



PREFACE



HOPE is without a doubt, the most beautiful word in the English language. Our world is starving for just little doses of hope, little sprinkles of sunshine on otherwise dark and dreaded days. In a time when so many words are used like weapons that attack and destroy, this four letter word is truly one of the “good guys,” one of the “best guys.”

I’ve watched people throughout my life who didn’t seem to know how to, or maybe were just afraid to, reach out and hope. Perhaps they came from a background where hope was never embraced. Maybe they were hurt; maybe at some point their dreams were shattered. Maybe disappointment, hardship or grief levied too great a toll. For whatever reason, they have lived their lives never daring to touch, grasp or stir hope on any level. The sadness, the emptiness and the void created by the absence of hope is not only destructive, it’s debilitating.

Hoping and wishing, although very close to the same definitions in Webster’s dictionary, are vastly different when they play out in our lives. We can buy a lottery ticket and put into motion the “wish’n, hope’n, and pray’n” philosophy captured in the lyrics of the old 50s song. We may



Hope When The River Rages

even claim that we're believe'n we hold the winning ticket. There's certainly nothing wrong with positive thinking. Seeing the glass half full instead of half empty is the perception of a stable personality, not to mention a person who's easier to be around. But at the end of the day, that attitude, although admirable, is simply a "wishful thinking" state of mind. True HOPE takes on a much deeper definition. It becomes something alive in us, something that flows in and through us. It comforts us, holds us together, and gives us reason to go on. Hope in this life makes today bearable. Hope beyond this life carries us on wings as we face tomorrow.

I want to share hope with you. I know that as you read my story, there will be scores and scores of your own that will surface and beg to be told, to be shared. I know that my experiences will wane in light of the hopeful walk many of you have traveled in life. My heart's desire is not to one-up anyone, not to tell a story for shock value and most of all not to gain personal praise or admiration. My HOPE is that I will be able to ignite a fire, nudge, urge someone, somewhere to reach out and open the gifts that God has given them. My PURPOSE is to awaken dreams, visions, and missions long ago forsaken for lack of hope. My DESIRE is that you will see the Creator, the Savior who made the ultimate sacrifice for mankind in order for you to "live out" hope in your life. May God receive the glory, honor, and praise.

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