

Biblical Perspectives: Hope in the Workplace

by Carrie Cavanaugh

Christian organizations often face challenges and especially now that the economy is struggling. It is vitally important during tough times to maintain a culture of hope at your workplace. If there is no hope, there is no motivation to keep striving ahead. But how can you instill hope in your staff?

“We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.” Romans 5:2b-5

These verses highlight two sources of hope for Christians in general, which apply to Christians in your organization. The first is hope in the glory of God. Although it may not seem like it at times, God is sovereign over all things and is working a grand plan of redemption in this world that is for His glory. We know that one day every knee will bow before Him. Practically speaking, then, everything that happens to help or challenge our workplaces are part of God’s process or revealing His glory. If we are blessed with a large donation, it is a gift from the giver of all good gifts. And if it is a lack of funds, it is our opportunity to witness to the world through the

peace we have in trusting His plan for adjusting our ministry reach. But the ultimate hope in this is that God’s glory WILL be revealed in the end. His victory will be complete. Everything will be set right.

The second source of hope that this passage points out is that God has orchestrated that suffering should be the seed that grows into hope in His people. This miracle happens as

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suffering produces perseverance. This perseverance is translated into character. And character in turn is the source of hope. This is a miracle of God at work in our lives because without Him many people who suffer hardships only become defeated by them. But God can do the extraordinary! First of all, He is the one who sovereignly determined that we should face suffering and that out of His perfect wisdom and love for us. You see, He cares more about making us beautiful on the inside than letting us be “comfortable” here and now. Moreover, when the troubles come, He gives us the strength and the grace to face them. Indeed, we don’t face hardships alone; the Holy Spirit never leaves us. That God-

given perseverance over time molds our very being so that our character is steadfast in trusting God and pursuing holiness despite life’s trials. This self-assurance of God’s goodness and help to us is then the bedrock upon which we can have hope for the future. Indeed, knowledge of God’s faithfulness to us in the past is the evidence we can point to that He will be faithful to us in the future. And this knowledge of God’s faithfulness could only have been gained through enduring trials that led us to depend on Him in ways we otherwise never would have.

If your organization is struggling right now, if you are faced with the prospect of having to layoff some of your staff or cut some of your programs, I want to encourage you by reminding you that this is the very moment that God is at work in you all, sanctifying you and giving you greater faith. He loves us so much that He makes the effort to shape our souls. With that in mind, let us persevere in His strength. Let us be men and women of character, who know the faithfulness of our God. Let us be a witness to the world though the hope that we have in a God who never forsakes us.

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