

**Hebrews 6: 19 and 20; “This Hope is an Anchor”, Sermon # 24 in the series –
“Holding Fast our Confession”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on
January 16th, 2022, in the Morning Worship Service.**

Today I want to talk to you about hope; about your thinking about the importance of your having hope in your living your life to God. I want to speak to you, 1st of all, about your laying hold of this hope that is set before you. And 2nd – I want to speak to you about this hope as being an anchor to your soul. And then, 3rd – I want to speak to you about Jesus being the Forerunner; that is, His going before you to the place where someday your hope will be fully realized. As I speak to you about these things, I pray that you will learn how important it is for you to have, and to exercise, this grace of hope as you live your life to God.

1st of all – Every Christian needs to lay hold of the hope that is set before them.

In my last message to you we saw the strong consolation which can come to every Christian if they will consider the fact that their perseverance, their continuing to trust in the Lord in every situation, and their learning to obey His word; this ability to persevere, is based upon the certainty of God’s promise in Christ, and His oath concerning His promise. God blesses us with all the spiritual blessings in the heavenly places because of Christ. The supreme example of this was given in the life of Abraham, as is stated in verses 13-15. “When God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying ‘Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.’ “And so, after Abraham had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.”

That is, that blessing was not only the promise of Isaac being born to he and Sarah. That was a great enough blessing to them. But the promise to Abraham and to His seed, was that, blessing He would bless him with, He would multiply to him, all of these spiritual blessings, so that in his seed, all of the nations of the world would be blessed. That a son would be given to Abraham at all was a very great blessing. His being able to believe that Sarah would be able to conceive seed and give him a son had been a matter of Abraham’s perseverance in faith over 25 years period of time, where God tested his faith and built his faith in His, that is, God’s faithfulness.

In Hebrews chapter 11, verses 11 and 12 it says – “By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.” “Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude – innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.” And in Romans chapter 4, verses 18-21, Paul tells us that Abraham believed God’s promise, but he explains it further, in this way – Abraham, who contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, “So shall your descendants be.” “And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about one hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb.” “He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.”

What amazing words these are! Contrary to hope, in hope he believed the promise. He did not focus on the strength of his own body. He did not focus on the fact that Sarah was barren. He believed that God could do something which was extraordinary and supernatural for he and Sarah. It was contrary to the way that hope is usually exercised by people of the world. It had to be that God would intervene Himself, and He would cause these great things to come to pass. What is this grace of hope then? It is desire and expectation based upon the certainty of God’s promise. Abraham’s desire was to have children, and by faith in God’s promise it became his expectation. But he knew that he could not bring it to pass by his own efforts.

It came to pass because of God's faithfulness to His own promise, and Abraham hoping continually in what God would do for him. Let me ask if you have spiritual grace of hope? Think about what David said in 2nd Samuel chapter 23, verses 2-6 – "The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue." "the God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spoke to me: 'He who rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.'" "And he shall be like the light of the morning when the sun rises, a morning without clouds, like the tender grass springing out of the earth, by clear shining after rain." (This is the way that Christ Himself reigns over men.) And then David said – "Although my house is not so with God, yet He has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure." "For this is all my salvation and all my desire; will He not make it increase?"

Ah, that is it, isn't it? That is the grace of hope. It is based upon an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure. And the grace that God gives through Christ is sure, and the desire that you have to glorify God by keeping His commandments by faith, and your desire attain to heaven and the resurrection of the dead; and your desire to know Christ better – Will God not make it increase? Yes, He most certainly will. But for those who know Him He expects the obedience of faith to be exercised. But He will take steps to bring this about in your life, as well.

Let me read to you, once again, verses 17 and 18 of our text. "Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us." The phrase that I want to focus your attention upon from these verses is the last one – We have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope that is set before us. What is this hope that is being spoken of, here? It is the hope of our finally making it to heaven. We have to flee for refuge to Christ, to lay hold of this hope. We do this by faith. And Christ is our refuge. Our life is hidden with Christ in God. He is all our hope and stay. He is the One who will teach us how to live the Christian life and then bring us to heaven in His good time.

