

The Disease of Misplaced Hope

by A.W. Tozer

Hope can be both a precious treasure and a treacherous deceit, depending on its guarantee of fulfillment.

Scripture: Psalm 42:5, Psalm 71:14, Proverbs 13:12, Isaiah 40:31, Jeremiah 29:11, Lamentations 3:24, Romans 5:5, Colossians 1:27, Hebrews 11:1, 1 Peter 1:3

Topics: "Hope", "Disillusionment"

Description

A.W. Tozer explores the dual nature of hope, describing it as both a precious treasure and a treacherous deceit. He illustrates how misplaced hope can lead to disillusionment, using examples of shipwrecked sailors, prisoners, and the families of missing soldiers who cling to false promises. Tozer warns that hope without a solid foundation can ultimately result in bitterness and despair, emphasizing the need for a hope that is anchored in truth. He concludes that without guarantees of fulfillment, hope can become a disease that misleads and ultimately harms us.

Transcript

In a previous piece I said that hope is unique in being at once the most precious and the most treacherous of all our treasures. I have shown that, as Goldsmith says, "Hope, like the gleaming taper's light, Adorns and cheers our way."

But we do not listen long to the voice of the keen and experienced teachers of the race until we detect a note of bitterness when they speak of hope. Dryden says bluntly, "When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat. Yet fooled with hope, men favour the deceit."

And the cynical La Rochefoucauld writes: "Hope, deceitful as it is, serves at least to lead us to the end of life along an agreeable road."

Why this contradiction? Why is hope thought to be both good and bad, both cheerful and deceitful? A little observation will show us why.

Hope has sustained the spirit of many a shipwrecked sailor by painting for him a tender picture of rescue and reunion with loved ones, only to leave him at last to die of thirst and exposure on the vast bosom of the sea. Hope has kept many a prisoner believing he could not hang, that a pardon would surely come, and then stood calmly by and watched him die at the end of a rope. Hope has cheered a thousand victims of cancer and tuberculosis with whispered promises of returning health who were never again to know one

single day of health till they died. Hope has told the mother that her son missing in action was surely alive, and kept her watching till the end of her days for the letter that never came and that never could come because the boy that might have written it had long been sleeping in an unmarked grave on a foreign shore.

Surely for the fallen sons of men, the Hindu proverb is true: "There is no disease like hope." Hope that has no guarantee of fulfillment is a false friend that comforts us a while with flattery and leaves us to our enemies. Expectation of a bright tomorrow when no such tomorrow can be ours will be bitterness compounded by despair in the day of the great reckoning.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-tozer/the-disease-of-misplaced-hope/>

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