

# A Word on Wednesday from Pastor Tonia

## "Hope Against Hope" 3/15

*In hope, Abraham, believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations; as he had been told, "So shall your descendants be." (Rom 4:18)*

Even when it looks dismal. When it looks impossible. When the cards are not falling our way and nothing is going according to plan. It just doesn't look possible, not now, not ever. There is no way. The obstacle before us is just TOO big. Can we hope against hope?

When Abraham looked at the situation, at his and Sarah's age, it did not weaken his faith. He held on, in hope he believed against hope in God's ridiculous sounding promise, that he would be the father of many nations. It plum didn't look possible, but God had said it would be so. Could he believe? On what did this promise hang?

We need to hope against hope. We need to have Long term, nonspecific optimism and face the fact - it is what it is. Knowing it is happening or has happened and we can't change it. While at the same time holding on the fact someday – even though we don't know when - it will be resolved. Hope. Knowing God has got this. Knowing God will strengthen you and bring you out of this, stronger, with more focused faith. The obstacle is the way. Exercise your faith. Let this obstacle form you into the person you were created to be.

Allow God's mercy to give you patience, to help you to see the endgame, to endure, to hold on - in spite of circumstances, to hope, to have long term, nonspecific optimism as you look at the boggy man, as you face the fear, the trial, the obstacle and - continue. As you strengthen your resolve, as you inspire others, as you reflect God's love to those around you.

Quite Stoic. The obstacle is the way. You can't control what happens – but you can control how you react. Stillness is the key – stop, take a breath, count to 10. Turn to God. Look at the situation, how can you best react, what can you do, how do you show grace, be the better side of self, reflect God's love. How do you hold on to hope, now?

Long term, nonspecific optimism - facing the fact it is what it is. It is happening and you cannot change it. While at the same time holding on to face the day – even though you don't know when, the situation will be resolved. When it is -16 and feels like -35, I know it can and will get colder, but I also know it will eventually be warmer and then I'll be complaining about how hot it is. You can't find a job, but eventually you will. What to do? When will it be over? Don't give up. Continue. Complete the next task. This too will pass. Be your own champion, ask for the job, tell them why you're the one. Do something. Don't feel like this is all there is, don't settle. Make it more. Make it count. Learn from the difficulty. Endure. Look outside of yourself. Trust God – He is here with you in this lonesome valley. Be optimistic. Hope against hope.

What God promises – God does. Even when it looks impossible, it can't be, this will never work, this is the wrong road, God keeps His word. Even when it appears hope isn't working, we can have hope in God's promises.

Our laments are surrounded by God's promise of hope as we journey through this wilderness which leads us to Easter morning. As we wander the unknown, let us abound in hope, for God's love and forgiveness washes over our guilt and our shame to set us free, so we can hope against hope.

## **Please pray with me:**

God of the Journey, help us to not let distrust cause us to waver. Help us to not be so discouraged by how things look, that we doubt Your goodness and kindness, Your grace and generosity, Your love. Strengthen us to hope against hope in Your unfailing promise. I bid you peace.