.18. I'll start at verse 17. Just as it is written, it says, I have made you a father of nations before whom he believed God who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did who against all hope.

And you can read it either in hope or by hope. The preposition epsilon new in the Greek can either be translated in or by. I like I like to translate this who against hope by hope believed.

And when when a person believes by hope, what are they basing that hope upon? Abraham had one thing to go by. God has said, I have made you a father of many nations. Was he a father? And did God even choose to say, I've made you a father of many nations.

The next month, Sarah becomes pregnant and he starts to have a son. Is that the way it works? Well, if it didn't work that way, then does God still work the same way now? Has God declared what he has made you in Christ? And just because you don't see it fully right now, what is it? Are you against hope by hope still believing? Can you look at where your life is right now? And like Randy said, or like someone else can say, no, I'm not fully there. But I'm going to forget what lies behind.

I'm not I'm not going to I'm not going to look at where I am and what I do not have right now, because I have been promised by God. I have been predestined by God to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. And by the promise of God and by the power of God, I'm not going to consider my body.

I'm not going to consider the deadness of Sarah Bloom. I don't care who I married you. I don't care who my brother is.

That's not the factor because of who God is, because of what God has said, God is able to accomplish what he promised. And because of that, Abraham came to look what it says in verse 20. He did not waver at the promise of God, but he was empowered by faith, giving glory to God.

And what did he come to in verse 21? He came to the full assurance, the very same word we read in Hebrews chapter six. He came to the full assurance of hope. He was, he became fully assured that God had power to do what he promised.

And you know what happened? Therefore, because he was fully assured that God had power to do with his promise, it was accounted unto him as righteousness. You know, that's what righteousness is. When a person comes to the absolute full assurance that what God has said about him will become a reality in his life, and he stops looking at where he is, and he stops looking at how weak he is, and he stops looking at the fact that he came from Adam, and he stops looking at the fact of where he's at, and he says, God is the factor, God is the reason, and I'm basing my future and my confidence on what God has said and that alone.

That's it. That's full assurance. That's a single eye, and that's what Abraham came to.

And if you don't come to that, here's what the results are going to be. The opposite of that is in Psalms, look in Psalm 78, 22. I couldn't remember the reference.

Psalm 78, 22. A group of people who also had a promise. What promise did this group of people have? It was a land.

What's it called? The promised land. It was the land that God said, I want you to have. It's a land that flows with milk and honey.

It has cities already built, houses already filled with good things, orchards already in production, fields already cleared, cultivated, and it's all for you. It's all to bring you into rest. And while they're standing on one river, told to go in and take possession of the land that they were promised, this is the record it says about them in Psalm 78, 22.

For they did not believe in God in the second half, and the Septuagint says, nor did they hope in himself. They didn't hope. And I just want to ask you, what do you really hope in? Is your hope in God, or is your hope in that you'll get a wife? Is your hope in God, or is it hoping that your spouse will get better so your life will be easier? Is your hope in God, or is your hope that your boss will start treating you better? You know hope placed in the wrong thing? What does the Bible say about hope deferred? It makes a shame.

You get what you deserve. If that's what you think you need to overcome, you think your spouse needs to be better, you think your boss needs to change, you think your circumstances need to change, that's what you're placing your hope in, and I can guarantee what's going to happen to you. You know what's going to happen to you? Disappointment.

But no one who has ever fully hoped upon God has ever been ashamed. Because God does not lie. God is not a man that he should change, neither the son of man that he should repent.

Had he spoken, and shall he not do it? I tell you what, heaven and earth will fail, and God's Word will not. David had come to such a full assurance of hope that he said this, a thousand may fall at my left side, ten thousand at my right hand, and what did he say? It will not come nigh to me. How could he say that? Because anyone who actually came to him had to get through God.

That's where his hope was, and he was never disappointed. I must come to this full assurance of hope. Let's look at some other scriptures that speak to this.

