

CHRONICLES OF

H O P E

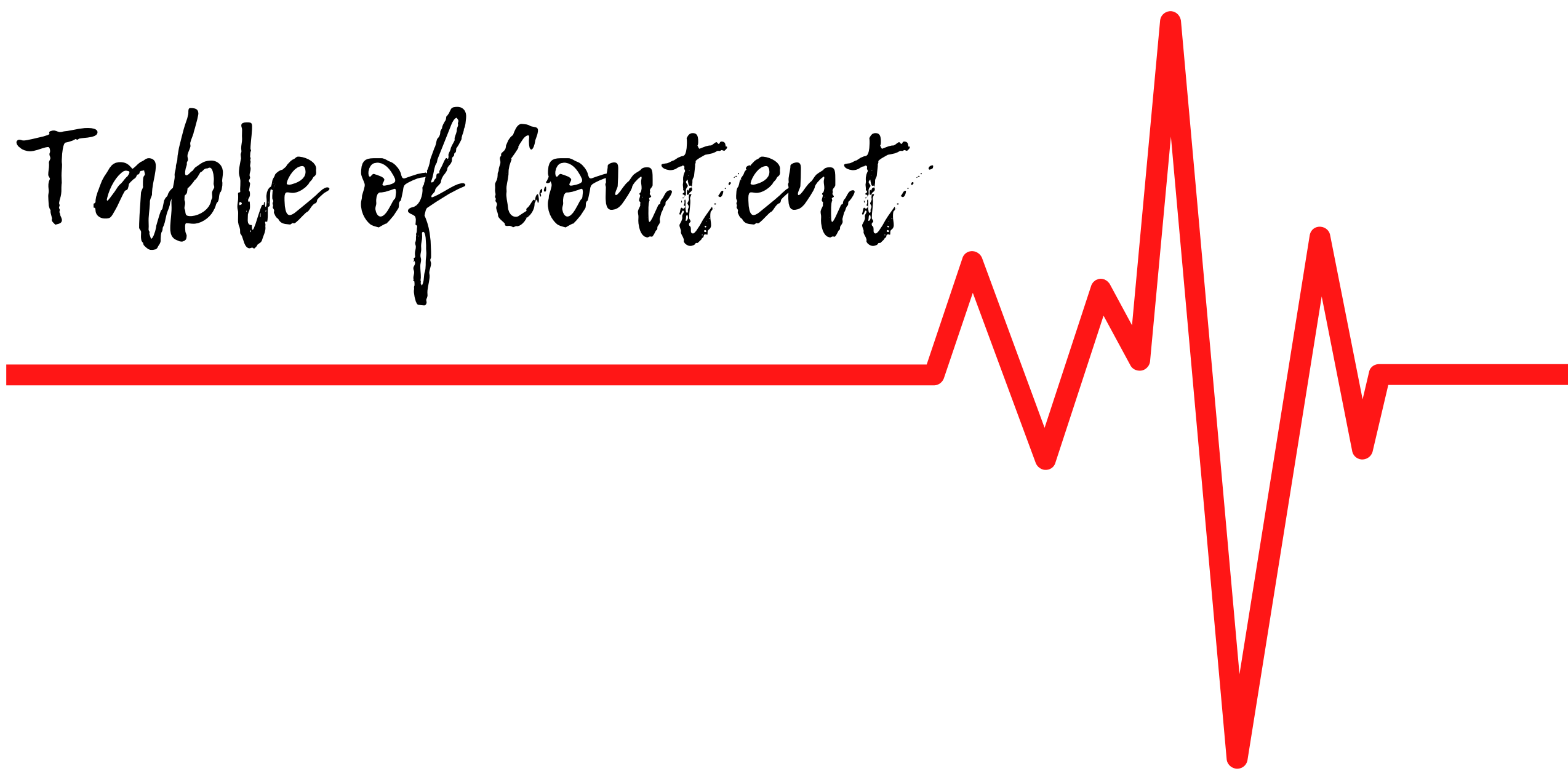
Vol. 1

A CHRIST-like *Response* to COVID-19

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Intro



Hope When There is No Hope

"Even when there was no reason for hope, Abraham kept hoping..."

