



Hopecasting: Finding, Keeping and Sharing the Things Unseen

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Hope in Action

Hope isn't something we can drum up within ourselves. Hope is a gift, given to us when Jesus draws near to us in the time of our honesty and fear.

But Hope immediately takes us to action (another difference between biblical Hope and wishful thinking). Hope brings with it, inseparably, an invitation to partner with God; we bring our actions into *alignment* with God's actions, in *response* to God's actions. Prior to Hope's arrival, we don't have a clear sense of what, exactly, a new reality might hold. At best, our perspective is somewhat limited to "not my current experience."

Hope arrives and whispers: step into *this* new reality, *this* new possibility, *this* vision. And we are drawn to action.

I may be completely lacking in power to change my reality; but I'm invited to partner with a God — *the* God — who has more than enough power. And (this is a BIG deal), God seems to want to partner with us. Throughout the Bible and throughout all recorded history and in the lives of our friends and modern-day saints, we see God partnering with humans to bring redemption and healing.

This partnering offer is not to say that God couldn't do it without us. Instead, it seems to be a loving God's way of sharing.

My friend, author and pastor Bryan Loritts, shared a wonderful metaphor for this at an event I'd invited him to speak at recently. I resonated with the example because I am on airplanes way too much and care way too much about my frequent flier status.

Bryan shared how his frequent flying has given him a certain "status" with his airline. And that status sometimes results in free upgrades to first class. Taking the first class seat is a no-brainer, except when he's flying with his wife, who has no status with the airline. He said he'd learned the hard way that sitting in first class while his wife sits in coach does not strengthen his marriage.

So his practice, on those occasions, is to take the seat next to his wife. And when the person whose seat he's in shows up, usually a bit miffed at his imposition, Bryan hands them his first class seat and the showdown is immediately over.

Bryan made this connection: in giving up the better seat, "I haven't lost my status; I just refused to use my status for my own benefit."

That's what God does when inviting us to partner in a life of Hope. God's not becoming less

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BOOK EXCERPT

God by inviting us into co-creating; instead, God is revealing parental love. Like a human father who invites his young son to join him in swinging a hammer during a home repair project, we get included because of love, and God *enjoys* our coworking.

With all of that in mind, here's my definition of Hope:

Hope is faithful confidence that God continues to author a story that moves us from vision to action.

-Taken from chapter one, "I Want Hope"



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“Oestreicher redefines hope, or better yet, pulls us back to a workable set of postures for receiving hope. This book reminds us that hope is a beautiful gift, an influx of Jesus into our dark and dry souls.”

-David Crowder, recording artist

“The best lives are full of hope.”

How was *Hopecasting* a personal journey and discovery for you?

Mark Oestreicher: This book is very much a reflection of my own periods of hopelessness and my discoveries as hope was reignited. It’s a reflection of my own journey as I prayed, explored Scripture, reflected, preached, journaled and interacted with people about what it means to live with a tangible, palpable hope.

In what ways do Christians misunderstand hope?

Mark: As I started speaking on this subject based on my own experience with it, I quickly discovered that the vast majority of Christians in America (based on my anecdotal sampling) had a faulty – I would even say “non-biblical” – understanding of hope. Most people either see hope as synonymous with optimism and wishful thinking (with a little Jesus mayo spread on top), or they exclusively tie hope to the afterlife in a way that strongly suggests there is *nothing* here on earth in this life to give us hope. Neither of those ideas is what we find in Scripture nor enough fuel to move my life from survival to thriving. I set out to address this issue in a way that I hope will be massively helpful to my brothers and sisters.

What does the term “hopecasting” mean?

Mark: The best lives are full of hope. But we so often confuse hope and optimism. Instead, hope is a gift from God, one we can actively position ourselves to receive. When we do, hope transforms our lives and turns us into hopecasters.

What do you hope readers take away from *Hopecasting*?

Mark:

- Hope is a faithful confidence that God continues to author a story that moves us from vision to action.
- We all experience exile in one way or another; but that’s the best place to start positioning ourselves for hope.
- The postures or practices needed to open ourselves up to hope are honesty with ourselves about our dissatisfaction and honest emotional cries to God.
- When we release control and open ourselves up to receive hope, we are often confronted with our fears about ourselves and God.
- Hope arrives with the presence of Jesus.
- Hope transforms our longings, turning them outward toward others and the world.



Mark Oestreicher, author of *Hopecasting: Finding, Keeping and Sharing the Things Unseen*
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"Mark Oestreicher offers deep encouragement for those of us who have ever struggled to cultivate transformative hope in hard places. Drawing on personal experience, he offers a practical path for pushing through fear and cynicism toward refreshing hope. I am grateful for the invitation Mark offers us here – an invitation into active, faithful confidence in the goodness of God."

– **Gary A. Haugen**, president and CEO, International Justice Mission

Mark Oestreicher, Author of *Hopecasting*

Mark Oestreicher is a partner in The Youth Cartel, challenging youth ministers through holistic professional coaching, strategic consulting, transformational events and inventive resource development for youth ministry. He has broad experience working in churches in roles ranging from junior high pastor to executive pastor. He served as vice president of ministry resources and later as president of Youth Specialties in San Diego, an organization that trains and equips church youth workers.

Oestreicher has authored or contributed to more than sixty books, including extensive youth ministry curricula and books such as *A Beautiful Mess: What's Right About Youth Ministry*, *Understanding Your Young Teen: Practical Wisdom for Parents*, *Middle School Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide to Working with Early Adolescents* and *Youth Ministry 3.0: A Manifesto of Where We've Been, Where We Are & Where We Need to Go*.

Oestreicher actively continues in his calling to middle school ministry by volunteering with young teens at Journey Community Church in La Mesa, California, where he leads a small group of middle school students each week. He is married to Jeannie and has two children in high school and college.

For more information about Mark and his work visit whyismarko.com and theyouthcartel.com.

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