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THE MESSAGE[®] OF HOPE

*Encouragement from the Bible
in Contemporary Language*



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Contents

Introduction 1

Lament 7

Promises 19

Assurance 35

Trust 53

Testimony 73

Commission 83

Vision 93

The End of the Story 113

About *The Message* 117

About Eugene H. Peterson 119

ASSURANCE

*"Though I claw at empty air and feel
Nothing, no embrace,
I have not plummeted."*

DENISE LEVERTOV, "Suspended"

The hope that the Bible offers is often invisible, beyond understanding. And yet it is more grounded in ultimate reality than the substitutes for hope we so often reach for. God's promises, if we allow them, nurture in us the assurance that God is for us and actively shepherding us to a flourishing future.



THE MESSAGE OF HOPE

GOD chose you out of all the people on
Earth as his cherished personal treasure.

DEUTERONOMY 14:2

“Still, I know that God lives—the One
who gives me back my life—
and eventually he’ll take his stand
on earth.

And I’ll see him—even though I get
skinned alive!—
see God myself, with my very own eyes.
Oh, how I long for that day!”

JOB 19:25-27

You’re well-known as good and forgiving,
bighearted to all who ask for help.
Pay attention, GOD, to my prayer;
bend down and listen to my cry for help.
Every time I’m in trouble I call on you,
confident that you’ll answer. . . .

ASSURANCE

You, O God, are both tender and kind,
not easily angered, immense in love,
and you never, never quit.
So look me in the eye and show kindness,
give your servant the strength to
go on,
save your dear, dear child!
Make a show of how much you love me
so the bullies who hate me will stand
there slack-jawed,
As you, GOD, gently and powerfully
put me back on my feet.
PSALM 86:5-7, 15-17

Far better to take refuge in GOD
than trust in people;
Far better to take refuge in GOD
than trust in celebrities. . . .
I was right on the cliff-edge,
ready to fall,

THE MESSAGE OF HOPE

when GOD grabbed and held me.
GOD's my strength, he's also
my song,
and now he's my salvation.

PSALM 118:8-9, 13-14

And you will say in that day,
"I thank you, GOD.
You were angry
but your anger wasn't forever.
You withdrew your anger
and moved in and comforted me."

ISAIAH 12:1

Where is the god who can compare
with you—
wiping the slate clean of guilt,
Turning a blind eye, a deaf ear,
to the past sins of your purged
and precious people?

ASSURANCE

You don't nurse your anger and don't stay
angry long,
for mercy is your specialty. That's what
you love most.

MICAH 7:18

Though the cherry trees don't blossom
and the strawberries don't ripen,
Though the apples are worm-eaten
and the wheat fields stunted,
Though the sheep pens are sheepless
and the cattle barns empty,
I'm singing joyful praise to GOD.
I'm turning cartwheels of joy to
my Savior God.

Counting on GOD's Rule to prevail,
I take heart and gain strength.
I run like a deer.

I feel like I'm king of the mountain!

HABAKKUK 3:17-19

“Your GOD is present among you,
a strong Warrior there to save you.”

ZEPHANIAH 3:17

“Jesus—‘God saves’— . . . will save his
people from their sins.”

MATTHEW 1:21

“What I’m trying to do here is get you to relax, not be so preoccupied with *getting* so you can respond to God’s *giving*. People who don’t know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. Steep yourself in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. You’ll find all your everyday human concerns will be met. Don’t be afraid of missing out. You’re my dearest friends! The Father wants to give you the very kingdom itself.”

LUKE 12:29-32

ASSURANCE

Whoever did want him,
who believed he was who he
claimed
and would do what he said,
He made to be their true selves,
their child-of-God selves.

JOHN 1:12

“It’s urgent that you listen carefully to this:
Anyone here who believes what I am saying
right now and aligns himself with the
Father, who has in fact put me in charge,
has at this very moment the real, lasting
life and is no longer condemned to be an
outsider. This person has taken a giant
step from the world of the dead to the
world of the living.”

JOHN 5:24

“I am the Bread of Life. The person who aligns with me hungers no more and thirsts no more, ever. . . . Every person the Father gives me eventually comes running to me. And once that person is with me, I hold on and don’t let go. I came down from heaven not to follow my own agenda but to accomplish the will of the One who sent me.

This, in a nutshell, is that will: that everything handed over to me by the Father be completed—not a single detail missed—and at the wrap-up of time I have everything and everyone put together, upright and whole. This is what my Father wants: that anyone who sees the Son and trusts who he is and what he does and then aligns with him will enter *real* life, *eternal* life. My part is to put them on their feet alive and whole at the completion of time.”

JOHN 6:35, 37-40

ASSURANCE

“You don’t have to wait for the End. I am, right now, Resurrection and Life. The one who believes in me, even though he or she dies, will live. And everyone who lives believing in me does not ultimately die at all.”

