

The immutability of God's Word and Council

(Quality: Good)

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- [0 : 00] I think it's right to say that most here present this evening were with us this morning. I venture to announce by way of text the same portion of the Word of God that we were considering largely in the context of it in the morning service.
- I hope to continue as the Lord may help me. The sixth chapter in the Hebrew epistle, verses 19 and 20.
- Verses 19 and 20 in Hebrews chapter 6. Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.
- Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.
- The morning sermon was to some great degree a solemn and searching word, lest we should be satisfied with a profession without a possession.
- [1 : 34] And my friends, a profession is but an empty can compared with a profession with a possession.
- We don't do need that possession to make our profession God-glorifying and profitable to our souls.
- We're exhorted to consider the wonderful blessing that God gave to Abraham, that he could swear by no greater than he swear by himself, saying, surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply.
- And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. Now God made promise to Abraham, as we have considered in our other reading, and in the book of Genesis, we have a more detailed account.
- But the answer to the promise was not immediate. And that, my friends, is more often the case.
- [3 : 13] God gives promises to his people and then waits to be gracious, if I may use that terminology with meaning.
- The Lord promised Abraham that he would have a son. And he realized that from no natural point of view, the fulfillment of the promise was possible.
- And as time went on, Abraham's faith was so tried by the waiting for the Lord in the accomplishment of the word that God had given him.
- And we read, we might say, of the weakness, of the father of the faithful. He was a man of like passions with us.
- He had a flesh as well as a spirit. And he comes to the point, and he said, let Ishmael live before thee. But, my friends, no.
- [4 : 30] That was an expression of impatience, wasn't it? And how often, when the Lord communicates his will to his people, there seems to come what I might term death upon it.

Naturally considered, it seems to wander further and further into the realm of impossibility. And there is a very solemn inclination in our hearts to despair of the fulfillment.

And we come to reason. Has God forgotten to be gracious? And will he be favorable no more? Is his mercy clean gone forever? And we get very tried.

And sometimes to the point where we feel the hopelessness of the situation makes us wonder if we were deceived in the beginning.

If it was really a communication of God to our souls. But, my friends, what a mercy that God doesn't deal with us according to our sins and according to our iniquities.

[5 : 50] That he comes in his grace over the mountains and hills of the wretchedness and the reasoning of our fallen faculties.

And he brings his word to pass. So Sarah had a son. And Sarah's Isaac was the means by which the Lord promised in Isaac shall thy seed be caught.

But now I've skipped over some of the history but you'll understand I hope my line of thought relative to the fulfillment of God's promise saying Surely blessing I will bless thee and multiplying I will multiply thee.

Oh, my friends, what a wonderful, wonderful family was given naturally speaking to Abraham and Sarah.

But how much more when we look at the interpretation symbolically revealed to us we see the church of God in all generations.

[7 : 11] The seed of Abraham. Yes, in the calling of the people of God not only in a way of natural generation coupled with God's gracious working but also among the Gentiles we that are strangers to so many things that were a blessing of God to the people of God in ancient times.

Nevertheless, there is hope in Christ for Jew and Gentile in on an equal basis as God in his sovereignty exercise exercises the power and grace of his spirit in the truth of his word and makes us one Jew and Gentile under living faith as members of the family of the Most High God.

Now, I want to deal with this situation in respect of these two immutable things in the which it was impossible for God to lie.

Wherein God willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel confirmed it by an oath that 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.

Two immutable things. You know what immutable means? Unchangeable irrevocable anything that shall be because it is fortified by the very character of our God on high.

[9 : 27] He's the eternal God and my friends in these two respects his immutability his unchangeable character is made manifest.

Now first I want to look briefly at the will and purpose of the Lord from all eternity.

The immutability of his will his counsel from eternity past.

You know the outworkings of salvation within the church of Christ are actually the unfoldings of the eternal counsel of God before he created the world.

I was going to say surely there is nothing more ancient than the salvation of sinners ordained by God to be saved from the consequences of sin in the garden of Eden.

[10 : 51] The heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel the counsel of the Lord that shall stand that shall stand and the standing of that counsel decrees peace the eternal security of the church of God.

There is no power in hell that can frustrate the most high. Satan did his utmost at a most evil moment as it were in the unfoldings of mankind.

He got in right at the beginning so to speak and ensured the defilement of the posterity of Adam and Eve. And we all are reaping the consequence of the entrance of sin into the world by many and various means.

