

Hope – Sermon

A lot of people around us feel hopeless. Especially at this time of year. And especially with the state of the world we live in.

Hopelessness can come as a result of loss or tragedy or even being overwhelmed. Or even becoming discontented with where you are in life.

Hopelessness feels like an absolute. And it feels like the overpowering word is never.

- I'll never see them again
- I'll never get past this
- I'll never feel good again
- Things will never be the same again
- I'll never be happy again

I believe that this time of year – Advent – is a time where hope should be restored for those without it, and a reminder of the hope we have because of the gift of Jesus..

- **Romans 15:4** For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.
- **One of the purposes of the Bible is to give hope!**

When the Israelites were waiting for the Messiah to come, they are described as having no hope, but then hope is given:

- **Isaiah 9:2** The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined.

The same is true for us. Without the coming of Jesus, there is no real hope. But with Jesus, we should have an abundance of Hope.

- **1 Peter 1:3-5** Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has **begotten us again to a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ **to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled** and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ **who are kept by the power of God through faith** for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

In this passage, I see 3 things that are necessary for hope:

1. He has begotten us again to a living hope
2. We have an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled
3. We are kept by the power of God through faith

First, we must define hope

- In Scripture, according to the Hebrew and Greek words translated by the word “hope” and according to the biblical usage, hope is an indication of certainty. “Hope” in Scripture means “a strong and confident expectation.”
- It changes what we value. Hope, if biblical, makes us heavenly minded rather than earthly minded.
- It affects what we do with our lives—our talents, time, treasures
- It gives us joy and peace.
- It gives us strength, courage, boldness.
- **Romans 8:24-25** 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.

Difference between faith and hope:

Hope is rooted in the future. Faith is rooted in the past. Faith is about what God has done. Hope is about what God will do. Both are just as certain.

We have faith that Jesus rose from the dead. We have hope He is coming again.

1. Begotten Us Again to a Living Hope

We must know where our hope comes from

- **Romans 15:13** Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- **Psalms 42:5** Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him For the help of His countenance.
- Hope does not come from within ourselves. It does not even come from knowing Scriptures, though that is helpful. Hope does not come from life circumstances or definitely not from the world. Hope is only found in God.
- That is why it is called a living hope.
- But it's not just a living hope. We are Begotten again to a living hope. Our salvation is the key to unlocking hope.
- If our salvation is key, what is it about our salvation?
 - **Ephesians 2:4-6** But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus
 - **It is our union with Christ.**

Part of understanding our union with Christ is reckoning our lives with Christ.

- What does reckon mean?
 - An accounting term
 - To count or compute
 - To conclude
- Essentially to reckon means to align to an external source. We reconcile our financial ledger with a bank statement so that they come into agreement. That is how we know how much money we have.

To turn hopelessness into hope, we must reckon what we think with what Christ thinks.

Never vs. Never

We started off by saying that hopelessness is found in the absolutes, and the main word is never:

- I'll never see them again
- I'll never get past this
- I'll never feel good again
- Things will never be the same again
- I'll never be happy again

But hope is also found in the absolutes. And Jesus flips the table on the word never:

- **John 11:26** "And whoever lives and believes in Me shall **NEVER** die. Do you believe this?"
- **John 6:35** And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall **NEVER** hunger, and he who believes in Me shall **NEVER** thirst.
- **2 Peter 1:10** Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will **NEVER** stumble;
- **Hebrews 13:5** Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I WILL **NEVER** LEAVE YOU NOR FORSAKE YOU."

Trading our Nevers for God's Nevers is reckoning our thinking with Christ's thinking.

But once we come into agreement with God about the nevers, He promotes us to another absolute – Always

- **2 Corinthians 9:8** And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, **ALWAYS** having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

- **Matthew 28:20** teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you **ALWAYS**, even to the end of the age." Amen.

This hope is rooted in the advent – the coming of Jesus.

Because Jesus came, we have hope. Refer to last week's sermon. Being made a child of God means we are saved, healed, delivered, provided for, protected, made whole, given His divine nature, made righteous, holy, accepted, made worthy, and placed in a royal family.

2. To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled

I said that hope is rooted in the future. What is our future?

1 Corinthians 15:19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

Our future is with Christ! Our future is heaven, a new earth, one where there is no sickness, disease, tears, suffering. Our Hope is an eternity with God in perfection.

That should give hope.

Jesus is returning

- **John 14:1-3** "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it* were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.
- The return of Jesus is not to be feared by those who are saved. Rather to be anticipated with Joy.

When Jesus returns,

- we will stand before Him where we will be judged, not to condemn us, but to give rewards

- **2 Timothy 4:8** Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.
- We will be given a home
 - **John 14:2-3** In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.
- We will be surrounded by those who are in Christ that had died before us
 - **1 Thessalonians 4:16** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.
- We will be in the full presence of God completely
 - **1 Thessalonians 4:17** Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.
- We will finally be free of mortality and corruption
 - **1 Corinthians 15:42** So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. *The* body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.

3. You who are kept by the power of God through faith

How do we stay reckoned with God's thinking? Maybe I can do it here, surrounded by others doing the same, but what about when I am home by myself, or around negative people?

- **Colossians 1:27** To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
 - Christ in you
 - It is not struggling to remember to have hope. It is remembering that Christ is in you. And you are in Christ.

Hebrews 10:19-24 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, ²¹ and having a High Priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works

- This is a progression – Because of Jesus we have boldness
- We have full assurance of our faith
- Our conscience is cleansed
- We are cleansed
- Let us draw near: We can draw near because several issues are settled. The problem of access to God has been settled. The problem of a perfect High Priest has been settled. The problem of moral and spiritual pollution has been settled. The encouragement to draw near wouldn't be given unless it was necessary. Discouraged Christians have a problem in drawing near. This is their real problem: they lose their intimate relationship with Jesus, so nothing else is going right.
- Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering: Discouragement makes us waver from the truth. A renewed confidence in the greatness of Jesus and in the New Covenant will make us stand strong in the faith.
- We can do this because God is faithful. This process is not about us. It works because it is the process of God and Jesus
- Then we spread hope to others.

Why is this hope? The answer is basically the Gospel.

It is hope because we have found that we cannot do it ourselves. You cannot keep being faithful to God in your own power. But Jesus' life in us empowers us to keep the faith.

Hence why it reads we are kept by the power of God through faith.

God is the one doing the keeping. We remain with our role of believing and surrendering.