

# Hope, an anchor of the soul (1) (Quality: very good)

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Preacher: Crowter, David (1931-2000)

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Two verses of the sixth chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, the sentence really begins in verse 17, wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath that by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whether the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus made on high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

The last two verses of the sixth chapter in the epistle to the Hebrews. Do we have such a hope as this?

That is the great question here, which immediately arises from these words. The apostle says concerning them, which hope we have.

It is a possession beyond all price. How sad, how tragic is the state of those of whom we read in the Ephesians having no hope and without God in the world.

And if they continue without such a hope as this, it means to go on into everlasting despair and anguish, everlasting torment as a just reward of their sins.

[ 2 : 3 6 ] And yet all the time, the gospel in the world is preached, is declared, is distributed. There is this hope set before us in the word of God, a wonderful hope in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And yet, as you know, there are so many who set it at naught, who have no hope. How very, very sad.

How sad it should be if any of us in this building should go on in that way, when there is such a gospel of free grace and mercy and compassion said before us in the word of God.

In the gospel of his grace, there is a hope to lay hold of. Is there anything worse than having no hope?

It may be that there is. There is the sad condition of those who have a vain hope, who think they are right when they are terribly wrong.

[ 3 : 5 8 ] You know that in the war a little while ago, between Iran and Iraq, which went on for years, many of those young men were told, very plainly, that if they died in that war, they would go straight to paradise.

Muslims, who were without any atonement for their sins, without any intercessor, without any Lord Jesus to stand in the breach.

They were told this, very plainly, and they believed it, many of them. And so many were killed like that, with a vain hope, without any foundation for it.

You know in the Pilgrim's Progress, that one man called Ignorance had a vain hope, at least there was a ferryman called Vain Hope, who took him easily over the river of death, but not into the celestial city.

And Banyans concluded that from the very gate of heaven, there is a way to hell, a vain hope, a hope that is not founded upon truth, upon God's immutable truth.

- [ 5 : 39 ] where is your hope this morning? There is a Christ-centered hope said before us in the Gospel.
- There is this hope, which gives such strong consolation to the people of God. There is that hope which is set before us in the Word of God, a hope to lay hold on, a hope beyond all value or estimation.
- Ten thousand worlds, the hymn speaks of. It could not be equal to a hope like this for all eternity, a hope in the blood-shedding, in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- What is your hope worth? Do you ever thank God for it if you have such a hope as this? A hope which is beyond all worth.
- You know it is said of C.H. Spurgeon that he was once with a lady, a true Christian person, who was so sad.
- [ 7 : 05 ] She felt that she had lost all hope, that she had no hope at all. And she admitted that that was how it was with her. But in the course of conversation, Spurgeon said to him, well there is the five pound note, he said to her.
- You are welcome to have it if you will give up your hope. The five pound note, of course, in those days was worth very much more than it is today.
- And this woman said, in horror, she would never give up that hope that she had. Not for a thousand pounds, not for anything. So he said to her, then you do have a hope after all.
- And this hope is indeed more precious than anything which you can possibly imagine.
- A hope as an anchor of the soul, which entereth into that within the veil. It enters into heaven where Jesus is.
- [ 8 : 15 ] It links with him. It links with him. And will bring the believer safely there where Jesus is. For where Jesus is there, they must be.
- They must be. To spend a long eternity in chanting forth his grace. The subject before us here, then, is the Christian hope.
- That hope which the believer has, he has in his heart. And none can rob him of it, really, entirely of it.
- It may be low at times, it may come to a low ebb, but it is there. And God who gave it will surely revive it again.
- Now it is described in these words, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.
- [ 9 : 18 ] Now first it is like an anchor. It is a soul anchor. One says of it, in every rough and stormy veil my anchor holds.
- within the veil. And it is likened here to a ship's anchor. When we go along the Thames or along the seafront, you see, you can see many, a ship, small or large, with very different shapes and appearances and sizes.
- But you know that every one of them needs an anchor. however big or however small, if they are there on the river or on the sea, they will need an anchor to hold them firm.
- And there are these things about an anchor which make it like the hope of a Christian and which do give us instruction in this important matter.
- the first of all, it means protection. It provides protection from danger. If there were no danger, those ships would need no anchor.
- [ 10 : 44 ] But each one of them is provided with at least one. because there are dangers. You know what dangers there are.
- Perhaps it is a storm. A storm may arise upon the sea or even the river and may cause much havoc, much damage to a ship which is not anchored firmly at such a time.

You know it is so at sea. It was so with the Apostle Paul when he went to Rome. The ship there was in the midst of a very severe wind, Heroclon.

And towards the end of the journey they cast out anchors and longed for the day. But during that time the anchors held them in the storm.

And in our lives we are bound to face storms, difficulties, temptations, sorrows, bereavements and at last the great storm of death.

