SCRIPTURE: “For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.” —Romans 8:24–25

MEDITATION:
Most of the time in the Old Testament, hope is FOR something.

In Ezra 10, one of the Israelites tells Ezra that there is “hope” for Israel in spite of all the bad things Israel has done. In this passage, there is an expectation that victory will come, no matter how bad we are—if we pray hard enough. The writer of Ecclesiastes tells us in chapter 9 that there is hope as long as we are alive. In Psalm 16, the psalmist says that because he has done what God wants, his body can “can rest in hope.” I guess this passage means that if we are good, staying alive gives hope and that the death of a good person still gives hope. In Job, we learn that our hope, our confidence, is in gold. I suppose that means that we hope to be rich, and if we are rich, our hope is fulfilled.

But in the New Testament, hope is IN someone.

In the New Testament, there is only one root word for “hope,” and the verb “to hope” is almost never followed by a thing or an event. Rather, hope is usually directed to and centered on a Person or the character and activities of that Person. As Christians, our hope is not in an outcome, but in the One who has saved us, who is in control of our lives, and who is with us always. Paul waits for “it” because his hope is really in the One who has saved us, who guides us, and whom we will see and no longer need to hope in.

REFLECTION:
What is the object of your hopes? What is your reaction if your hopes are not realized?

Does hope IN God provide you with peace and confidence even when things are bad? Do you “wait with patience”?

Additional scriptures: 1 Timothy 4:10; 1 Corinthians 15:19, Colossians 1:27

PRAYER: Gracious God, focus our hope on you, on your grace, on your power, and your activity to bring about your Kingdom on earth—for us, for others, and for this earth. Amen.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR:
Sara Miles and her husband, John, were missionary teachers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where Sara taught science and math. They have two children, a daughter and a son, and four grandchildren. While they were home on furlough, the situation in the DRC became too dangerous for couples with children to return, and they became involved in Christian Higher Education in the US. Sara taught at Wheaton College for 20 years; she then taught and did administration work at Eastern University for 11 years. Sara has an MRE (religious education), an MS (biology), and a PhD (history and philosophy of science). She and her husband are now both retired.

Sara served on the ASA Executive Council from 1995–1999, gave several talks at annual meetings, submitted a number of articles to PSCF, and reviewed articles for PSCF. She has also been active in the Presbyterian Association on Science, Technology, and the Christian Faith, serving on their board since 2009.

In retirement, she has been active in her local congregation and in the Milwaukee Presbytery, where she has given several presentations on science and theology and served as Moderator of the Presbytery. She is commissioned by the Presbytery and her congregation to serve as Pastor for Visitation.
“Group Correspondence.”

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