

JUST A MINUTE MEDITATIONS

# Embracing Hope in Christ

KRIS FRANK

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# Introduction

Can we dare to hope? Sometimes, hope feels like a fool's errand. We live in a hurting, desperate world; why do we believe things could be different? Most days, waiting for the other shoe to drop is far easier than believing our situation will improve. And yet, hope invites us to rise above our current reality.

Hope is not tethered to what is happening in our lives or the world. Nor is it a false optimism or faulty coping mechanism that turns a blind eye to the difficult circumstances surrounding us. Instead, hope is a theological virtue that allows us to look to heaven as the source of happiness and lean into God's grace and strength to sustain us. Simply put, true hope is based on the presence and promise of God. This is what makes Christianity unique: God comes to us and meets us in our place of need. "I will not leave you orphaned" (Jn 14:18).

When life fails to align with our ambitions and deep longings, and despair knocks on the door of our hearts, we find ourselves faced with an important choice. We

can give way to the angst, frustrations, and hurts that overwhelm us, or we can bravely choose hope.

Hope is a courageous choice. It requires us to look beyond our present circumstances and believe in the holy promises that are yet to come. When we embrace hope, we believe God has an ordained plan and purpose for our lives. He desires to give us the strength and grace required to endure and flourish through every trial we may face. To live a life filled with hope is to live a life of grace and unshakable faith.

This short book could easily be read in a day, but I'd caution against it. Reflections can only take you so far. It is in prayer that God can replenish our weary hearts. Each meditation has been crafted to serve as a springboard into a meaningful moment of prayer where we can bring our entire selves—the good, the bad, and the ugly—to our Lord.

Before diving into these meditations, I'd like to offer a simple rhythm of prayer to assist you in your journey toward a life of hope.

1. Even before opening the text, take a moment to be mindful that God sees you, knows you, and loves you. Take as much time as you need to allow this profound reality to sink in.



2. Read a meditation. There is no need to rush through these short passages. Feel free to pause and ponder if words, phrases, or ideas tug on your heart.
3. Recall occasions when your past or current feelings and experiences intersect with the meditation topic. Bring to the Lord the thoughts and feelings that arise.
4. Ask God to reveal himself in those moments and circumstances. Then, allow hope in God's presence to enter your prayer.
5. Allow your prayer to flow freely. Let God lead. As your time in prayer comes to a close, consider noting any moments of light and understanding in a prayer journal.

As believers and followers of Jesus, our hope is based on a real encounter. The closer we allow ourselves to draw to God, the more we will find the grace and aptitude to hope. For the more we spend time in close contact with him, the more confident and reassured we will become of his promises and unwavering love for us. Because God is always with us, we can trust that he will sustain us through any situation, providing strength and comfort even in the most challenging circumstances.

Our lives are transformed when our hope is confidently anchored in an omnipresent, omniscient God. We can navigate life's trials with certainty that God desires what is best for us in this life and the next. By God's grace, we can dare to hope once again.

## Why Bother to Hope?

Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful.

HEBREWS 10:23

Hope is often the forgotten virtue. And yet, our lives are shaped by hope.

“I hope it doesn’t rain.”

“I hope the line isn’t too long.”

“I hope she likes me.”

“I hope for good news from the doctor.”

Few days come and go without some semblance of hope. But in what do we place our hope? When we place our hope in wealth, our physical appearance, or other worldly metrics of good fortune, we risk disappointment. The value of money, our health, and our social standing are ever-changing and ultimately outside our control. Things of this world will fade. For hope to be

worthwhile, it must be placed in something—or someone—that surpasses all worth.

Turning our hearts to Jesus soothes our deepest longings and unwaveringly renews our hope. God's ceaseless love and constant presence offer us a profound sweetness that remains steady and comforting when various troubles arise. In moments of uncertainty and distress, we can cling to this truth:

Find your delight in the LORD  
who will give you your heart's desire  
(Ps 37:4 NABRE).

When we open ourselves to his love, we discover true fulfillment beyond our expectations.

Let us examine where we place our hope and work to direct our hope to the one who is infinitely worthy of it.

*Lord, ignite my hope in you. Help me to recognize your presence so that my confidence may stand unwavering, resilient against life's challenges and uncertainties.*

## Hope in God's Promise

But this I call to mind,  
and therefore I have hope:  
The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases,  
his mercies never come to an end;  
they are new every morning;  
great is your faithfulness.

Lamentations 3:21–23

Our hope is steadfast, grounded, and sure because it is rooted in the immutable promise and oath of our God (see Heb 6:17–19). Without hope, the storms of life can cause us to drift away into an abyss of despair. Thankfully, God gave us hope to anchor us to him. With hope as our anchor, nothing can shake us. Our God is trustworthy. He will never leave, abandon, or forget us in times of need.

When we ask God for the grace to hope amid small sufferings, this prepares us to hope when we face more substantial sorrows. If we aren't intentional and

disciplined about living hope, however, the small and large issues can compound. Eventually, without hope, our little sufferings can become a weight impossible to bear. This is why hope is so vital. Whether facing daily inconveniences or significant suffering, if we lose our focus on God, our hearts can begin to absorb and reflect the hardness and misery of our trials rather than the love of Christ. Wherever we find ourselves and whatever we are going through, the virtue of hope helps us to trust that we will never be abandoned by God in our time of need. Hope gives us the ability to raise our gaze from our suffering to our Savior.

*Lord, I trust in your promise; you are my hope.*

### 3

## Hope in Jesus

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”

JOHN 3:16

We have a God who was willing to become man. Jesus took on our humanity in all ways but sin. He knows what it is to feel lonely and angry. He understands our hurt, our brokenness, and our shame. He bore it all on a cross. He died a death he didn't deserve so that we could live eternal life with him, something we could never earn ourselves.

Hope grants us the assurance that our deepest longings can and will be satiated by the God who put those desires in our hearts. The virtue gives us the supernatural strength to rely on Christ's grace when our own strength fails. Hope points our faith to eternal life; in some sense, it brings heaven into the present moment.

Through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Baptism, we are saved from our sins and given the gift of eternal life. At Baptism our souls are infused with the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. These virtues center us on God and “make [us] capable of acting as [God’s] children and of meriting eternal life” (CCC 1813). In other words, the theological virtues draw us into a deeper and richer relationship with God. Because of this wondrous mystery, we can place our hope in God. No matter what situation we face, hope assures us that our best days lie ahead.

*Jesus, thank you for the gift of eternal life. Help me to place all my hope in you.*