Romans 4:18a
NLT

How do you fight an invisible enemy?

At the present time, many of us have been confined to our homes due to a deadly virus that can not be seen with the natural eye.

However, we are told to be optimistic and courageous by mass media outlets. Government agencies and people of faith tell us to "keep hope alive" while we yet experience hopelessness.

How do we fight the stark realities that sometimes make us feel hopeless – while at the same time embrace the hope and expectation that everything is going to be alright?

"Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness."

– Bishop Desmond Tutu

What started out for some as a great year can also be seen as the darkest of times – depending on who you talk to. We all need a glimmer of hope to escape this shadow of hopelessness.

Finances are being challenged, businesses are currently closing their doors and no one seems to know when this will end.

That's why we are reminded of stories like Abraham and his internal/external battle against hopelessness. In fact, this first volume of "Chronicles of Hope" is based on that story and many just like it.

We all need a strong infusion of hope – especially when things look hopeless.

The word hope, in the context of this book, speaks to the great expectation that a Believer in Jesus Christ can have during times like this. The stories that you are about read are designed to give you hope. – George M.



What Hope is Not

Hope is not a frivolous shot in the wind canvassing for positive results. Hope is another word for "expectation." Think of a child waking up on Christmas morning. Whether or not gifts are present, there's still this crazy expectation - a hope - that there will be something there. It's what drives that child (depending on the family dynamic) to wake up looking for gifts.

In other words, hope is not a whimsical "maybe." Hope expects something to happen!



In light of the current Covid-19 pandemic - it would be good for us to expect something better than what we are currently seeing and/or hearing.

Abraham is a good biblical example of that. When God spoke to him in Genesis 15 and Genesis 17 - Abraham had no children. Yet, God continued to give him hope by telling him that he would have more children than "the stars in the sky" (Genesis 15:5).

God gave Abraham hope - when everything looked hopeless.



In fact, God even changed Abram's name to Abraham - a name which means "father of nations" - while he was yet childless and too old to bear children (Genesis 17:1-5).

This kind of hope is not "positive energy" - this kind of hope expects God to do what He said - regardless of what it looks like. That's the kind of hope that we all need in times like these.

Of course, somebody is probably reading this and saying to themselves, "*That sounds like faith.*"



But faith is not hope. Hope "expects" God to do what He promised - faith already knows that He will.

I know that sounds like a play on words but here's the bible's definition of faith: "**Faith shows the reality of what we hope for;**" - Hebrews 11:1
NLTa

Faith says that "you have it" and there are many Christian Believers who have strong faith. But you can have faith in God and still lose hope. In the same way, you can pray and still grow faint in your expectation of receiving what you have prayer for.



And that's why I'm sharing these "chronicles of hope" with you.

I have personally witnessed people "panic buying" or hoarding items that they don't need. Some have even claimed this to be the end of the world - but no man knows that day or hour. I just believe that God wants our hope and expectations to rise so that we don't live in doom and gloom.

Hope is not based on how we feel or what we see. Hope is rooted in a strong believe that God is good and that He has good intentions for all of His children.



the Crazy Truth

When I first heard about Covid-19 it seemed so far away. I saw a few videos that showed people eating bats in China. We casually dismissed it during fellowship after church. And we joked about how doomed we would be if the virus were to be found in chicken. None of us knew the truth.

We were all only days away from being challenged on a level that we couldn't possibly imagine. And now, we are all living in a time where you either have hope - or you don't.



And it is evident.

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life. - Proverbs 13:12 ESV

A lack of hope has physiological and psychological effects that can clearly be seen. However, when the inner core of your being is sick - it can be a silent killer.