Look in 1 Thessalonians 1, verse 3. We'll start in verse 2. Paul says, we give thanks to God always for you, making mention of you in our prayers, constantly remembering this, your work of faith. If you really had faith, what's it going to produce? Work. Obviously, that's what Paul said.

Your work of faith, your labor of love, and your endurance of what? So obviously, what's the key to our enduring in everything? That's what really causes a man to endure, and here's the key about that. You realize that the Bible says, who hopes for what he already has? Hope that is seen is not hope. If you are really fixing your eyes on things that are not seen.

You know what fixing your eyes on things that are not seen looks like? It looks like Moses. Moses persevered because he saw Him who is invisible. There's only one really thing that's invisible, and when He is the only one you are looking at, you know what it's going to produce in your life? In every single situation.

Every single situation. In your marriage, in your job, in your relationship with every brother, in the way you react to every single situation. When the only thing you really see is God.

You know what it's going to produce? Endure. You will continue. You will be steadfast.

You will be overcome. You will continue to press in because I can guarantee what the first sign that a person is not living by hope is they stop. They get sluggish, and they suddenly begin to think it's too hard.

It's too difficult, and what Israel did in their unbelieving state, they said, why is the Lord's way so difficult? As a matter of fact, you know what the unfaithful, the wicked slave, you know what he said about his master? Remember? I knew you to be a hard man. Jesus says my yoke is easy, and my burden is light, and you know what's really happening when you are walking around saying, oh nobody knows the trouble I've seen, and oh my circumstances are so difficult. You know what it's a real indication of? Your eyes are not fixed on him who's invisible.

Your eyes are upon your circumstances, and your hope is that your circumstances will change so things will get better for you, and you know what? I can guarantee what you're going to have is disappointment, but no one who hopes on the Lord is ever disappointed. So what we're supposed to do with each other is we are supposed to help one another fully lay hold of this hope. We need to bring one another to this complete mature hope to live a full assurance of hope that does not make a shame.

Fully hoping upon God. Look in Romans chapter 8. Romans chapter 8 and verse 18. You know when you, what this is, this is another way you know when your hope is fully fixed upon the things that are not seen.

You see in verse 18, for I don't consider that our present sufferings are even worth comparing to, they're not even worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. You see then? It doesn't matter what I'm going through. You know if I were to suffer every single day difficulty, I'm 51 years old.

Let's say I live to be a really long life. Let's say I make it all the way to 110 or 120. That'd be a long time.

That means I only have 59 measly years of difficulty. That's all. It's not even worth comparing.

But it's just the only reason I say that is because I fully fix my hope on what I know awaits me. And not only do I know what awaits me, it's light and momentary. I'm in a win-win situation.

I know this, that tribulation works endurance. And endurance produces proven character. And you know what proven character produces? I'm in a win-win.

Even if for the rest of my life it's fully difficult. It's not even worth comparing to the light. It's momentary.

It's light because it's not even worth comparing to what's awaiting me. Even the difficulty itself is used to bring endurance and proven character in me which only strengthens the hope I have. I win-win.

There is nothing that can happen to me in this life that does not come through my Father. I don't care whatever men say about me, whatever Satan tries to do to me, whatever circumstances occur. You know how they are to me because they come through my Father.

You know how they hit me. You know what happens to that before it hits me through my Father? It becomes good. The only thing that can happen to me in this life is goodness.

That's all. When my wife is not doing well, it's for my good. When my children are struggling, it's for my good.

When my job is difficult, it's for my good. Because my Father works everything for good to me. Everything. That's why I give thanks in everything. When it's hard, I give thanks. When it's easy, I give thanks.

When I'm waiting, I give thanks. Because I'm thankful to the One whose eyes are fixed upon. Even it says in Ecclesiastes, when times are bad, consider.

When times are good, no, it says, when times are good, be happy. When times are bad, consider. The Lord hath made the one as well as the other.

