



**2017 Women's Encouragement Day
Session One - By Sarah Markman**

THE CHALLENGE OF HOPE

OPENING THOUGHTS AND BLESSING

I want to open with this blessing of scripture and remind us of these sacred words. (NOTES: These two scriptures could go on a bathroom mirror or at the kitchen sink)

This verse carries an important truth:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us, you and I, to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” (1 Peter 1:3)

This verse is one that I came across as I was preparing one day, and it brought me so much hope. I wanted to speak it over you.

“The steps of a good woman are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in her way. Though she fall, she shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholds her with His hand.” (Psalm 37:23-34)

As a homeschooling mama 1. Your steps are ordered by the Lord 2. He delights in your way 3. You shall not be cast down 4. He is upholding you with His hand

*Jesus, Rock of Ages- “I rest my soul on the Rock of rock of ages/And my feet stand firm on a sure foundation/ All my hope in this salvation/ Jesus, Jesus, rock of ages”

WHAT IS BIBLICAL HOPE

As I prepared to speak, I went on a journey in the Bible to discover what hope is really all about. I found out that my own understanding of hope was limited, and somewhat rooted in worldly rather than biblical hope. I think that the culture lives with a hope that is based on human understanding and what can be seen, touched and tasted. But the hope that the Bible speaks of is characterized by **confidence**, often in the unseen.

Merriam Webster defines hope as, “to cherish a desire with anticipation, trust, to expect with **confidence**.”

John Piper “Biblical hope not only desires something good for the future; it expects it to happen. And it not only expects it to happen; it is **confident** it will happen. There is a moral certainty that the good we expect and desire will be done.”

What about the prayers that have gone unanswered, that we have hoped for?

With my Dad and PD, chronic pain or disease in your life, your child’s, or someone that you care about...

My confident hope is in the tension of both the miraculous AND the healing prayer with little to no change. That God does the miraculous and is also doing a healing work in someone’s life, when they continue to face chronic pain, disease or infertility. I desire, expect and have confidence for 3 threads of healing: My Dad’s miracle like we see in the NT OR God’s PROCESS of healing OR the healing that comes from His nearness when one is suffering

An article I studied called, “Hope from the Old Testament” said: “At times, **hope seems to be used interchangeably with faith**... see Hebrews 11:1.”

AND “**Because Christian hope is a matter of faith, our hope is characterized by confidence rather than wishful thinking**... see Psalm 62:5-7.”

This statement brought me to a place where I began to pray, “God, I think that my perspective of hope has mostly been based on wishful thinking! I ask for a **confident** hope to well up in me. Teach me and guide to live with a confident hope!” David gives us language for this in Psalm 62:5-7 and Psalm 18. Let’s take a look- (These two scriptures are not in the notes)

*The Wondrous Cross– “Now You’re my resting place/When trouble I must face/I won’t be overwhelmed/Jesus, Your love has won/ And my faith looks up to Thee”

HOPE- TO EXPECT WITH CONFIDENCE

Psalm 62:5-7 (NKJV)

⁵My soul, wait silently for God alone, For my expectation *is* from Him.

⁶He only *is* my rock and my salvation; *He is* my defense; I shall not be moved.

⁷In God *is* my salvation and my glory; the rock of my strength, and my refuge, *is* in God.

What does David do, what can we do, to walk in confident hope?

1. Waits expectantly on God
2. Waits alone ,in silence
3. Extolls the nature of God

Psalm 18:1-3 (NKJV)

¹I will love You, O Lord, my strength.

²The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

³I will call upon the Lord, *who is worthy* to be praised; so shall I be saved from my enemies.

4. Offers a hymn of gratitude for his deliverance
5. Declares his love for the Lord
6. Exalts the nature of God

Ten descriptions of the nature of God: My DEFENSE, DELIVERER, FORTRESS, GLORY, ROCK, REFUGE, SALVATION, STRENGTH, SHIELD, STRONGHOLD

When we are waiting, we can think about who God is, and this is a huge anchor to our confident hope. (Hannah's necklace)

*My Anchor "My anchor, forever/My shelter within the storm/Your my deliverer/ You never falter/ You're the rock I stand on"

FOUR OF THE GREATEST CHALLENGES FOR A HS MAMA

Introduction:

Over the last couple of months, I reached out to a handful of homeschooling Mama's, and asked them what might be their greatest struggle or what attempts to steal their hope.

I took the ideas they shared and put them into four categories. I will say the questions that come with each challenge. As I do so, I would like you to think through and assign VICTORY (even small- John and I call these "little wins") or CHALLENGE to each one.

If you have victory in an area, than praise the Lord! If it is a pain point for you, let's define it, and literally, MAKE WAR!! Now, you might just be asking questions, but not be weighed down by them. This is probably not a CHALLENGE area, BUT if you feel heavy over the questions, I would assign CHALLENGE to it!

Like I said, I see a sea of beauty before me and I think big B Beauty, God Himself, is raising us up unto victory with a war cry (and I am not a big war, battle scene movie kind of person) that will resound into the hearts and mouths of our children. What we sow in tears, fight for, and pioneer, will be passed on to this next generation.

I truly believe that there is no better time in history to be homeschooling our children. I think it is our season to thrive!

FEAR, COMPARISON, PERFECTION, DISCOURAGEMENT

1. Fear of Failure (*Everything is Mine in You)

Am I enough? Am I doing enough? Am I equipped to educate my children without a degree? Are they learning all that they need to learn? What if I send them to school at some point- will they be prepared? Are they being challenged enough? Will I make school fun? How can I do this with an infant, toddler, or a large gap in ages? Can we cover the cost of materials?

