

CHRISTIAN LIFE NOTES

Oregon District LWML

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*Have you received your vaccination yet?
What group are you in?
Did you have your second shot?
Moderna, Pfizer, J & J?
When will you be able to make an appointment?
Is there a clinic near you?*

We hear these kinds of questions all of the time these days. After months and months of social distancing, mask-wearing and handwashing, there seems to be signs of hope. From fear and frustration, we are moving toward a sense of hope for our future — for family and friends gatherings, concerts, sports events, even eating out in restaurants. We are looking forward to a new season of hope for our physical and mental well-being.

For the Christian, *hope* is more than just a feeling that what is wanted will happen which is how the dictionary defines hope. A second definition is that it is desire accompanied by expectation.

For Christians, hope is more than wanting, it is the confidence that what God has said is true and can be counted on. There is a big difference between hoping it doesn't rain or hoping my team will win the next game and the assurance we have that Christ's death paid the penalty for our sin and His resurrection has defeated sin, death and the devil and guarantees our eternal life both now and in heaven. We recognize Easter is the culmination of what we began with our Christmas celebrations.

One of my favorites hymns is *My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less*. Although that is just one half of the sentence. You have to keep reading (or singing) to figure out what the hope is built on.

1. *My hope is built on nothing less
than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
No merit of my own I claim
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.*

Chorus:

*On Christ the solid rock, I stand;
all other ground is sinking sand.*

2. *When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil.*
3. *His oath, His covenant and blood
Support me in the raging flood;
When every earthly prop gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.*
4. *When He shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh, may I then in Him be found,
Clothed in His righteousness alone,
Redeemed to stand before His throne! (LSB 575)*

We do live in resurrection life because our hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. This is our Easter hope/assurance.

There are 16 hymns in the Lutheran Service Book (aka our hymnal) listed under the "Hope and Comfort" category and many, many verses in my bible's concordance which include the word *hope*. Interestingly enough, the first scripture verse listed is from Job: *Though He slay me, I will hope in him* (Job 13:15a). That is a lot of assurance in our God.

Read of Paul's confidence in Titus 1:1-2

Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began.

And a favorite verse is Romans 15:13:

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Our hope for the vaccines to inoculate us from the pandemic we have been experiencing this past year may reduce our fear and anxiety, but our hope for eternal life with our Father in heaven is absolutely certain.

We rejoice and say, He is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!

