

The Hope of Jesus [Hebrews 6:13-20]

I. Intro

- A. Welcome everyone, introduce myself, special welcome to new visitors
- B. This Sunday marks the start of our season of Advent, because last Sunday we had a special Thanksgiving message. If you are new to Advent, or even if you have celebrated it before, it is one of our most favorite times of the year as a church. Special songs, special art, special topics, it is really a wonderful time of our church's life!
 - 1. So what is Advent? ...When did it start?
 - a) It started somewhere between 380-580AD. It largely originated in the more European areas of the church, which loved to celebrate Christmas, or the day that the church celebrates the birth of the Savior. The time leading up to Advent began to be seen similarly to Lent, the time leading up to Easter. With calls for daily attendance to church and fasting and prayer. At one point it was similar to how we, in our current American culture, anticipate Christmas... the 6 weeks leading up to Christmas! But under Pope Gregory the Great (580AD), it was brought down to the current 4 weeks before Christmas.
 - b) Since that time, it has always been celebrated as a time of great joy. It is a remembrance of the first coming of Jesus Christ to save His people from their sins, and looking forward to His second coming to usher in the full consummation of His eternal glorious kingdom. Thus, the celebration of Advent has been going on in the church for 1,500 years! It is rich with various customs, songs, prayers, and ways to celebrate Jesus.
 - c) The 4 topics that are celebrated in connection with Advent are: hope, humility, joy and peace. We see ourselves, as The Resolved church, continuing in this joyful tradition of the saints to remember and anticipate the advent of Jesus. Over the course of the next 4 weeks we will be following the 4 topics of hope, humility, joy, and peace and see how Jesus is the source and the fullest expression of all of these things
- C. This Sunday we will be looking at the Hope of Jesus from [Hebrews 6:13-20]
- D. I need to be honest with you all today...when Duane asked me to preach on this topic I was excited, but mostly I was intimidated. I was intimidated because the topic of hope is so engrained in our persons and human experience, yet it is so difficult to truly understand what it is. It is such a vast, wide, and deep subject which defies circumstance and even reason at times. It is both life-giving to our souls and elusive in understanding. It is a subject which is a driving motivation in people's lives, and that which causes the soul to despair and shrivel when absent.
- E. The topic of hope in our culture is, unfortunately, extremely shallow. Usually people talk about hope the same way they talk about wishful thinking. But the topic of hope is so indelibly tied to the daily undercurrent of the human soul, that it is much deeper and far more profound than simply wishful thinking.
- F. I studied a lot for this sermon, I read a ton of material on hope and on the passage we will be looking at. And I was able to put together a definition that I believe will be helpful as we study our text from the book of Hebrews.
 - 1. "Hope: the anticipation and assurance of a better future reality."
 - 2. In the Bible, hope can be both a noun and a verb. I am largely studying hope as a noun, and not as the action of the soul to hope. This is because the author of the book of Hebrews describes "hope" as a noun, not as a verb in this context. To see hope used as a verb, look at [Hebrews 11:1]
 - 3. Faith and hope are very closely related, yet distinctly different as we will see from our passage.
- G. Read the text, declare as God's Word, thank God for it together, pray over it.
- H. [Hebrews 6:13-20]
 - 1. Promise [vs. 13-17]
 - 2. Protector [vs. 18]
 - 3. Priest [vs. 19-20]

