

Believe Your Hope

“Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”
John 5:45-47.

Jesus is here speaking to Jewish leaders who opposed Him for healing a man on the Sabbath and He tells them something very interesting: He tells them that they don't believe Moses but that they hope in Moses.

For one to hope in something means for one to have a real and confident expectation from that something. For one to believe something means for one to accept that something as true to the point that one lives one's life as if it is true. These two concepts are similar but not the same. And Jesus is saying that these Jews hope in Moses but they don't believe Moses.

There aren't many practicing Jews who would agree with Jesus on this. The Jews who heard Jesus say this surely didn't think that Jesus was telling the truth. How could they have both set their hope on Moses and not believe Moses? Is this possible?

Let's pretend that Johnny receives from his grandma \$25 every week, and this same grandma tells Johnny that he'll only receive \$25 as long as he writes a thank you card. It would be possible for Johnny not to write the thank you cards but to hope sincerely for \$25. If he did, then he would demonstrate that he hopes for \$25 but doesn't believe his grandma – until the \$25 stopped.

In the same way the Jews hoped in Moses but didn't believe Moses, they didn't live as if Moses's words were true, because Moses spoke of someone greater than Moses who was to lead Israel. And we need to consider this very carefully, because the same can be said of us: We can hope in Jesus but not believe Jesus. That is to say, we can hope to receive eternal life from Jesus, but not believe the words that He spoke and are recorded for us. If we truly hope to receive salvation from Jesus but we don't love our brother or sister, then we don't believe Jesus, because we're behaving as if His words aren't true.

Hope is a good thing to have, and at times it's a difficult thing to have. But hope by itself isn't enough. We can't only hope in Jesus and His words. We must also believe them. **[DJR]**