But Satan brought mankind under the displeasure of God in that respect that man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward.

My friends, there's no trouble but what sin is at the root of it. Well now, let's look at the heirs of promise in the immutability of God's counsel.

[12 : 32] I was going to say, if we look at the law of God and our relationship in the light of God's holy law, we shall have to appreciate that there is everything in us naturally to turn God away from us.

What is there attractive to holiness in the defiled nature which you and I have inherited by natural generation?

And the wonder to my mind is this, that there's any of us to be saved. It would seem more reasonable if God exercised his holiness to the damnation of the whole human race.

But my friends, the counsel of the Most High, the immutable counsel of the Most High, what I'm going to refer to now is the message of the Gospel and its comprehensive application to the remedy of sin's malady that's exemplified in the salvation of every child of God personally.

Isn't that wonderful? Isn't that wonderful? And if you and I are going to heaven when we die, God thought upon us from before he made the world.

[14 : 07] He saw us in our sin and he decreed with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit that we shouldn't be left to the power of sin, to damnation and the power of Satan to that captivity into which sinners fall except God interposes in the fullness of his grace to save them.

The immutability of his counsel. My friends, if God sought upon you with thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end, to heaven you'll go, there's no power existing that can hinder the accomplishment of those glorious counsels of our God which gathered from the human race a number which no man can number of every nation, kindred and tongue and ordained that they should be redeemed, that they should be washed and made pure and holy, clothed in spotless righteousness before him forever and forever.

Now, the theme I've got this evening is just I was going to say beyond me in that sense, it is beyond me but I mean the branches seem to grow out of the subject almost to a degree of exhaustion still let's flood on as the Lord helps me the promise that the immutability of his counsel the immutability of his counsel and it's confirmed by an oath God has spoken God has decreed nothing shall ever occasion an empty throne at the right hand of the father.

Now you and I can go through the pages of scripture and we can see the record of various characters and we can't touch upon any particular character who in any way or any extent is historically recorded in our Bibles but we come to blemishes we come to the fact that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God God has been very faithful and very patient in his word in showing to us that the counsel of his will is the saving of sinners so that none of us whatever we may see in our own hearts and however the burden of sin may seem to thrust us down into despondency how can God love a wretch like me but yes yes because our salvation doesn't depend on what we are our salvation depends upon the immutability of his counsel that is that God the Father will give the church into God the hands of God the Son and in the due time appointed by God

God's Son will take our flesh and dwell among us that he will live according to the law of his Father in absolute purity that nothing that was ever exercised by sin or Satan to stumble him was ever successful he was as pure in his nature when he died as when he was born and he's as pure in that nature now in glory as when he was here upon the earth but my friends you see when we examine the life of Christ we can see how everything so to speak in that spotless God honoring God fulfilling life that he lived here below focuses in the fact that he will save his people that his whole mission was carried forward according to the eternal counsel that all that the

[19 : 08] Father giveth me shall come to me and him that cometh to me however black he is however vile he is whatever he's been guilty of he may make the streets of Jerusalem run with blood he might be guilty of all manner of evils nevertheless here is a saviour that saves to the uttermost all that come unto God by him the immutability of his counsel this people have I formed for myself they shall show forth my praise my friends that's an eternal that's a statement of eternal consequence now the immutability of his counsel confirmed it by an earth you see the Lord not only has decreed in eternal counsel but he's revealed that counsel and its consequences in the pages in the pages of his holy book our

Bible and my friends that Bible is the sure word of the living God and God will always be faithful to that word it's an immutable unchangeable testimony from Genesis to Revelation and no power on earth can ever alter it no power on earth can ever bring it to fail to failure nothing now two immutable things God's counsel enforced by God's covenant engagement that his people through the precious blood and righteousness of his dear son shall be perfectly prepared to enter into paradise without the slightest sense of shame because their dear saviour was made sin for them who knew no sin that they might be made the righteousness of God in him and God looks upon them clothed in the righteousness of his dear son and he records this their sins and iniquities

I will remember no more I'm satisfied and the law is honoured in the substitutionary sacrifice that Jesus made on their behalf and remember that the sacrifice Jesus made on their behalf is a perfect sacrifice acceptable to God and effective to the presentation without fault of every one for whom he came to save the immutability of his counsel and my friends God's word is an affirmation of his purpose in counsel from of old those two things are immutable unchangeable God will never be unfaithful to his word

