

Patience in Hope

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"But if we hope for what we do not yet see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance." NKJV - Romans 8:25

To hope, to not see something, to hope with patience. These words from the apostle are a challenge to our reason and to our indignation at the evil that goes on around us in the world. Violence, injustice and suffering dominate the scene of man's history. The wonderful and fantastic realities of the reign of God are hidden from our eyes: evil masters mankind and generates conflict and afflictions.

Why hope? Many people consider hope an illusion; we don't see that which we are hope for, and in fact we see that which we wish didn't exist! Are Christian men and Christian women naive, enclosed in an unreal world that is intangible, showing no signs of life? The final redemption of man and creation is slow in arriving.

The time that separates us from the advent of the reign of God seems interminable, at least longer than our own existence. We feel swept along by the strong evil currents of history. It's as if a crosswind is continually blowing and keeps us from moving forward. This wall of suffering surrounds us and suffocates us. One who is closed up in a prison from which he cannot seem to exit cannot do anything other than wait. So, are we talking about resignation? Is the believer someone resigned to being trampled on by the events and circumstances of history?

This is not the intended meaning of Paul's words. Hope expects the promises of God to be fulfilled, notwithstanding the long period of waiting and the contradictions in which we find ourselves immersed. We actually wait for the very thing that we do not see at present.

We wait expectantly with patience. Patience is persistent, it is the capacity to resist in the face of the innumerable difficulties that keep us from seeing with clarity the substance of the promise of God. Patience is a strength because it is not based on being a balanced person, rather it is based on the power of the truth of God's promise:

the Holy Spirit enables us to hope, to wait expectantly and to resist.

I would very much like to see mankind breaking down all the walls and barriers erected in their paths; I would like to see children playing, learning, joyfully secure and happy; I would like to see human beings looking out for and loving each other with tenderness, passion and responsible actions; I would like to see my neighbor working and serenely enjoying the fruit of his own labors. I would like to see the sick always tended to with good care and sympathy, I would like to see our cities transformed into places in which one could live one's life enjoyably; I wish that we could all learn to live with honesty and trust; I would like to see men sharing bread and joy; I would very much like to see that which I hope for. Unfortunately, we all know very well that we don't always get what we hope for.

Nevertheless, that which we do not see, if we really desire it, we can wait for it expectantly, with persistent passion, all the while donating to the world our desires for peace, for justice, and for happiness. Giving away to others our expectancy, patient and yet active--this is our assignment that we need to give heed to. We give our hope to those who are desperate, our joy to the one who is sad, our enthusiasm to the one who is resigned to live a life of resignation.

To persistently hope, with patience, means to become involved in the struggles, sorrows, and defeats of other human beings. The promise of God accompanies us on our life journey and allows us to see beyond this horizon of pain, to see the Light of His coming reign and so we can say, "COME LORD JESUS!" Rev.22:20.

Your Brother in His service, *Franco Maggiotto*