

## HOPE AND REBUILDING LIFE

T. K. BERNTSEN

Allow me to stir you up ever so slightly this week by asking whether you realise how blessed we are to be Christians? Why is being Christian such a blessing? Well, I am sure you can think of thousands of good reasons for yourself, but the one reason I would like to point this week is: We have Hope, in an otherwise hopeless world.

I think after being a Christian for a while, we get to a stage where we forget how miserable it was to live without Hope. We forget what it was like to worry about such things as where you would go when you die. You forget what it was like to have guilt, fear, regrets, bitterness, and boredom in your life – a life before Christ brought meaning, purpose, and significance. Yet, these are the things that occupy the existence for many people in our world today. Many people in the world (and more locally, in our own neighborhoods for that matter) live in a sense of hopelessness. And this hopelessness is so painful that people will try anything to relieve it - they take drugs, they get drunk, or they coop themselves up in their homes with the TV or computer as their only friend. These are the people who live in a hopeless world. These are the people who live without Hope.

Now, I don't intend to depress you with my writing this week, by telling you that there are people out there who live without Hope. What I am trying to do however, is to give you a reason to appreciate how blessed you are for having Christ in your life. Christ gives us Hope in those tough times we experience. Obviously, life can be tough and challenging even if you are a Christian. It doesn't matter if you are a believer or not, but sometimes life hurts. Being Christian does not mean we are exempt from experiencing the pains of life. Sometimes it will feel like life is falling apart.

Yet, just when it looks like life is falling apart, it may actually be falling together for the first time. This moment may be the time when we for the first time gain some real perspective on things. These may be the times when we learn to trust in what God has planned for us. These may be the times when we truly realise that we have Hope. I have over a period of time learned to trust the 'process' of life, and not so much the 'outcome'. I dare to say that destinations have not nearly as much value as the actual journeys.

So maybe you should let things fall apart at this juncture if that's what's happening. Don't hang on so tenaciously. Everybody hurts sometimes. Everybody falls apart sometimes. The nice thing about things falling apart is that you can pick up only the pieces that you want in rebuilding what has come apart. You are given an opportunity to build a 'better' life. That is Hope.

Now ask yourself what the word 'better' means to you?