[ 12 : 11 ] What would hold you? What would hold you firm in the middle of the storm when the wind blows and when the gale threatens and when the seas rise high?

What would hold you? Is there anything in your heart which does serve as an anchor in such a case in the storm?

What a mercy it is then to be held firmly while others it may be other crafts are tossed about and are carried and shipwrecked on the shore, on the rocks.

but that is not the only danger to a ship. There is also the danger of drifting currents and these in a way are more subtle and less easily discerned than the storm which is fairly evident to everybody.

one says concerning it more the treacherous calm I dread than billows bursting o'er my hand.

[ 13 : 36 ] You read in the second chapter here of how it the danger that there is in these cases therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which you have heard lest at any time we should let them slip or as it says in the margin there that we should let them pass away, drift away.

There is that danger especially in that more constant and more hidden danger of a current and we read of those in the word of God of how that there are these great dangers with regard to them there are these subtle teachings these errors the apostle in the Ephesians writes to them there that they might not be desired that they might not be like that driven tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine and cunning craftiness whereby some lie in wait to deceive but speaking the truth or holding fast the truth in love may grow up into him in all things which is the head even Christ have you any provision in these dangers that do threaten as you make your journey or voyage through life as you no doubt desire to reach that harbour that safe haven at last we read of those in the storm in the 107th psalm how they are tossed up and down they rise up and they fall down again but then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble they have a hope after all and he bringeth them to their desired haven he maketh a storm a calm so that the waves thereof are still then are they glad because they be quiet so he bringeth them unto their desired haven how wonderful it is when there are those whom we can bury in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection in that in life and in death they manifested a having a sound hope a Christ centered hope hope and there are other ways in which this hope is like an anchor of the soul now for one thing it is in use in use it is anchored to the immovable it is not much good having an anchor which is only grounded in sand because then when the dangers arise it may drift away it may come out of the sand but a season barrily will want his anchor held fast on the rock honestly it says in the hymn we have an anchor it is a great mercy if we can say that we have an anchor which keeps the soul steadfast and sure while the billows roll fixed to the rock which cannot move fastened firm and sure in the saviour's love there is an immovable rock one which will never move will never will never fail as we have him set before us here in the word

this anchor is said to enter within the veil where the Lord Jesus Christ himself is it does cling to him it does found itself on that firm foundation it is centered in the Lord Jesus Christ what a mercy it is through grace to have our hope fixed upon him other things move other things move you see in the storm and in the in the swelling tide many things move but you may be sure that the rock at the bottom of the sea will stay where it is and so we may be certain that the immovable rock of the son of God set before us often in the word of God as such a rock he will not fail he will ever be the same then there is a third way in the rock this anchor does appear as like hope it is it is it is invisible in its working when the anchor is doing its task it is beyond sight it is out of sight it doesn't matter very much if it's ugly or rusty as long as it is doing its job in that way it may not be very attractive to view it may be very corroded but you know that an anchor is valuable because it will do that one task it will fulfill its function in that way now here hope is spoken of as entering within the veil it is out of sight nobody around you can see it really they may be able to see it really they may be able to see the evidence of it and certainly the unbeliever cannot see and indeed you yourself may not be able to see that hope where it fixes in this case in this particular instance in this main value of this truth it is out of sight it goes within the veil which was of course it is best designed for that purpose that it shut off from view all that was in the holy of holies and so this hope of the Christian goes within the veil it enters there and it rests in the Lord Jesus Christ invisible at present yes but it will bring the believer where Jesus is you see this really makes a wonderful link between the soul on earth and the Lord Jesus in heaven hope it holds to him as one says concerning it thy anchor once in Jesus in Jesus cast will hold thy soul till thou at last him face to face shalt see though trouble now thy heart appall and grief to grief incessant call no storm no storm shall injure thee not any person

with such a hope as that cast within the veil anchored in the Lord Jesus Christ you know it is said of that great reformer John Knox that when he came to his deathbed he said read and they said what shall we read and he said read where I first cast anchor and so they read to him there and I believe that he put his finger on the place where it says in the 8th chapter of Romans concerning the unchangeable love of God that the apostle says I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor height nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in

Christ Jesus our Lord did you ever cast your anchor like that have you this hope as an anchor keeping your soul in the midst of life there are these two immutable things which hope anchors in it was very very gracious of God to make that oath it is very unusual for him to swear but how he condescends to the weakness of faith how well he understands the many trials and storms and difficulties there are here below you would have thought maybe that one immutable thing should be enough for us the promise of God does it need any further confirmation and yet

[ 24 : 22 ] God willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel confirmed it by an oath it is a very solemn thing for God to do and because there was no one greater there that he could swear by he said he would swear he swore by himself so that these were the two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie if you are at all exercising these things you will surely want a hope that cannot fail a hope that is firm and sure a hope that is founded on those things which cannot change God's promise and God's oath these two immutable things and they are said to be here both sure and steadfast this anchor is said to be first sure which means literally not tottering not moving and it is of that character which it does it is strong and steady sure it is certainly of the kind that we so greatly need as I mentioned before it is so sad and so terrible to have a hope which fails as the hymn says repeatedly the