Do you realize that Jesus said not only that the gate is small, but the way is tribulation? The way is tribulation. Am I suddenly going to suppose to wonder if God's loving me or things are not going well because the way is tribulation? That's the way. The way of tribulation leads to life.

That's how I learn. That's how I learn endurance. Endurance brings a proven character in my life.

And the proven character only does it. I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor principalities or powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor anything in this entire creation, nothing can separate the love of God in me. Nothing.

My Father makes everything good for me. I have learned to live like this. I have come to the full assurance of hope.

And therefore, no matter what I face, no matter what comes my way, I thank my Father. That's what He's decided for me to do. I live by hope.

I'm full of hope. It is my life. The Thessalonians had that too.

That's what they live by. You know, look in Galatians 5.5 and see if you see this in the scripture. It's not a scripture that I fully understood for many, many years.

Galatians 5.5. For we, by the spirit of faith, eagerly await the hope of righteousness. You see that? My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. You know what I am fully convinced of out of faith? I am hoping, all of my hope is that the righteousness of God is going to be fully mine through Jesus Christ.

And I'm talking about a righteousness that my wife will see. I'm talking about a righteousness that will produce tenderness and patience and kindness and gentleness with my children. I'm talking about a righteousness that my boss will see and my co-workers will see.

I'm talking about a righteousness that will produce a good tree, which will bear good fruit, which men will see as a good work, and when they see it, what will they do? They'll glorify your Father which is in heaven. That's the kind of righteousness. I know that it's not hope in me that will do that.

And by His divine nature, this is what's happening. And by the spirit of faith, I can't wait. I can't wait.

I can taste it. I am experiencing it. It's like it's so good.

It's so good I'm full of joy, but I can't wait for the next. If this is so good, I can't wait for the next. And that's so good, I can't wait for the next.

It's glory even in difficulty. It's the way we're supposed to live. Now look at Romans 12, 12.

Ask yourself this question. If you're lacking in joy, if you are not rejoicing in the Lord as fully as you should, why? Read this verse. What does it say? What's the only basis you're really able to rejoice? You see? Rejoicing in hope.

What if your hope is not full then? What if it's not complete? What if you've not come to the full assurance of hope? What's the manifestation? How are you going to be able to recognize it in your life? Or how are you going to be able to recognize it in the life of her brother? What's really going on if they're not full of rejoicing? They're not hoping. They're not living in the full assurance of hope. They've not set their hope fully upon the grace to be given them at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

They've not come to the full assurance of hope yet. Now look at Romans 15. Randy even quoted this this morning in his sharing.

Now you know, how many here are, is anyone Jewish here or Jewish background? Okay, not that we're all Gentiles. You know at one time we were without God and without what in the world? Okay, that's how we were. We were without God and without hope in the world.

But now look here in Romans chapter 15 in verse 12. And again Isaiah says, there shall be the ruin of Jesse and the one rising up to rule the Gentiles. And upon him what will the Gentiles do? Ah, here comes our hope.

Our hope was never meant to be in the law of Moses. Okay, but now the son of Jesse, the king, the king, the son of the king, king David, we're supposed to place our hope in him. And when that happens, the next verse says, so now, now that the hope that we're, now that the person we're supposed to place our hope upon is here, it says, now may the God of hope fill you with all in joy, with all joy and peace in believing so that you may abound in what? Hope.

Okay, now follow. Remember, if you are really hoping, what does it produce? It produces rejoicing. So listen, if you're, if you begin to abound in hope, what would it look like? You'll start, your life will become an abundance of rejoicing.

And you know what that makes you for the kingdom of God? A light set in a dark place. A city set on a hill. Because I guarantee you, that's the one thing the world cannot see any other place that a man, no matter what's happening to him, no matter how difficult it is, no matter what his marriage is like, no matter what his home is like, no matter what his job is like, he is constantly rejoicing.

They know that that man must have something else going on than any of them. And when they see that evidence in your life, you know what they're going to start asking you? They know you're not fixing, you're not rejoicing because of circumstance. They can see that.

