

HOPE

-Jim Hyest-

There are three great virtues that stand like beacons on a hill that should guide the Christian; the Holy Grail, as it were, of Christian endeavor. Paul identifies these as “faith, hope, and love (1Cor. 1:13).” Like Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the triune grouping of faith, hope, and love stand as a great cornerstone of life. Traditionally, we speak much of faith and more of love, but little of hope. From “the just shall live by faith (Rom. 1:17)” to “you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind (Mt. 22:37),” we focus on the necessity of embracing these two great virtues. Of these two we elevate love above faith because Paul declared that, “the greatest of these is love (1Cor. 13:13).” Faith comes in a strong second because “without faith it is impossible to please Him (Heb. 11:6).” Consequently, we relegate hope into something of a poor third. Yet, I suspect that without hope faith would fade and love would evaporate. While we should pursue and honor God in His own right, God has given us hope as a strong motivator. We have a hope that is assured “by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie (Heb. 6:18),” His word and His oath. With this hope we see a better reality. Hope assigns to us a place in the family of God wherein we can become “partakers of the divine nature (2Pet. 1:4).” Hope promises a place where God Himself will be with [us] and be [our] God; where He will wipe away every tear; and where there shall be no more death, pain, sorrow, or crying (Rev. 20:3-4). Our hope is not a vague wish or an empty dream, but an absolute reality that transcends everything that we can experience. It is a not yet a realized reality, “for hope that is seen is not hope (Rom. 8:24),” but it is so certain that even God Himself cannot take it away. It is a promised inheritance codified in the New Testament and sealed with the blood of Jesus Christ. All we have to do is remain faithful unto death to receive our crown of life (Rev. 2:10). Perhaps no small challenge, but well worth the trouble.