God never can be unfaithful to his word because he would cease to be who he is God that cannot laugh God that never never deceives God who reveals perfectly his purpose and records his will and way in holy scripture to the encouragement of his people yet upon the earth 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 now what is the hope set before us it's not because we've done this and that and the other that we expect to get to heaven is it the apostle

Paul is very explicit he said for by grace are you saved through faith that not of yourselves look here it's God that's going to save you it's God that's going to save you you'll never save yourself and the filthy rags of your own righteousness won't add anything of a qualification to your acceptance in the sight of God salvation from first to last is God's plan accomplished in the hand of God and brought to the heart of a sinner that that sinner might have hope of eternal life my friend look as soon as you take your eyes off God's counsel to your salvation you'll begin to sink you'll begin to sink the only thing that is a strong consolation is that

[25 : 08] God has fixed his purpose to salvation now where do I stand in relation to the word of God that reveals to me the character the way of God in saving his people experimentally here below and establishing them in the faith that they may with humble hope look for a better country when they come to die it's God's work it's God makes children it's God that creates a disposition in his holy fear that causes the choice of the better part that part which was chosen by Moses who chose to be a soldier of the cross a man who feared

God one who was concerned in the presence of God and for the accomplishment of God's purpose through his instrumentality well now by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie we have we might have a strong consolation strong consolation my hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness I dare not trust the weak my mind just goes a blank I'm getting old you know I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly lean on Jesus name on Christ that solid rock

I stand all other ground there's no exaggeration he's he's setting the truth before us in hymnology all other ground is sinking sand now my friend if you're going to experience the hope in a strong consolation you've got to look at God's eternal counsel and you've got to look to the finished work of Christ and you've got to find some evidence of the work of the spirit living in your heart and overriding the circumstances of your life that God in his providential care and under the influences of his grace toward you will bring all things to work together for your good and for his honor and glory the experience of the saints really is the outworking of that sovereign principle of God this people have I formed for myself and my friends as we've read tonight in Romans touch upon the potter and his clay the

Lord fashions his people the Lord works upon his people he makes them a different people from what they are in the flesh he makes them a different people from the worldlings that surround them they are his workmanship ye are my workmanship says God in the third chapter of the Ephesian epistle now is God working in you is God working in me or are we actuated wholly and solely by what we think and what we are motivated to accomplish by the energies of the flesh you're not your own you're bought with a price you're God's special character for ordained to his own glory that he's working in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure not your pleasure not your pleasure his good pleasure and my friends he works by various instruments as we've already sung in one of our previous hymns oh

God is more concerned with the well-being of our souls than he is the pleasure and comfort of our flesh sometimes he takes us through deep valleys of affliction because they are instrumentally sanctifying and beneficial to our souls they are in his hand molding more and more into the spirit and image of his dear son the Lord Jesus Christ strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us what is your hope in life what is your hope in death is it that God in his sovereign love will so take care of you so work for you and within you as to bring you through the various foreordained experiences of life that when you get to the end of life's journey it will be

[31 : 35] I was going to say natural to you it will be obviously a consequence of you to praise him praise him from whom all blessings flow praise him for your trials in life praise him for your bereavements in life praise him for the enmity that you may have experienced under persecutors in life yes all shall come and last and end as shall please your heavenly friend strong consolation my times are in his hand the world is not controlling me I'm controlled from heaven and my experience in life is heavenly ordained and my friends I know this the great objective in the council of the most high was and is his praise his glory to a never ending eternity and with that believing in the two immutable things that is

God's decree and the promises of God to see you through to provide for you to help you in your troubles to deliver you through your sorrows and all those things many of them seemingly to be as it were antagonistic to the love of God yet we don't see as God sees God works in us for our good and for the ultimate glory of his own name my friends I believe sometimes that our troubles will one day be a source of high praise that God didn't give us over to ourselves he didn't give us over to a bad spirit when we were brought through deep valleys he tempered as it were our natural reactions by the influence of his saving grace and sometimes the children of God are helped to take down their hearts from the willows in this wilderness and thank

God for some of the grievous and most difficult and most cutting experiences of this present life which hope we have and we fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope before us and the hope before us is that God will perfect that which concerns us and what's our chief concern the eternal welfare of our immortal soul or whatever whatever we are called upon to endure in in this present life under the appointments of a sovereign God will appear to be little compared with basking in the son of paradise and in the presence of God and all those holy beings the spirits of men made perfect as trophies of his sovereign sufficiency and the abundance of his saving grace now which hope we have have you fled for refuge are you committing your way to the

