



“And now I am no more in the world,
but these are in the world...” (John 17:11).

Use this recent news story to help your students see the relevance
of this week’s lesson from the Standard Lesson Commentary®
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HOPING FOR RELEASE FROM PRISON

Andrew Brunson, a Christian pastor, has been imprisoned for two years in Turkey. He was charged with spying and aiding terrorists. Supporters have said the charges were without merit. Through an email campaign, they have encouraged American Christians to pray for Brunson’s release. Their hope was that this would put pressure on both American and Turkish governments to work toward setting him free. The President, Vice President, and several members of Congress have all become active in the cause. This pressure—and some accompanying incentives—resulted in Brunson’s release on October 11.

HOPE FOR RELEASE FROM CHILDLESSNESS

Sometimes our hope is rewarded only after a long wait. For Andrew Brunson, it was two years. For Abraham and Sarah, it was ten years. Sometimes we may give up hope, as Sarah apparently had. Her disbelieving laughter when divine messengers promised Abraham their long-hoped-for son would be born within a year indicates this. When she became pregnant a few months later, her hope surely began to grow. But perhaps even then, it might have seemed so surreal as to cause lingering doubts.

1. Which, if either, do you think were more important in getting Brunson released: the prayers of Christians or the diplomatic efforts? Explain your answer.
2. Some Christians seem to rely solely on prayer; others rely primarily on human activity. What would you say to Christians in either group to help them have a more balanced view?
3. Does Sarah’s laughter indicate a lack of faith and/or hope? If your life circumstances were like hers, how would you have responded to the promise? Why?

—Charles R. Boatman

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