**From Death to Hope**

* **Scripture Reading:** “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33, NIV)
* **Devotional lesson**

In the midst of the fragility of our lives, we have marvelous reasons to have hope.

That is not as easy as it sounds, of course. Sometimes we forget to see the eternal in the midst of the temporal.

Fatalism is “the acceptance of all events as inevitable,” according to Webster’s Dictionary. The fatalistic person says, “What does it matter? We will all lose in the end. We are victims of destiny.” One of the most insidious aspects of fatalism is the part that makes us resist holiness. We become hostages of discouragement, insisting there is nothing we can do. Fatalism can take us to depression, hopelessness and even suicide.

*A soldier was captured as a prisoner of war, and his captors took him far away from his country. He felt isolated, far from his family, surrounded by strangers. His loneliness grew as the time passed without news from his home. He did not know if his family was still alive or if his country was safe. He lost all sense of purpose in his life.*

*Unexpectedly, he received a letter. It was crumpled, and the edges were dirty, showing the many months it took the card to arrive. It said, “We are waiting for you to come home. Everything is fine here. Don’t worry.”*

*In an instant, everything was different. His circumstances had not changed. He was still doing the same forced labor and receiving the same meager rations, but now he knew that someone was waiting for his liberation and return. Hope changed his life.*

God has written us a letter. The good news of the revelation of God in Christ declares to us we must have hope.

In that resides the hope that gives us the power to live; it gives us new strength.

Hope in Christ-- its very possibility means we must say “no” to all forms of fatalism, because when we mourn and weep, we remember our lives can join in the grand dance of God. The dance of life and hope.

Hope does not come from positive predictions about the state of the world . . . Hope, on the other hand, has to do with God. We have hope and joy in our faith because we believe that . . . God has overcome the world. We follow the One who is not limited or defeated by the suffering in the world.

*--H. Nouwen, Turn My Mourning Into Dancing*