

Hope

1- Objective

- ❖ We have to have hope in the Lord and think that “God is there; everything works for the good to those who love God; every tribulation must have an end” (HH Pope Shenouda III).
- ❖ Do not give up or get bored, just wait for the Lord.

2- References

- ❖ A sermon about hope by HH Pope Shenouda III
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LtO-ljbzFYM>
- ❖ <http://id.mind.net/~dnol/pullrubble.html>

3- Scriptural Verse

- ❖ “Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today. The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace” (Exodus 14: 13-14)

4- Lesson Guidelines

What is hope?

- ❖ HH Pope Shenouda III said, “Hope is the window from which light enters to the soul that is oppressed by the darkness.
- ❖ Trust that good things are in store for the future.
- ❖ Not falling into despair despite the fierceness or length of a problem.
- ❖ Optimism; every problem will end for sure.
- ❖ Strength to face hardships cheerfully.

Basis of Hope

- ❖ Earthly Hope vs. Heavenly Hope: “It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes” (Psalm 118: 8-9).
- ❖ Our hope is in God alone even if it takes time: “Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the Lord” (Psalm 27:14). “But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31).
- ❖ Active waiting and listening: We should not sit around and “do nothing.” We should focus in prayers with perseverance knowing that learning to lean on God is the greatest reward of any tribulation.
- ❖ Do not give up or get bored; always remember:
 - How many times did Elijah pray for rain before it happened?
 - How long did Joseph stay in prison?
 - How long were the Israelites in exile?

Advantages of Hope

- ❖ A hopeful person easily spreads hope to others without preaching.
- ❖ Creates an adventurous spirit.
- ❖ Motivates to work and to give.
- ❖ Heals the broken (St. Augustine returned because of his mother's hope).

Some examples of Hope

- ❖ Eve's Seed bruising the head of the serpent as God promised.
- ❖ Noah hoping for land to re-emerge after the great flood.
- ❖ Abraham hoping that his son would return alive while going to offer Him as a sacrifice.
- ❖ Moses on the shore of the Red Sea waiting for the salvation of the Lord.
- ❖ David and Goliath "This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand".
- ❖ Jonah in the belly of the whale prayed and rejoiced hoping confidently that he will see again the Lord's temple.
- ❖ Hope of Esther being accepted by the King through fasting and prayers.
- ❖ The right-hand thief, despite of his crimes, said with great hope, "Remember me when you come into your kingdom".

Some examples of losing Hope

- ❖ Sarah lost hope in the promised child and planned to marry Abraham and Hagar.
- ❖ Zacharias lost hope and doubted the Angel's annunciation vision.
- ❖ Abraham lost hope and wanted God to choose Ishmael instead of the promised child.
- ❖ Judas lost hope in the possibility of forgiveness while St. Peter remained hopeful.

Hope of the Resurrection

- ❖ Martha had hope in the healing of Lazarus, but did not expect his resurrection. The Lord Jesus rebuked her and said, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?"
- ❖ Hope in the "Resurrection" is the base of our faith "But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen; and if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty" (1 Corinthians 15: 13-14).
- ❖ Our hope in the Resurrection keeps us from the sorrow and agony of death: "But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope" (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

5- Conclusion

- ❖ No situation is too difficult for God; God is not weak to save us thus wait for His salvation and do not lose hope.
- ❖ We should see the situation in a positive way and search to know what God wants us to learn.

6- Activities / Discussion Points

- ❖ Study this nice story together and see what having hope can do in our life:

A terrible earthquake hit several years ago in Turkey. Many small villages were devastated by the shock. In one small village lived a man and his son Armand. How that father loved Armand. He was the light in his eye and the beat in his heart. On the day of the quake, Armand went off to school as he had so many other mornings. His dad told him as he left, "After school today, I'll come for you!" When the quake hit, the whole village was demolished, including the school. It was a brick structure which just disintegrated and collapsed into a pile of rubble. Armand's father was terror-stricken and ran to the school to see about Armand.

Knowing his son needed to be rescued; Armand's father joined the entire town in yanking off bricks and other fallen debris. They were desperate to reach the children who were buried there. For 2, 4, 6 hours they labored feverishly. Evening came and they worked; 8, 10, 16 hours. When morning came, some quit toiling and headed home.

A handful stayed and worked, 18, 20, 24 hours. Then, they too left -- but not Armand's father. Others urged him, "you have to quit! Come with us! It's hopeless! Armand is dead; there's nothing you can do!" "No!" he said, "I told Armand I would come for him!" And ignoring them, Armand's father kept pulling off bricks and rubble seeking his son and any other survivors; 30, 32, 34 36 hours and he kept pulling rubble off the pile.

On the 38th hour Armand's father pulled off a piece of the demolished building and looked down and saw a hole, and through the hole he saw two little eyes looking up appealingly into his! And Armand said, "dad, I knew you'd come for me! You said you would come for me!" Armand's father kept pulling rubble away; he saw other children in the hole. He reached down to Armand and said, "Come on, Armand! I'll lift you out!" Armand said, "No, dad, no! Take the other children first; they're afraid. I told them you'd come for me -- and you came! I know you'll come back for me!" He lifted out all the other children, then reached down and took Armand's hand and lifted him out.

How about the Lord Jesus!