Christian's hope will never fail it is that hope spoken of in the fifth chapter of the Romans where the apostle speaks of it as being a hope that maketh not ashamed as

Jesus said in his teaching all that the father giveth me shall come to me and him that cometh to me I will in no eyes cast out you know this word here is the same word as that which is used in the gospel concerning the saviour's tomb when Pilate said to those Jews which came to him you have a watch make it as sure as you can this is surely made like that as sure as God himself could make it by his word he has again and again testified in these ways the saviour said in the plainest language come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest rest the uncertainty dear friends is not it is not in the promise of God it is a sure certain promise the uncertainty is in us all the uncertainty is because of our own wretched unbelief because of our foolishness

God has spoken he has put in his word two immutable things and it is impossible for God to lie and so those who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them have every reason for strong consolation and this word is this anchor is still said also said to be steadfast it is to be sure and steadfast these are similar words approaching the thing the matter from a different point of view steadfast means to be firm not changing it is not only unmovable immovable but it is immutable it is steadfast it will not change in the course of time what God has spoken is the same today as it was when he said to spoke to

Abraham out of heaven and when the Lord Jesus Christ spoke on earth you have the very same reason for relying upon the word of God as they had then it is just as steadfast now just as firm and steady and sure as it was in those days are you relying upon this or what a mercy it is to have a sure foundation you can imagine a sailor at sea how concerned he would be in the storm to have an anchor and to have a resting place for it a rock on which he can rest a sure and steadfast foundation one that will hold him firm what a mercy it is dear friends to have such a hope as that which hope the apostle says we have we have it in our hearts none can rob us of it of this blessed hope of this blood bought hope you know that inside the holy of holies of old there was a covenant the ark of the covenant speaking of the

[ 32 : 19 ] Lord Jesus Christ as the ark of faith on top of the ark was the blood sprinkled mercy seeds and there was the Shekinah glory the glory of God the apostle says which at this anchor entereth into that within the veil it centers in the Lord Jesus and his precious blood such a Christ centered hope will never fail now the apostle here says which hope we have we have it in our hearts we do possess this hope do you have you this firm hope a hope that is founded on nothing less than the word of God on the blood of the Lamb those

Israelites in Egypt were perfectly safe they were sheltered under the blood of the Passover Lamb the word of God concerning it was plain and sure and the blood shall be to you for a token in the houses where you are and when I see the blood I will pass over you so here we have implied in this word in this way it is put the city of refuge the city of refuge there were several of those cities in the land of Canaan clearly marked out and when anybody had killed a man accidentally he could flee from the manslayer and how he would run you can imagine once there once inside those walls he would be safe nobody could kill him there the avenging arm of the slayer of blood could not reach him then once he was safe but until then he was in the greatest of danger how he would run and so we might ask well how does a poor unworthy guilty sinner how does he have a hope like this how are there some in this world who have a hope a sure hope when there are others who have a vain hope or no hope at all for eternity how about you how does this hope how it is is it possible for anybody to say this which hope we have well it is by the sovereign grace of God it is by his distinguishing love alone that this is so with some and not with others they could not say they are any better good hope through grace the saints possess the fruit of Jesus righteousness and by his spirit given it is given

God gives this hope through his word and by the work of his spirit what a wonderful mercy surely every day that we live if we have such a hope as this we should thank God for it as the apostle Paul says in his teaching seeing that we have such hope we use great plainness of speech we want to be clearly understood in these things because we have this wonderful hope for eternity which some do not it is all of God's grace the praise is due to him we could never have had such a hope were it not for his sovereign distinguishing unchanging grace there is another aspect to it though as it is all of the sovereign grace of God is it do we conclude from this that there is nothing for us nothing we can do about it that would be entirely unscriptural think of that slayer of blood how eagerly the one who had slayed who had shed that blood would run to escape the avenger the way was to be clearly marked out for everyone to observe but there was no time to be lost with everything in his power he would do this when we read here we who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us does that speak of inactivity it surely speaks of a sense of need of peril there is this great danger there is a refuge for sinners that the gospel makes known and what a lovely expression this surely is a description of those who have such a hope who have been brought by the grace of God to flee who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us hope have you laid hold and surely you will keep hold it is most important to have such a hope as this it is beyond all value it is something we so need to lay hold of and to have that hold as long as life shall last and in death what a wonderful mercy it is to have such a hope as this for may the Lord graciously revive it may he confirm it where it is given so that we may be able to say from our hearts concerning the hope of the gospel of hope in the

Lord Jesus Christ which hope I have as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast  
Amen