

Arrival of Hope (not wishes)

Eden Jersak

My husband, Brad, grew up in Manitoba, Canada, and we used to make the long trek from the west coast of British Columbia to his hometown every other summer. Our three boys were veteran road trip travelers and the 22-hour drive became a treasure chest of family memories.

We found many ways to pass the time. We had sing-alongs and played road trip games such as “20 Questions.” We even combined them by singing the Canadian hit song, “If I had a million dollars...” and then asking each other, “How would you spend a million dollars?” We would hear each other’s elaborate plans and ideas of how to spend that sum—some thoughtful and others quite ridiculous. But when it came

down to it, it was just a wish. It was all in good fun, a way to keep everyone from going crazy while cooped up in a car for a long time.

The terms *hope* and *wish* are often used interchangeably in our world, but they are not the same thing. How does hope work—or is it just a Christian euphemism for wishing?

I don’t believe they are the same at all. Hope has an enduring quality to it. Hope is something that expresses our trust in someone or something. Of course, we need to be careful in whom or what we place our trust, but hope has been a lifeline for me personally when that line is anchored to my trustworthy God.

In this season of world history, hope has taken a

serious beating. Hope is a sacred commodity that is fast losing the battle against despair. You hear a lot of people feeling hopeless, but our hope cannot be invested in men or women, ideologies or philosophies.

Our hope must be solidly planted in Jesus.

In Matthew 12, Matthew quotes Isaiah 42:1-4, a Messianic prophecy about what he will and won’t do, and the power of hope attached to his name:

Look well at my handpicked servant; I love him so much, take such delight in him.

I’ve placed my Spirit on him; he’ll decree justice to the nations.

But he won’t yell, won’t raise his voice; there’ll be no commotion in the streets.

He won’t walk over anyone’s feelings, won’t push you into a corner.

Before you know it, his justice will triumph; the mere sound of his name will signal hope, even among far-off unbelievers. (The Message)

This passage is a goldmine of hope! Just read what Jesus won’t do! He won’t yell, raise his voice, walk over other’s feelings or push others into a corner. If we understand that to be a description of how Jesus operates, and if we follow him as disciples, doing what he does or doesn’t do, just imagine the hope that could be restored! What if we listened instead of trying to shout others down?



What if we moved peacefully instead of violently? What if we considered others' feelings instead of trampling on them? What if we raised others up instead of pushing them out of sight? What if? Then at the mere sound of his name, HOPE would be signaled through the nations!

This is how hope differs from mere wishes. Hope has a path, a way of being and has Jesus to follow. Wishes are like vapor, without real substance or form. **But hope appeared in the human life of Jesus Christ.** When we follow him, we follow hope, we help create hope, and ultimately restore hope to the world.

Ephesians 3:20 gives us even more hope!

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 with us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us.

(The Message)

Let's stop just wishing things were different and instead, return to the path that Jesus walked and asks us to follow. Hope is fostered as we follow Jesus, who is our blessed hope.

Our hope cannot be in a particular outcome; our hope must be in a God that can do more than we ask or imagine! *"...while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ"* (Titus 2:13, NIV). □

Eden Jersak runs a publishing house called Fresh Wind Press.

Arrival of Peace

(satire of lament)

Brad Jersak chats
with John Lennon



WAR IS OVER! (If you want it) – John Lennon

No John, war isn't over. And *No*, we don't seem to want it. Thanks for offering, but we just can't. We can't afford an end to armed conflict—"it's the economy, stupid!"

I know, I know, the prophet Isaiah forecast the arrival of a Prince of peace, saying:

He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. —Isaiah 2:4

But you see, John, we weren't ready for a Prince of Peace. We wanted a divine warrior who would side with us to drive out and destroy our enemies. And when he didn't, we did to him what we've done with all you peace-mongers. We didn't use bullets, but you get the idea: the cross was our *No* to Jesus' way of peace.