They know you, you must be tapped into something that they're not. And when men see this kind, it adorns the doctrine. I mean, it's not even producing joy in you.

You don't even have a gospel. What good news is that? It's like, here son, it doesn't work for me, but I want you to believe. It's ridiculous.

You know why most children don't follow their parents' faith? It didn't work for their parents. Why shouldn't it? But you know what? Even a child not living at home can see the joy of the Lord come upon a parent. It's never too late.

When the joy of the Lord comes, when He comes into your life, when He accomplishes this in your life, you know what happens to your past? All those ashes got burned up. You know what they become? Beauty. You know what happens to your mourning? What does God give you? The oil of joy.

And you know what happens to your heaviness? What does He give you? The garment of praise. And I like that. It says He shall give you beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that you should be what? Why? Why does He give you that? In order that you become a tree, a planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.

And it literally finishes up. It doesn't even stop there. Isaiah goes on to say, and instead of their shame, they shall receive a double.

Now that is not the best bargain in the world. That God wants to take the things that literally you should be ashamed of, turn your ashes into beauty, turn your mourning into joy, take your garment, your heaviness, and give you a garment of praise. And instead of the shame you deserve for what you did, give you a double blessing.

And what it produces is a tree of righteousness. You know what the neat thing about a tree is? It's a perennial. You know the difference between an annual and a perennial? An annual you have to replant every year.

A perennial doesn't die. It bears its fruit in season. And its leaf does not wither.

When your hope is really built upon the Lord. I'm going to be sensitive with children too. The spirit of prophets are subject to prophets because God is a God of order, right? All right, I'll wrap up with this.

Where is this hope really being? You know what Paul said, therefore having such hope we use great boldness of speech. It's taken me a while to realize that when people would wrestle with me, they would wrestle with me because they think, man are you there fully? I mean do you ever sin anymore? Do you just talk like you never struggle? I had this Russian brother, you know, he's been coming to our fellowship almost a year. And one time he says, you know, you talk about joy and peace and I listen to you and I just wonder, do you ever struggle? I was so blessed.

That's the way it's supposed to be. Yeah, I struggle and I rejoice when I struggle. Yeah, it's hard.

I rejoice when it's hard. Sure. I mean, that's just part of the way.

You know what I mean? I know guys who go to the gym to do it to themselves on purpose. They do it in hope. And I'm supposed to murmur when it gets difficult? Are you kidding? That's just a perishable thing.

Why am I so full of hope? You know, it says those who have fled to take hold of the hope that God has offered. He gives them something. He does two things.

Two things to establish this hope. First of all, he swears an oath. And what do we know about an oath? What do we know about an oath? It's unchangeable.

That's one thing. That's one unchangeable thing. What's the other unchangeable thing? God can't lie.

God swears an oath and God cannot lie. Those two unchangeable things, you know what they become to me? They become an anchor to my soul. I don't care how bad the storm is.

I am firmly attached to God's oath and I am firmly attached that God cannot lie. And you know what my Father has done for me? He's predestined me to be conformed to the image of his Son. And you know how he's accomplished this? You know how he's going to accomplish this? This is going to happen not because of what happens to my wife.

She's a blessing to me. But that's not why my life is good. My children are a blessing to me.

That's not why my life is good. You know why I absolutely have a full assurance of hope that what God has sworn by an oath and he cannot lie is going to become a reality in my life? You know why? It's in Christ is. And I don't care how bad the world is.

Greater is he that is in. Bring it on world. The same Jesus who said, the Prince of this world comes, he has no hold on me.

He lives in me. The same Jesus. It's by the power of an indestructible life he's become my high priest.

And you know where that indestructible life and that power is now? It's on the inside. What can Satan do to me? What can circumstance do to me that Jesus Christ is not able to handle? When your hope comes to be fully placed in the Lord Jesus Christ, in his power, your life changes. You begin to rejoice in the Lord.

You begin to abound in hope, abound in joy, and people will see it and know there's something going on inside you.

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