Dear Open Door Family,

I know I am from Michigan and I have been through many winters like this, including several different record breaking storms. But I have to admit - I am tired of the cold and snow. The good news is that every day that goes by we are one step closer to spring. So, there is hope on the horizon. Hope is such an amazing thing. When I have had surgery in the past, one of the reasons I have worked hard and struggled through the pain of the physical therapy was the hope of restoration to normal activity or the relief of pain. Hope is one of the wondrous things that we have because of the cross of Jesus. We have the Hope that comes from being forgiven, and the Hope of spending eternity in the presence of our Lord. Because of the cross, there is always Hope.

[Naaman a leper from Syria was sent by the king to Israel with a letter demanding they heal him...]
2 Kings 5:8 (NIV) When Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his robes, he sent him this message: "Why have you torn your robes? Have the man come to me and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel."

To tear your clothes was a sign of complete and total despair. Many times people tore their clothes after the death of loved one. For the king to do this now meant he had no hope that this situation could be resolved - it was utterly hopeless. Elisha's question was designed to make him think through: Why are you in despair? Why are you without hope? The answer of course was that the king did NOT believe or trust in God. So, in hopeless despair he tore his robes. We never literally tear our robes but do we ever give in to utter and total despair? Do we ever give in to Hopelessness?

Psalm 42:5 (HCS) Why am I so depressed? Why this turmoil within me? Put your hope in God, for I will still praise Him, my Savior and my God.

The writer in this Psalm asks why he has no hope, why he is in emotional turmoil. Then he goes on to tell himself and us the answer to hopeless and despair. Put your hope in God. How? Through a conscious, willful, and determined effort. I will still praise Him, my Savior and my God. In dark times of hopelessness we must REFUSE to tear our clothes and give in to total despair. We must Focus our heart and mind on the ONLY Hope there is - our God.

Psalm 18:32 (NET) The one true God gives me strength; he removes the obstacles in my way.

Whatever we are facing, no matter how difficult or discouraging, we have a God who gives us STRENGTH, His strength. We have a God who can remove ALL the obstacles we might have to face. But even if He does NOT, He has promised to gives us His strength so that we can keep on going. We do NOT ever have to tear our robes in Despair. We can PUT our HOPE in GOD. He is worthy of our Trust and He is the giver of ALL HOPE.

PRAYER: Lord God, help me NOT to despair or to lose hope. Please help me Lord Jesus, to Trust You for Strength to either remove the obstacles or help me face them in a godly way. Help me to put ALL my Hope in YOU and You alone.

Pastor Mark Kieft
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