

## Having No Hope

I was studying but my sermon is not getting much attention right now. John, a 34 year old poor man from Cleveland, knocked on the door 45 minutes ago and I just finished talking with him. Living with a prostitute who has 4 kids from different fathers, not working, having 6 felonies, he walked in weary needing money to get something to eat. He has no Social Security card, no driver's license, no ID card, only a torn, old birth certificate. He has made poor decisions in his life and now he is without hope in the world.

This happens a lot here in the office. As I talked with him I heard a story of "no hope". When he was 18, he had no money and could not get a job (a regular in the 4<sup>th</sup> poorest city in the US). He started "jacking" cars (stealing and selling to pawn shops to strip them and sell the parts). "It was easier to do that. I would get \$1000 in an hour". But now, after 6 convictions, he can't get a job. It reminded me of the verse in Ephesians, "that at that time you were without Christ... having no hope and without God in the world".

I have never known this type of life. All my life I have had hope, at least of some kind. It may have been running away, hiding, or in the shadows but it was hope.

I shared the Gospel with "John". That is more important than any money I could give him. "I was saved", at least he said so - part of the difficulty of people who give a bandage for cancer of the soul. "I was, you know, put in the water and then they did a sign over me". He had been led to a false hope.

"I talk to God but He don't listen because I'm too bad. Ya know what I mean, man"? I'm going down the drain and I can't help it. I know He is up there but He don't listen to me, man". John isn't unkind. He is without hope. He does not know what to do.

Excuse me; he just walked in again after I sent him to get his birth certificate so he can get a SS number to which he just left on a bike to that office.

Hold on, I just got another phone call from a person that needs to talk right now about their marriage which is in trouble and needs hope. They will come now. My sermon for Sunday is not looking at me anymore.

So while I am waiting for them to come, I ask myself these questions, "What is it like to have a Christmas without hope? What is it like to go to strangers asking for food? What is it like to not be liked?"

“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ”. (the next verse) This stares me in the face, “In Christ”. That is the hope for “John, Larry, Sue, and another one Eric”, who just called (all changed names) need hope. Christ is the only hope... “Christ in you, the hope of glory”. As you finish reading this slice of my life, pray for them.

*“John, God does listen. Larry and Sue, God will heal your marriage. Eric, look to the Truth to produce wisdom for decisions”. All of you readers of hope and those illiterate in hope, see the Hope of heaven and earth.*

PS. John just came in with his SS# card and is now going to get his ID card. Would you take a moment right now and pray for him to hope again?