I've had close friends that committed suicide and it shocked me because I couldn't fully see what was going on with them. Somewhere down the line they had lost hope.



Sometimes we paint this beautiful picture of life to hide the ugly grey areas that are not so pretty.

The truth is that Abraham, a man who is considered to be "The Father of Faith" for prominent religion - also believed that the Egyptians would kill him and take his wife. So he devised a plan that involved his wife Sarah saying that she wasn't his wife.

All this was after God had told Abraham that He would make him "a great nation" (Genesis 12). Abraham had faith but his expectations were sometimes low.



Do you remember Y2K, or the year 2000 when all the computers were supposed to shut down? I was in prison during that time and I remember my cellmate laughing at me because I got fully dressed in preparation for all the doors to open. I was concerned that everyone's records would be lost and that we would all be forced to fend for ourselves.

True story.

At that time, I was Chief Bible Study Leader lol. I had faith but my hope and expectation were low.



The crazy truth is that you can truly trust God but have low expectations.

And, based on my encounter with Y2K, you can clearly see that a lack of hope can cause anybody to make foolish choices.

In this season where everyone's hope is being challenged, I would hate to see people standing at the door with their suitcases packed. It would be a shame to witness people of faith filling their houses with an overabundance of toilet tissue. We all need a fresh fusion of hope.



Great Expectations

I love "second chance" stories!

In fact, I would probably vote for the person who is least likeliest to succeed before I would vote for the person who is most qualified. I'm infatuated with underdogs. And that's probably because I consider myself an underdog.

One of the primary characteristics of an underdog is their ability to "bounce back" or to start over again.



In my opinion, God loves underdogs just as much as I do - if not more.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 tells us that God purposely chooses people to do His will who are not qualified for the job or people who have to bounce-back.

Yet, there are times - in the same bible - where unqualified people refuse to make a come-back.

"And they said, There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart."



That scripture (in Jeremiah the 18th chapter) amazes me because God wanted to re-new the mind-state of His own children in the same way that a potter would re-shape clay. But they replied, "**It is hopeless.**"

"As of today, Tuesday the 24th (the day this chronicle is being released), at least 43,499 people across every state, and three U.S. territories, have tested positive for Covid-19, according to a New York Times database, and at least 537 patients with the virus have died." This would be an opportune time to bounce-back.



In fact, this is the perfect time for us to have great expectations!

You may be familiar with the story of Hernan Cortes. In 1519, he and six hundred men made history against a fierce opponent when he turned to his men and told them to "burn the ships."

In other words:

There's no turning back!

In spite of the odds, Captain Cortes expected a great victory and that's exactly what he got. But even beyond that, he eliminated any possibility for retreat. That's great expectation!



Many of us are hunkered down in our homes with high hopes of fleeing this dangerous virus. But we have to be careful to maintain our resolve that God is working this thing out for our good. We have to "keep hope alive."

That is why I based this particular chronicle on Abraham:

- He was full of hope when there was no reason for him to have hope.
- He was a man of faith that sometimes had low expectations.

In summary, he was a human – just like you and me – who sometimes needed hope.



To conclude this chronicle, I just want to share a few options that will increase your expectation for greater.

First of all, if you do not know for sure that Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior – I want to invite you to open up your heart to Him so that He can fill you with His Spirit of great expectation (**Romans 10:8-11**).

Secondly, if you need resources to help you get through challenging times like this, we will continue to share these chronicles and to point you towards relevant resources.

www.legacyreentryfoundation.org

800 573-8538



Finally, here are some practical resources that you can use to keep yourself and others informed about Covid-19:

- www.cdc.gov

(learn more about Covid-19)

- www.dph.illinois.gov

(Illinois Covid-19 information)

- www.legacyreentryfoundation.org

(Covid-19 information - as it relates to people who will be released from jail)

Remember - even when it looks like there is no hope - you can always put your hope in God.

Chronicles of Hope - Volume 1