

## What is your reason for hope?

“Christmas is a feeling in your heart!” That is the title of a song first released by Andy Williams in 1955. Doesn’t that sound warm and wonderful? It might, but it’s also far from the truth! For those who don’t know (and there actually are some), Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, who was prophesied as being the Messiah, the Son of God, the Savior of the world, who came to die on a cross to pay for the sins of all mankind and rose again three days later and ascended back to heaven. That’s what Christmas is truly all about!



As I write this, Christmas is three weeks away, and we are still in the midst of possibly the strangest presidential election ever. I do not intend to get political here, but I want to make a very important and timely point.

No matter what side of the fence you happen to be on regarding the election, it has caused a great deal of frustration and angst among most people. Most likely, many of us will see this Christmas season as a time to take our focus off all of the election-related turmoil and “think happier thoughts,” as we decorate our homes and get together with family and friends (as per government guidelines, of course – no comment). It will be a welcome relief and a source of hope for many, many people. However, and this is my main concern, the hope that is sought is primarily based on the feeling associated with this time of year and not directly on the “reason for the season.”

What is the general result? Well, like all prior years, Christmas will end, January will arrive, and we’ll all be back to “business as usual.” This return to normality means being very discouraged and frustrated regarding what has happened to our country, including the COVID pandemic, which may drag out much longer than any of us anticipate. But wait a minute! What happened to our hope? Oh yeah, it was all centered on the “feeling in the air.” But the winds will have shifted, and that feeling will have blown away. In fact, it will be another 10-11 months before it returns.

I’m a huge Green Bay Packer fan, and it’s been very frustrating to see all that has gone on in the NFL this year. In the past, I have occasionally recorded a game that I wasn’t going to be able to see live. In some cases, I unintentionally found out the final score before beginning to watch the recorded version. That takes away almost all the fun, as you can imagine, especially if they lost! Let’s say I am watching a game in which I knew they had already won. During the portions of the game when things aren’t going well, or even when it seems like the “wheels are falling off,” I can find solace in knowing in the end, they will be the victors. It’s similar to our situation regarding hope. We’ve “read the end of the book” (literally), and we know how it turns out. Unfortunately, we’re stuck in the middle somewhere, seeing the mayhem all around us with no signs of improvement. We may have passed the tipping point, and things may get more and more challenging for Christians.

# Question of the Month

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However, God is still faithful and we need to “keep our eyes on the prize” (Philippians 3:14). The bad news is we are virtually powerless to change the world. The good news is we’re not called to change the world! We’re called to evangelize and make disciples. We can still do that, and we should actually have more and more opportunities as things fall apart around us and more and more people desperately begin looking for hope!

Romans 8:24 says, “For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?” Our hope is eternal and in God’s sovereignty. Nothing happens without God’s causing it or allowing it.

Hope and faith are similar concepts. One of the most interesting things about faith is that what ultimately matters is the “source” of our faith and not the “amount” of our faith.

Consider two chairs. One is very rickety and the other is made of concrete and steel. Which makes more sense... to have a tremendous amount of faith in the rickety chair or at least a small amount of faith in the concrete chair? Again, it is not the amount of our faith that matters, but the source. As lacking as our hope and faith may be at times, they are still routed in Jesus Christ and in the authority of God’s Word, which is trustworthy from cover-to-cover!



I would never claim to completely comprehend this, but even when we are faithless, God remains faithful (2 Timothy 2:13). In short, God keeps His promises, even in those times when we struggle to trust Him.

We need to be confident in God’s Word and His promises so that we are better positioned to mentor our own children and to boldly share the Gospel with all those around us.

“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 1:13).

This Christmas, let’s all focus on being thankful for God’s provisions and His ultimate sovereignty; worrying less about the outcome of any particular situation and praying more for opportunities to share the hope we have in Christ... the reason for the season!

If you have any questions about this or any other issue, please don’t hesitate to [contact us!](#)