

# A HOPE STRONGER THAN ALL THE WORLD'S TROUBLES

## VIDEO ONE

The English word 'hope' has several shades of meaning.

It can refer to our desire for a thing to happen. It can refer to a wish for circumstances to change for the better. Or it can refer to a personal aspiration.

What these 'hopes' have in common is that they're about looking to the future positively – even and especially when times are tough. Having a hopeful attitude can limit our feelings of helplessness, increase our happiness and reduce our stress.

At a time in which, nationally and internationally, difficult things are happening, we need *hope*.

But not all forms of hope are equal.

Authentic hope has three hallmarks. Let's think about the kind of hope we need.

Firstly, *authentic hope is realistic about how big the challenges we face are.*

True hope isn't blindly optimistic. Hope is only authentic if we first allow ourselves to recognise how bad things are.

Even by this measure, many expressions of hope fall short.

During height of the pandemic, these words were shared online:

Someday everything will make perfect sense. So, for now, laugh at the confusion, smile through the tears, and keep reminding yourself that every cloud has a silver lining.

It's a cheery sentiment.

But, we should ask: is it *true*? What global tragedy has ever caused people to look back and say, "Ah, now that makes perfect sense. Yes indeed, every cloud has a silver lining."

The hope it offers is unrealistic.

We've all heard apparently hopeful words – but, in the end, they do more harm than good. They might offer a quick pick-me-up, but that's all. Later, they leave us feeling guilty if we're not able to smile through the tears.

Hope isn't authentic if it's naïve or patronising or if it denies the scale of our problems.

Secondly, *authentic hope has a broad vision.*

Our world has many needs. Some solutions address specific needs. The discovery of a vaccine, for example, gave many people hope during the pandemic.

Yet the most authentic forms of hope are multi-faceted. The most authentic hope deals with more than just one problem, it brings healing and change to broader structures, systems and culture.

It has a broad vision.

Thirdly, *authentic hope helps us persevere in the midst of difficulty.*

On the whole, quick fixes are no match for deep change. History reveals that the story of hope is long, full of twists and turns, steps forward and steps back.

This makes passing time both a friend and an enemy to hope.

On the one hand, because hope is normally realised slowly, we need not give up if change seems slow or unspectacular.

On the other hand, we always risk giving up. Because most problems cannot be quickly solved, the danger is that we become weary and simply quit.

Authentic hope makes waiting worthwhile, and it offers us comfort as we wait.

It's not easy receiving bad news, or seeing others suffer, or becoming more aware of the world's troubles. We need hope – to believe that things now aren't as they'll always be.

We need hope that sees the scale of our problem, that has a broad enough vision for change, and which helps us to wait patiently.