

Friday, April 17

“A Christian will part with anything rather than his hope; he knows that hope will keep the heart both from aching and breaking, from fainting and sinking; he knows that hope is a beam of God, a spark of glory, and that nothing shall extinguish it till the soul be filled with glory.”

Thomas Brooks

In Annie Dillard’s book, *The Writing Life*, she recounts one day when she asked her neighbor on one of the San Juan Islands, a painter, how his work was going. Instead of answering, the painter started telling her about a friend who once saw a valuable log out in the ocean channel, rowed out to it and started pulling it ashore. But the tide shifted and began dragging the log, boat and man away from his house.

“He was rowing to the north and moving fast to the south,” the neighbor explained. “He traveled stern first. He wanted to be going home, so toward home he kept pulling. He rowed against the tide, through the evening and into the night, being dragged farther down the island, past the end of the island, and slowly out to sea. Eventually, however, still pulling, he felt the tide relent, go slack, and then reverse. He kept rowing, back to the tip of the island, back along the beach, and, finally, home, at sunup the next morning.”

“So,” the neighbor told Annie, “that’s how my work is going. The current’s got me. Feels like I’m about in the middle of the channel now. I just keep at it. I just keep hoping the tide will turn and bring me in.”

In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, in fact, in the midst of any hard or difficult life situation or event, we “hope” the tide will turn and bring us in. And yet, what God has promised and what He has prepared in eternity is waiting for us because we have hope beyond our circumstances.

Romans 8:24-25 *For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*

When people are at their lowest, we often say they’ve “lost hope,” as though the person was losing their ability to hope. The truth is a statement like that says more about the source of a person’s hope than the strength of their hope.

Health, friendships, security, a full refrigerator, a stimulus check, a vaccine, and other things may provide a *ray* of hope, but that hope is like the flame of a candle which flickers in the wind and eventually goes out.

Hope isn’t about our present circumstances but about our eternal promise. Hope in God is our lifeline in every circumstance. The Old Testament word for *hope* means a cord or attachment. It’s closely associated to the New Testament word which is described in Hebrews 6:19 as *A sure and steadfast anchor for the soul*.

Hope is our stabilizer. Without it, as it states in Hebrews, we’re like a ship at sea in a storm with no anchor. Don’t discard your hope! Through the power of hope and its ability to connect you to God, you won’t be left feeling adrift. God’s grace sustains us.

May those whom you encounter see in, and hear from you, how hope in Christ transforms desperation into perseverance and patience. Offer your Anchor to them.