



Vision studies – week 6

Growing in Hope

w/c 16 February 2020

"Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness." (Desmond Tutu)

In his introduction to *Surprised by Hope*, Tom Wright notes that the subject raises two distinct questions: "First, what is the ultimate Christian hope? Second, what hope is there for change, rescue, transformation, new possibilities within the world at the present?" If we see the answer to the first as simply a salvation which takes us away from the world then they are apt to become separated. We need to recognise, Wright believes, their close connection.

A stock response to the church becoming involved with issues of justice and the like can be telling it to "get back to its proper business of saving souls." In response, Wright describes this as a "... radical distortion of Christian hope" and of being a "quietism that leaves the world as it is and thus allows evil to proceed unchecked." How do we overcome such prejudice? In what ways does the message of Job 5:15-16 inspire us to take necessary action?

Through the Old Testament, God is seen as both the source and focus of our hope – see for example Psalm 25:5, 39:7, 62:5 & 71:5. Why is it important to have these dual perspectives?

Read 1 Peter 1:3-9

How does the hope of the Christian differ from that of society around us? Is it just to do with expectations of the world to come?

With so much to worry about in the world around us – the impact of Brexit, growing inequality, climate change, coronavirus... - how do we avoid the Christian message of hope simply becoming "pie in the sky when you die"?

Indeed, how can we bring hope to others? Isaiah 42 talks about the servant bringing justice on earth and that consequently people will look to him in hope. Why do think Matthew quotes this in chapter 12 of his gospel? How today could we follow the pattern that God's servant "establishes justice on earth"?

How do we cope when our hopes are dashed? In his recounting of the Easter story, Luke records the disciples at Emmaus, in speaking of Jesus, recalling that, "we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel." (Luke 24:21). As they walked away from Jerusalem that hope had gone, all expectation shattered. How do we help those we meet who have similarly broken dreams?

And finally, with a quick look forward to next week, why do you think that Paul, in writing to the church at Corinth, makes the point that love always hopes? (1 Corinthians 13:7)

"We must restore hope to young people, help the old, be open to the future, spread love. Be poor among the poor. We need to include the excluded and preach peace." (Pope Francis)