Lord commit thy way unto the Lord trust also in him and he shall bring it to pass oh my friends God involves us in that sense by the movement of the spirit in our souls to look into his word and to take knowledge of the gracious exhortations that are therein contained and we wish to walk humbly in the light and teaching of God's holy word because what is the word word is Jesus Christ and the burden of scripture written in the incarnate word in all things are the same the burden of scripture is consistent with the discipleship of Jesus Christ as we conform by God's grace to the influences of truth in our hearts by the holy ghost so we put our feet in the footsteps of the master and have you ever been able to say in humble echo as it were of that beautiful spirit that was evident in our suffering

Lord when you've been called upon to suffer in some measure yourself nevertheless not my will but thine be done total acquiescence in the will of God in the midst of some sore trial or bereavement when I fled for refuge other refuge have I known hangs my helpless soul on thee leave on leave me not alone still support and comfort me this is the exercise of faith this is the soul that's fleeing for refuge into the person and work of Jesus Christ this great rock in a weary land

[37 : 43] Christians are practical followers of Jesus Christ they want to be found in that narrow way and Jesus says of it I am the way the truth and the life well now who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us yes it's set before us in the word and it's set before us in the gracious experiences of life sanctified by the spirit of God so that you can look back over life and say sometimes the Lord has been my helper I've had six troubles and I'm now facing my seventh but he that hath helped me hitherto will help me you know there's a strong consolation in the fact that what God has revealed as his relationship to us in the past is essentially his relationship to us in the present and in the future

I am the Lord I change not therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed God isn't leading us through the fires to consume us he's leading us through the fires to purge us from what we're better without which hope we have as an anchor of the soul and I must hasten we are so honest as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast and which entereth into that within the veil whither the forerunner is for us entered even Jesus well now an anchor you've seen many a ship sailing along toward the bows of the ship on either side to anchors and they stay where they are until troublous waters are encountered and then it may well be the wisdom of the captain of the ship to suggest that an anchor is cast and what happens the anchor sinks the anchor sinks and it sinks to the bedrock so to speak of the floor of the sea and when it reaches the ultimate in the bed of the sea it's so made that the spades on the bottom end of the anchor penetrate into the surface of the sea in the surface of the earth under the sea and there the ship takes its hold there to that it contributes as it were to a sense of security when the buffeting of the waves and the blowing of the wind is harnessed to the anchor in its effects oh my friends have you got a hope which is an anchor to your soul is love in times past forbids me to think you'll leave me at last in trouble to sink has God been working in your heart and sanctifying your experience to such a degree that he's built up a hope he's built up a hope and the fact that the

Lord has helped you formerly gives rise to a sweet assurance that he won't forsake you now he's revealed his love toward you that he's arisen and sent defences sent helps sent all manner of means to deliver you and his deliverances are imprinted with heavenly sovereignty that you say well that wasn't man doing that wasn't man's doing that was God doing he may have used men instrumentally to accomplish your deliverance but it had the seal of heaven upon it and you can say with Jacob and he blessed me there there what would you part with if you could part with some of your experiences you'd have to part with your hope wouldn't you but you're not called upon sanctified experience as it were is a gift of

God to help the people in strong consolation to continue through the wilderness believing in hope that God will see you through and he'll take you at last from time into eternity and he'll settle you in the purity of salvation in the very presence of God forever and forever and forever the hope of righteousness through Jesus Christ our Lord that God takes a sinner in all the vileness of fallen human nature and makes him so pure as to have no shame in the very presence of God and those holy beings on high be they the spirits of just men made perfect fellow saints so to speak or even the angels of God no I must close

I think I must leave it there for the present which hope we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast it can't be denied Satan can't take it away he may suggest all sorts of insidious temptations you built this up in your own mind my friends when God works he puts his signature on the pattern of experience and you say if God didn't do that for me I don't know who did and you can look round to the devil and say from time to time when God appears for you the seventh time you're a liar you're a liar the people of God are qualified to speak of the devil as the father of lies by the insidious workings that he suggested to the mind contrary to all the faithful patient and gracious dealings of the

[45 : 35] Lord with the soul well now I must leave it I hope you've got something to think about but my friends God works in the hearts of his people he doesn't give them over to their fallen nature to drift on through a few years of life and perish he separates them by his grace unto himself he calls them with an effectual calling they leave the hateful ways of sin they turn to the fall and enter in do you know what I'm talking about the Lord had his blessing amen