JOHN 11:25-26

By entering through faith into what God has always wanted to do for us—set us right with him, make us fit for him—we have it all together with God because of our Master Jesus. And that’s not all: We throw open our doors to God and discover at the same moment that he has already thrown open his door to us. We find ourselves standing where we always hoped we might stand—out in the wide open spaces of God’s grace and glory, standing tall and shouting our praise.

ROMANS 5:1-2

Grace, because God is putting everything together again through the Messiah, invites us into life—a life that goes on and on and on, world without end.

ROMANS 5:21

Each of us is raised into a light-filled world by our Father so that we can see where we're going in our new grace-sovereign country.

Could it be any clearer? Our old way of life was nailed to the cross with Christ, a decisive end to that sin-miserable life—no longer captive to sin's demands! What we believe is this: If we get included in Christ's sin-conquering death, we also get included in his life-saving resurrection. We know that when Jesus was raised from the dead it was a signal of the end of death-as-the-end. Never again will death have the last

word. When Jesus died, he took sin down with him, but alive he brings God down to us. From now on, think of it this way: Sin speaks a dead language that means nothing to you; God speaks your mother tongue, and you hang on every word. You are dead to sin and alive to God. That's what Jesus did. . . .

God's gift is *real life*, eternal life, delivered by Jesus, our Master.

ROMANS 6:5-11, 23

So, what do you think? With God on our side like this, how can we lose? If God didn't hesitate to put everything on the line for us, embracing our condition and exposing himself to the worst by sending his own Son, is there anything else he wouldn't gladly and freely do for us? And who would dare tangle with God by messing with one of God's

chosen? Who would dare even to point a finger? The One who died for us—who was raised to life for us!—is in the presence of God at this very moment sticking up for us. Do you think anyone is going to be able to drive a wedge between us and Christ's love for us? There is no way! Not trouble, not hard times, not hatred, not hunger, not homelessness, not bullying threats, not backstabbing, not even the worst sins listed in Scripture:

They kill us in cold blood because they
hate you.

We're sitting ducks; they pick us off one
by one.

None of this fazes us because Jesus loves us. I'm absolutely convinced that nothing—nothing living or dead, angelic or demonic, today or tomorrow, high or low, thinkable

ASSURANCE

or unthinkable—absolutely *nothing* can get between us and God's love because of the way that Jesus our Master has embraced us.

ROMANS 8:31-39

This comprehensive setting-things-right that is salvation is *God's* business, and a most flourishing business it is.

ROMANS 10:3

Just think—you don't need a thing, you've got it all! All God's gifts are right in front of you as you wait expectantly for our Master Jesus to arrive on the scene for the Finale. And not only that, but God himself is right alongside to keep you steady and on track until things are all wrapped up by Jesus. God, who got you started in this spiritual adventure, shares with us the

THE MESSAGE OF HOPE

life of his Son and our Master Jesus. He will never give up on you. Never forget that.

I CORINTHIANS 1:7-9

All you need to remember is that God will never let you down; he'll never let you be pushed past your limit; he'll always be there to help you come through it.

I CORINTHIANS 10:13

Because of the sacrifice of the Messiah, his blood poured out on the altar of the Cross, we're a free people—free of penalties and punishments chalked up by all our misdeeds. And not just barely free, either. *Abundantly* free! He thought of everything, provided for everything we could possibly need, letting us in on the plans he took such delight in making. He set it all

ASSURANCE

out before us in Christ, a long-range plan in which everything would be brought together and summed up in him, everything in deepest heaven, everything on planet earth.

EPHESIANS 1:7-10

Now God has us where he wants us, with all the time in this world and the next to shower grace and kindness upon us in Christ Jesus.

EPHESIANS 2:7

God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us.

EPHESIANS 3:20

THE MESSAGE OF HOPE

The mystery in a nutshell is just this: Christ is in you, so therefore you can look forward to sharing in God's glory. It's that simple. That is the substance of our Message.

COLOSSIANS 1:27

The fundamental fact of existence is that this trust in God, this faith, is the firm foundation under everything that makes life worth living. It's our handle on what we can't see.

HEBREWS 11:1

Since God assured us, "I'll never let you down, never walk off and leave you," we can boldly quote,

God is there, ready to help;
I'm fearless no matter what.
Who or what can get to me?

HEBREWS 13:6

ASSURANCE

What marvelous love the Father has extended to us! Just look at it—we're called children of God! That's who we really are.

I JOHN 3:1

This is the testimony in essence: God gave us eternal life; the life is in his Son.

I JOHN 5:11

A Memory Verse for Assurance

“Your GOD is present among you,
a strong Warrior there to save you.”

ZEPHANIAH 3:17