To "fly for refuge to lay hold of the hope that is set before us", is therefore, to fix your eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, and to run the race of your life with endurance, all the way to heaven, realizing that Christ has gone before you. He is at the right hand of the Father now. He is interceding for you there. And you are running the race of this life to meet Him there. And you are looking forward to that time when your race shall be finished, and you will be brought to Him there, to be with Him there, forever. In other words, you run the race of your Christian life, having heaven as your goal.

All Christians are runners in this race. And a prize is set before you. You must be eager. You must be spiritually hard working. And you must be diligent in your running this race if you would glorify God in relation to your perseverance. To do this you must exercise the grace of hope. You must lay hold of the hope that is set before you. 1st Corinthians 9, verses 24 and 25 – "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize?" "Run in such a way that you may obtain it." "And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things." "Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown." "Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty." "Thus I fight: no as one who beats the air."

What is all of this running and fighting related to? It is related to your faith and your hope. "Fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life, Paul says in 1st Timothy 6: 12. So, as you exercise hope, you should realize that at points God expects you to endure hardship as a part of your perseverance. God knows that you must endure hardship at some points, in order for you to become more Christ-like. Even as it says in 2nd Timothy 2, verses 1-7 – "You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

“You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” “No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.” “And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.” “Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.” Yes, Timothy was called to be an evangelist to the apostle Paul, and he could expect hardship in that ministry. But let us remember that we also are called to holiness and becoming more like Jesus, and so we need to expect the same thing, at times.

In Romans 5, verses 1-5 Paul says – “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through out Lord Jesus Christ., through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” “And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.” “Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” Let us remember that when we are enduring hardship in relation to our persevering in our faith, and our obedience to God’s commandments, that our hope will not disappoint us. The Holy Spirit will convince us by His love, the love of God, being poured out in our hearts, that this hardship will bear good fruit.

2nd – I want to speak to you about this hope being an anchor to your soul.

Verse 19 says – “This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil.” Living the Christian life is set forth in mariners language for us here; in the language of men who do business on ships on the sea. What do they use an anchor for? Is it not so that the ship will be secured from drifting long distances and perhaps run aground on the rocks, and there occur a shipwreck? The Christian is a ship on the sea of life, headed for the heavenly kingdom. And so, yes, in living this Christian life, we very much need an anchor for our souls. “An anchor gives steadiness and security.” “So does our hope go down beneath the surface-troubles of life, and it grapples with some secret ground of strength and comfort.” (Rev. George Barlow, The Preacher’s Homiletic Commentary)

Hope is the anchor for the Christian’s soul, because it is by means of hoping in the Lord that we find the strong consolation that is mentioned in verse 18. The word hope is set in italics in verse 19, which shows us that it is not in the original, in this verse. But if we substitute the word “consolation” for it, and read it – “This consolation we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil”, the verse makes perfect sense, and does not violence to the wording in the original. The anchor for our soul is that we have strong consolation in thinking of everything that God has promised, and everything that Christ has done for us in His death. Then, too, we should think of everything that He is presently doing for us now, by His intercession for us in heaven. He does these things in order to bring us safely to heaven.

I want you to think with me for a minute, of the way that it is for mariners. Turn with me to Psalm 107, verses 23-32. “Those who go down to the sea in ships, who do business of great waters, they see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep.” “For He commands and raises the stormy wind, which lifts up the waves of the sea.” “They mount up to the heavens, they go down again to the depths; their soul melts because of trouble.” “They reel to and fro and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits’ end.” “Then they cry out to the Lord in their trouble, and He brings them out of their distresses.” “He calms the storm, so that it waves are still.” “Then they are glad because they are quiet; so He guides them to their desired have.” “Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!” “Let them exalt Him also in the assembly of the people, and praise Him in the company of the elders.”

Now, notice in verse 25, that it is God who commands and raises the stormy wind, and lifts up the waves of the sea so that they mount up the heavens and go down again to the depths.