2. Comparison (*Who Can Compare)

Do my children look like their amazing children? Does my curriculum measure up to hers?, Does my schedule meet the standards of their schedule?, If only I had their financial status?, What works for their family, why isn't it working for mine? What if I were a different kind of mom? What if I could have her personality or background? Does my marriage measure up to that marriage? Are my kids in enough activities outside of the home? Do our kids measure up to the social capabilities of other kids?

3. Perfection (*Leaning on You Jesus)

Will my schedule ever work like I created it to on paper? Will my home ever be consistently clean? Why do my kids keep making mistakes? I can't believe my kids have this/ that weakness. How can I avoid these constant messes? Will I always get angry at the accidents? Is it wrong to be controlling when life is out of control? Don't I have to work well into the night to try to make things just right? Am I always going to feel like I am behind and losing the game? Why bother starting if I can't finish?

4. Discouragement (*Freedom Song)

Will I ever feel joy in the journey? Why this pressure from others? Am I forgetting why I signed up for this self-sacrifice? Will I ever be truly patient with the kids? Won't I just go through mom burn out? How can I possibly maintain the kids hearts in the process? Is it possible to define the 'teacher vs. mom' hat? Can I do this with constant sickness in the home? What about the discipline issues in the middle of schooling? What if families who don't HS think that we judge them by our decision to HS?

You may even have another category where you would say, "This is challenging my heart and my homeschooling". Write It down.

I have been at war with many of these thoughts or emotions over the years. I think at times I have been drowning, because I either did not have the **language** to see it for what it is, **the community** to fight with, or the **tools** to make war against it. When we can see it for what it is, we can CHOOSE to go after freedom! To Set our Hearts.

A CALL TO SET OUR HEARTS

What is a Setting of the Heart?

This phrase "setting of the heart" is something that has resonated with me since I started the ABLE group in 2015. It has to do with finding God in weakness and believing that He leads me when I am weak. It is about measuring myself, not by my performance, but by the condition of my heart. You have a will that is God-given and powerful. I want to call us to fight back against the challenges that are trying to steal our hope. We are all in process!

I imagine that some of you might look at me and think 5 kids, happy marriage, 6 years of homeschooling- "she has what it takes, if only I could..." If you only knew what my day in and day out carries at times! You could chat with John, ask my kids, and get the low down! You could drop by my house mid day to find me still in my pj's with my hair a bit crazy. These thoughts of "if I could only get into her home, have her schedule, and see it done, I could finally figure this thing out!" ...have been such a trap for me. I have had to CHOOSE to lay aside these thoughts and emotions, and CHOOSE another way. His way for our home. Ladies, we are the people of God. We overcome. In this journey, I have tasted victory and the joy of living in confident hope. I am fighting to stay in it. I think that we have an amazing opportunity to link arms and do it WITH HIM and WITH ONE ANOTHER!

Scripture: Romans 5:2-5- I felt like this scripture was a marker for today:

Promise: Through Him we have obtained access by faith into this grace

How We Engage: In which we stand and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, (wow-this is a whole other level, but man it sounds good!)

Truth: Knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces **hope**, and **hope** does not put us to shame, because This is a KEY- 1. God's love has been poured into our hearts through 2. the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."

Words to speak- A War Cry- We speak it with our mouths for our ears to here, and the atmosphere can actually shift in our home and heart.

1. God's love has been poured into my heart. I am loved by God!

2. The Holy Spirit has been given to me. I have what it takes because I have the Holy Spirit! (I would love to pray for us!)

TEN WAYS I HAVE SET MY OWN HEART (FINISH BY 10:20–SING TILL 10:30)

The following ten sentences are the ones I came up with that are personal to me and remind me of my CHOOSING to set my heart, especially during days when everything seems to be falling apart. When all is well, this is such a beautiful set of words. When the pressure is squeezing life, these words are a tool to keep me in the **confident hope** we have talked about. So, might you consider either joining me in using these or creating your own “Top Ten List”?

Ideas: Print it off and hang on your bathroom mirror or at your kitchen sink, share it with a friend, gather 3 or 4 women and pray for each other, share it with your husband and ask for his prayer, say it aloud once a day or once a week!

Top 10 List:

1. I will stand in His grace (Rom 5:3)
2. I will rejoice in hope (Rom 5:3)
3. I will rejoice in my sufferings (Rom 5:3)- my dear friend says- we push back the couches and we dance or laugh
4. I am in process, not meant to be perfect
5. I messed up, but it's not who I am in Christ
6. I position my mind and heart to say “yes” to what the Father is doing
7. I commit to sign up again and again, believing that he is conforming me to His image and working out His will in my home
8. I believe that He loves me in my weakness
9. I see failures as opportunities, instead of quitting
10. I lay my life down, go to the lowest place, laying everything on the altar

*Wonderful Name- “There is healing for all who ache/There is comfort for all in pain/ There is freedom, there is grace/Here in Jesus and the power of His name/All who are broken, His love endures/All who are weary, His rest is yours/All who are hopeless run to His name/He is Jesus/You’ll never be the same

APPLICATION: WHAT IS HINDERING HOPE IN MY LIFE?

Write down the top 3 challenges that you will commit to prayer this year:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Write down your prayer to the Lord as you set your heart: