

**Monday, December 10** – *“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.” (Psalm 46:1)* Everyone has hope in something. Hope for a brighter tomorrow, a way out or a way up. Hope is found in that which we believe. If we believe in money providing a brighter tomorrow, a way up or a way out, our hope will be found in money. If we believe in a relationship, hope will be found in that relationship. When the money is spent and the relationship breaks down, what do you have left? If you believe that God is your refuge and strength, your hope will be found in God. I don't know about you but my money is on God when it comes to the hope department. The most important relationship that any of us can develop is with the one who created us. If your hope is not in God than your hope has to be in something in and of this world. There are some pretty awesome things in and of this world, like money and relationships, but nothing in or of our world deserves to be the focus of your hope more than God.

**Tuesday, December 11** – *“The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and are safe.” (Proverbs 18:10)* I have been singing this song with the kids at our preschool since the beginning of the school year. It is called “Blessed Be the Name of the Lord”. As I am writing these words I can see them dancing and singing. One of the blessings of children is that they are hope-full. They haven't been tainted by our sin-stained world. They haven't been hurt by someone lying and cheating on them. They haven't had to declare bankruptcy. They haven't suffered the sting of death. At least they haven't yet. The sooner we can sing these words with our kids at Little Disciples Preschool the better it will be for all of us. Some say the hopefulness of children is simply found in their lack of experience. I say the hopefulness of children is found in the fact that they truly know that the Lord is a strong tower and in him they will be safe. Afterall, they were with him not too long ago!

**Wednesday, December 12** – *“For I know the plans I have for you’, declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’” (Jeremiah 29:11)* Why would you put your hope in God? God is the one who has made big plans for you and he will never forget those plans, even if you forget about him. God's plans are for your benefit. Contrary to popular opinion, God isn't sitting up in heaven waiting for you to mess up so he can condemn you. God wants you to be all that he has created you to be. This is the hope and the future that God promises. This the Journey to Be that we always talk about. God has something in store for you, someone that he wants you to be. Putting your hope in God opens the door to being. Putting your hope in God allows you to discover the plans that God has made for you. Plans to “prosper you and not harm you”.

**Thursday, December 13** – *“But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” (Isaiah 40:31)* No, this verse isn't promising that you will be able to fly or run or even walk for that matter. This verse isn't about the physical aspects of life, it is about hope. Think about it for a second. If you have your hope in your income, you must constantly cater to that income. If you have your hope in a relationship, you must constantly cater to that relationship. In that which you have your hope requires a lion's share of your attention. When you put your hope in God, you get to let go of all that catering. You get to stop worrying and trying to control and feeling as if everything depends on your effort. That freedom will allow you to experience things in this life of which you have only dreamed.

**Friday, December 14** – *“Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 1:6)* Think about where your hope rests. Does the source of your hope have the ability to carry out a “good work” in your life? Or is the source of your hope based on someone else's efforts or decisions? Hope is something that all of us do. You don't need to teach anyone how to hope. You will probably have to remind them to be hope-full, but all of us already have hope. The question we are asking today is in what do we hope? If your hope rests in anything in this world you are assured to be disappointed. Nothing in this world, not money, not relationships, not material things, not drugs, not achievement, are able to begin and sustain a good work in you. If you put your hope in God you are assured that God will carry on that good work that he started in you when he knit you together in your mother's womb.