

“An Anchor for the Soul”

by John Eldredge

Scripture names *Hope* as one of the Three Great Forces of human existence:

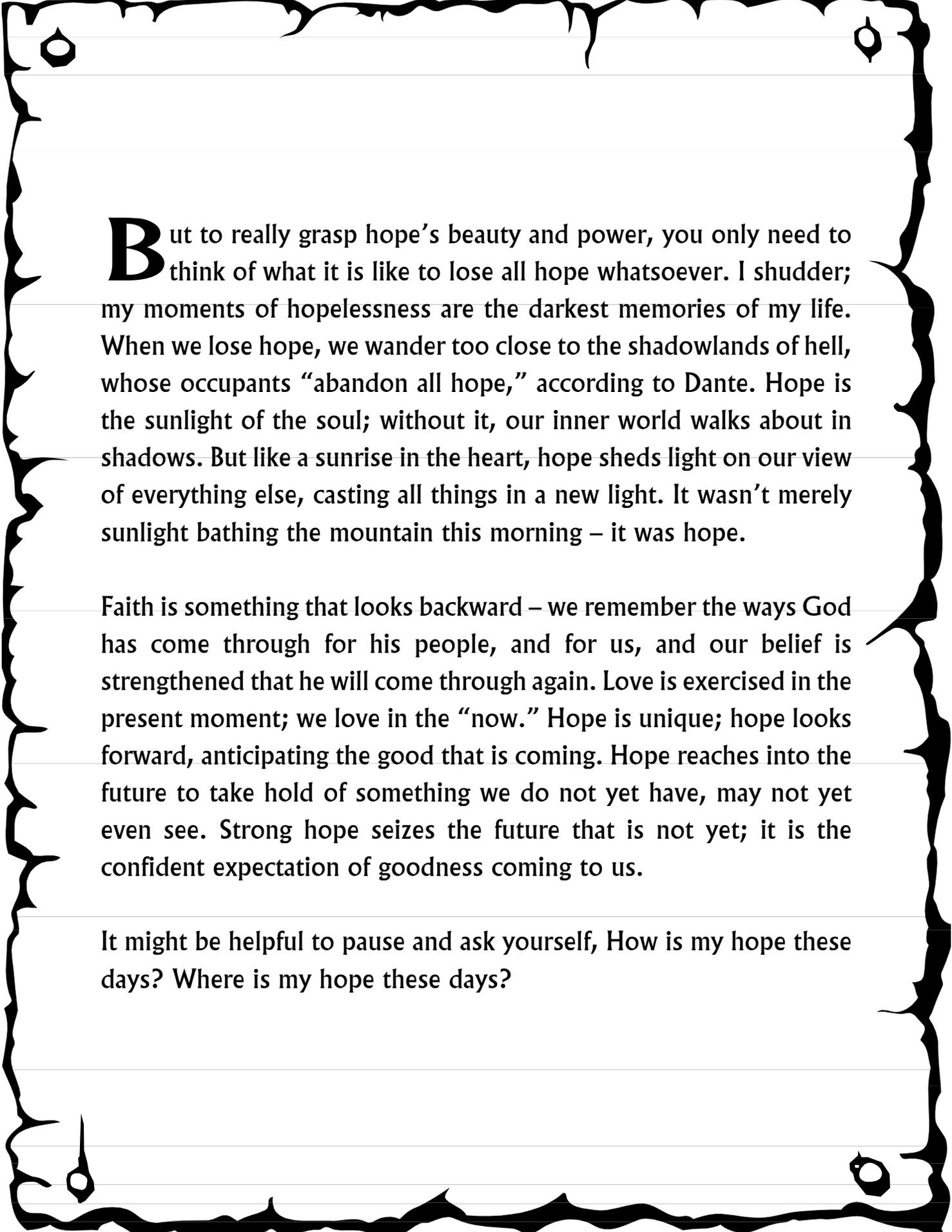
Three things will last forever – faith, hope, and love.

(1 Corinthians 13:13 NLT)

By saying they last forever, God names these three as immortal powers. A life without faith has no meaning; a life without love isn't worth living; a life without hope is a dark cavern from which you cannot escape. These things aren't simply “virtues.” Faith, hope, and love are mighty forces meant to carry your life forward, upward; they are your wings and the strength to use them.

I believe hope plays the critical role. You'll find it pretty hard to love when you've lost hope; hopelessness collapses into who cares? And what does it matter that we have faith if we have no hope? Faith is just a rigid doctrine with nothing to look forward to. Hope is the wind in your sails, the spring in your step. Hope is so essential to your being Scripture calls it “an anchor for the soul” (Hebrews 6:19).

In an untethered world, we need a hope that can anchor us.



But to really grasp hope's beauty and power, you only need to think of what it is like to lose all hope whatsoever. I shudder; my moments of hopelessness are the darkest memories of my life. When we lose hope, we wander too close to the shadowlands of hell, whose occupants "abandon all hope," according to Dante. Hope is the sunlight of the soul; without it, our inner world walks about in shadows. But like a sunrise in the heart, hope sheds light on our view of everything else, casting all things in a new light. It wasn't merely sunlight bathing the mountain this morning – it was hope.

Faith is something that looks backward – we remember the ways God has come through for his people, and for us, and our belief is strengthened that he will come through again. Love is exercised in the present moment; we love in the "now." Hope is unique; hope looks forward, anticipating the good that is coming. Hope reaches into the future to take hold of something we do not yet have, may not yet even see. Strong hope seizes the future that is not yet; it is the confident expectation of goodness coming to us.

It might be helpful to pause and ask yourself, How is my hope these days? Where is my hope these days?