And soul of the mariner melts because of this trouble. And he is at his wits end what to do. Is this not very much like the trials which come to God's people, as well? God is ordaining the trial for your good, for your confessing of your sins, for the strengthening of your faith, and for establishing you in your ability to persevere in your faith. He is leading you to a greater obedience to Himself. In these trials God would have you to see Him as your only hope. It is He who guides you on the path of righteousness for His own name's sake. His rod and His staff they comfort you. It is when you cry out to the Lord in your trouble that He brings you out of all your distresses. It is He who calms the storm so that its waves are still. It is He who makes you glad because He has brought quietness to your situation and peace to your heart. He is the One who guides you all the way to your desired haven of heaven. And even in the midst of the storm – When your anxious thoughts multiplied within you, God's consolations are that which delight your soul, as it says in Psalm 94: 19. That is your anchor.

Many times, a Christian can be shaken by the various trials that they go through. In James chapter 1, verse 2, James says to us – “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.” “But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” “But let him ask in faith, with no doubting for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.” “For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

Once again we see that the faith of the Christian being fixed upon God's promise in Christ. This produces patience. Patience is the ability by Christ's grace, to wait and endure what God appoints for you to endure in your trial, knowing that because of God's sovereign control over all of your life, and the particular trial that you are going through, that God is working it for your good. Let patience have her perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. I hope that you can see that patience and hope are graces which go hand in hand in the Christian life. The reason that you can be patient is because you have hope.

When you have doubts concerning God and His faithfulness, then you are like a wave of the sea. You are driven and tossed by the winds of adversity. When you do not exercise faith and hope, then you cannot expect to receive anything from the Lord. Without faith, it is impossible to please God. Without hope it is hard even to pray aright because your expectation of God helping you is low. You are doubting God's promise that He will never leave you, nor forsake you; that He is always your helper in everything. This is why it says in Psalm 130, verses 5-8 – “I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word I do hope.” “My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning.” “O Israel, hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is abundant redemption.” “And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.”

The difference between the hope of the worldling and the hope of the Christian is that the hope of the Christian is fixed upon things unseen. Listen to Romans 8: 22-25 – “For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.” “Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.” “For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?” “But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.” This eagerly waiting, remembering God's promise, and His oath, is an anchor for your soul. It will be both sure and steadfast in our experience. This is the great value of hope.

3rd – I want to speak to you about Jesus being your Forerunner, going before you to the place where your hope will someday be fully realized.

Verses 19 and 20 once again – “This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” I have tried to show you that the hope that is spoken of here in these verses which is an anchor for the soul of the Christian is the hope of one day being in heaven with Christ. But I want to portray it to you as the Bible portrays it here. It is a sure hope because Christ has gone before us. Since Christ is our forerunner, it means that if you believe in Him, you shall one day go to the place where Jesus is when you die. There will be no question of it, if your faith is founded in grace. Your hope is even now, “entering the Presence behind the veil. It is entering into God’s very Presence, where Jesus now is.

Your hope enters into the Presence of the Father who is in heaven. It enters into the Presence of the Son who is seated at His right hand, there in the glory. It enters by means of the Holy Spirit’s conveying your thoughts, your hopes, and your prayers there to the Presence behind the veil. The phrase, “the Presence behind the veil” takes us back in our minds to the tabernacle or temple; to the place where the Most Holy Place was, and which only the High Priest entered into, once a year, to make offering for sin. Christ fulfilled this type in His High Priestly ministry in the offering up of Himself to God as a sacrifice on the cross. When He died, He said – It is finished! And the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom.

The reason that it was torn was to show us that since Christ has fulfilled the law and suffered for our sins, since He was raised from the dead and ascended to heaven, that He is now there as our Forerunner, to intercede on our behalf. The veil that now separates us from all of this eternal glory is death. And Christ has overcome death on your behalf. He will give you hope and He will give you the strong consolation that you need, to persevere in your running your own race. He knows that He has fulfilled God’s promise, and tells you now by His presence in heaven that God has fulfilled His oath.

You do not run alone. You have one who has run the race perfectly, and you will run your race in His strength, with His help. And He will teach you and leading you by His Spirit, on to eternal glory. This hope enters within the veil, and into the Presence of our God. May He help each one of us as we run the race to His glory to remember that our anchor holds within the veil.