



ST AUGUSTINE'S
COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY

Windows on Hope: Week 3

Hope is not about optimistically wishing that things will come right in the end. It's a matter of staring hard reality in the face but trusting that God's power can truly be at work in the worst of human circumstances. It's a matter of trusting that, in close relationship with Jesus, even our poor efforts can make a difference to how the world is and will be.

Later on in chapter 32 of her Revelations Julian of Norwich writes, 'He wills that we know that he takes heed not only of noble things and great, but also of little and small, low and simple [...] for he wills that we know that the least thing shall not be forgotten'.

Hope is a great power in the world, but it is built on our understanding and trusting the 'God of little things' – the same God who in Jesus tells us to become like little children if we wish to be part of the kingdom. It is the same God who over and over again chooses the weak and makes them strong, who chooses sinners like ourselves to bring about the divine purpose and who says, 'I will be with you until the end of time'.

From Gemma Simmonds talk.



Some examples of hope in the Bible

Jeremiah buys a field in a besieged city [From Jeremiah 32]

And I bought the field at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel...for thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: House and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land.

Jeremiah complains to God: 'See the siege ramps have been cast up against the city to take it... yet you, O lord God, have said to me, 'buy this field and have witnesses'.

The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: 'See I am the Lord...is anything too hard for me?'

The vision of Ezekiel in exile– the dry bones [From Ezekiel 37]

The spirit of the Lord set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones...

The Lord speaks: 'These bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely'...Thus says the Lord God...I will put my spirit in you and you will live, and I will place you on your own soil'

The vision of Ezekiel in exile – the river of life flowing from the Temple of God

This water flows towards the Eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, and when it enters the sea, the sea of stagnant waters, the water will become fresh...everything will live where the river flows [From Ezekiel 47: 1-12]

The sower, and the seed that does grow [Mark 4: 8-9]

Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold ...Let anyone with ears to hear listen!

Faith, hope and love

*And now faith, hope and love abide, these three,
and the greatest of these is love [1 Corinthians 13: 13]*



The beginning, despite the order, is love.

There is no other beginning in God but love. God 'is' and 'does' love.

It is love / God that continually draws us into being.

It is love that leads God to become one with us in Christ, to invite us into relationship, to labour to heal us and set us free.

It is the Holy Spirit of love that burns within, leading us deeper into God and drawing us into God's active compassion for all.

Faith and hope are the fruit of love and the means of our transformation by love.

Faith is the choice made to trust God with what is important to us. Through faith we become open to receive the love that is God. Our life becomes established in love.

Hope leads us to act purposefully in the present as we anticipate the work of Love in the future through drawing on the memory of love received in the past.

And may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace by your faith in him,
until by the power of the Holy Spirit, you overflow with hope" Romans 15. 13

Faith and hope together are the human, but God-given, response to love.

And faith and hope enable us to live within and to express the love in which we are created and held.

Through faith and hope we open the way for love to bring us into the fullness of our individuality. Through faith and hope, love creates us, and in this love, through faith and hope, we become co-creators with God.

Faith, hope and love will often seem to overlap – because they do.

Love hopes in the other, has faith in the other's goodness.

Faith is both the response to love and the means by which our capacity to receive love expands; faith flowers into hope.

Hope flows from faith in God, enabling us to express love creatively, drawing what seems lifeless into being. But without love, faith and hope have no being.

Everything rests on this: that God is love, and love has neither beginning nor end.