

Excerpts from the letters of the “men in white” at the Torres Unit.

There was a period of time in the beginning of my sentence where I started to fall into depression and lose sight of life. I was too blinded by my current situation and circumstances and there seemed to be no hope for a future. Instead of continuing to focus on my immediate surroundings and circumstances, I began to live in the conviction of truth - that God’s plan and purpose for my life included prosperity and a future. As I began to do this I noticed I was no longer bound and blinded by that fog of hopelessness and despair. My current circumstances began to become my training grounds. I was shown in a vision what I would be, how far I would climb above my current incarceration, and the countless lives I would impact because of everything I went through.

I do know of hope and I feel qualified to speak of it, for if it did not exist and I did not have it, I would not be writing this letter. I would not be here. My faith is dependent upon and in proportion with the hope that I have. The hope I have for my life and future. Much like a dying ember can be nurtured and formed into a mighty flame, so too is life the beginning of hope.

When I think of hope I think of an anchor, something solid that can hold you in place no matter the storm or movement around you. . . .My hope is not in parole, my hope is not in good health or money, my hope is not in a good life. My hope is as Jesus was raised from the dead so I too will be raised at the last day, and while on this earth I have been raised to newness of life by the same power that raised Jesus from the dead.

By the grace of God I have been afforded a hope which has taken hold and through nurturing and providence has grown and sustained me for quite some time now. Mine is not a unique story. I am not special. I am not worthy or deserving. But, I do know suffering, and I have endured - I would like to believe I have developed a fair amount of character. And I, without a doubt, have hope if nothing else.

One of the beautiful things about scripture and the Christian faith is a relationship of a son with the Father. (Even when our earthly fathers disappoint us again and again) I had hope to be a son. Now I am.

We are embraced and supported by a divine love that no power can separate us from and which also conveys both identity and purpose.

I lived without hope. I was just living to die. I was just existing in a place that has little if any mercy let alone hope. I have learned that God has an expectation in hope that he has called all of his children to. While we suffer and our hope is in the alleviation of the pain, our hope becomes misplaced; it should be that our hope is in God and what he expects of us. Hope is to me fulfilling the expectation that I know God has for or of me. To find the purpose in a life that

society would deem worthless. Hope isn't about the stock market or a pizza. Let your hope be in something greater than you.

I find a message of hope in Romans 8:18: "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." I read it at the time of my incarceration and I liked it but only because it "sounded good," not knowing it was confirmation that what I am experiencing is nowhere near the comfort, understanding, encouragement, growth and hope that God would reveal to me. I realize that pressure does indeed bust pipes, but also through pressure diamonds are formed. It is up to you how you handle it and if you're going to use the pressure as polish to shine through adversities and shine as a light of Christ. Now I realize God will throw you deep in the struggle to show you what you've been blind to all along. But just because you're in the struggle doesn't mean He's not by your side holding you up. So always remember if He brought you to it, He'll bring you through it.

This is the hope that he has called me to, to be a man who can look at myself in the mirror and love the man looking back, one who can be all I can be because of who is in me. I love being a slave of Christ. My hope is in this servitude, not as a ministry of works, but as a ministry of hope. A messenger and feeder on the hope Christ provides. Prison is the darkest place I have lived in, yet the hope of Christ has kept me in the light and surrounded by the light.