II. Promise [vs. 13-17]

- A. What are things that you have hoped for in your life? Perhaps a new toy (when you were much younger?) or a boyfriend/girlfriend, or to graduate high school, or to get a sweet job or a cool house or...When I was in high school I was extremely insecure about my looks. I was short, skinny, hard parted to the side, and I couldn't grow a beard to save my life. So I hoped for a beard. I even prayed that God would give me a great beard. This hope was grounded in the promise that when I became a man I would have a beard, and I was tired of looking like a boy and was ready to look like a man...
1. When you stop to think about it, all of the things that we have hoped in or hoped for have been tied to a promise...whether a promise someone gave us, or a promise that we internalize from our culture, but all of that for which we hope is tied to a promise.
 2. The promise, whatever it is or whatever it's source, produces anticipation. Or a vision of what could be.
 3. The next half of the anticipation is tied to the giver of the promise. Whoever is the giver of the promise is able to give us either a deep sense of assurance that the things will take place, or a lack of assurance of the things promised. Thus, hope is always to be found in a person, and the character of the person themselves is the most important thing in giving us a sure and lasting hope.
- B. Let's look at [v. 13] "For when God made a promise to Abraham...] STOP! Who is making the promise? God. What promises did God give to Abraham? There are several, I'll just give us the top 5:
1. [Gen. 12:2-3] "And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."
 2. [Gen. 15: 4-6] "And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." And He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then He said to him, "So shall your offspring be." And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness."
 3. [Gen. 17: 8] "And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."
 4. [Gen. 17:16] "I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."
 5. [Gen. 22:16-18] "By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."
- C. What do you think this did for Abraham? It gave him the anticipation of having a home, and a family through whom all the nations of the earth will be blessed, and that one of his offspring would defeat the enemy of mankind! All of them before his wife was even pregnant.
1. It is interesting to note, that the very first interaction what Abraham had with the living God was in the context of God giving him a promise, and Abraham building his life on that promise. The rest of the way that Abraham and God would relate would be through God's promises and covenants with him. This becomes that model by which we relate with God. By believing in the promises of God and in building our lives on these promises!
- D. Let's continue in our text: "...since He had no one greater by whom to swear, He swore by Himself, saying 'surely I will bless you and multiply you.' "
1. This is the second half of hope, the assurance that what we are hoping for will actually take place. What does God do here with Abraham? He gives Him an oath. Why would God give an oath?
 2. "The divine oath is an expression of the intensity of God's speaking. It signifies the extent to which God commits Himself to His spoken word. God's oath solemnly guarantees that He will fulfill His promises and that His Word is truth. Accommodating Himself to the human need for

confirmation, the word of promise confirmed by an oath reveals the unchangeable character of God's will. An oath provides strong encouragement for His people to trust Him with unwavering confidence" - Dr. William Lane

3. What is the purpose of God's oath? To give assurance in His Word, which really means, to give us assurance in Him! To give us the greatest assurance that what God says will come to pass!
- E. So what do we see from [vs.13-17]? We see that God's promises gives rise to a glorious anticipation which has it's strongest assurance by God's oath.
 1. Abraham didn't see the full realization of the promises of God, but he did wait patiently and got to see the the next two generations from his own body.
 2. [Heb. 11:9-10] the promise of heaven
 3. [Heb. 11:17-19] the promise of the resurrection
- F. Remember how I said that just as Abraham related with God on the basis of His promises? So it is with us. We come to God through Christ first by way of a promise. For me the very first promise that I truly trusted and came to the Lord on was [Mat. 11:28-30]. The promise of rest for my weary and burdened soul.
 1. What are some promise that you might be desiring to relate with God today?
 - a) [Rev. 21:5] "Behold I AM making all things new."
 - b) [Mat. 11:28] "Come to Me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest"
 - c) [Phil. 4:19] "And my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus"
 - d) [Rom. 8:1] "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"
 - e) [Rom. 8:38-39] "For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."
 2. Come to God this morning and throw all your life and soul upon the beautiful promises of God. He is infinitely trustworthy [Numb. 23:19], confirmed for us by His Son Jesus Christ! [2 Cor. 1:20] Build your hope upon the Son, and it will never be shaken or dislodged.
- G. However, too often we are placing our hope in the wrong people. This is when we find our hope being shaken or shriveled or absent altogether.

III. Protector [v. 18]

- A. The key phrase for this point is found in the middle of the text "...we who have fled for refuge...". This phrase is important for our understanding of hope because it causes us to focus on the last part of the definition: better future reality. This fleeing for refuge shows us that things are not always how we desire them to be. In a way, the promises of God cause a kind of holy discontentment in our lives, because we are given a vision of the perfect reality, yet also the awareness that we are not currently living in that reality. It's almost like the promises of God wake us up to seeing what our souls truly long for and desire, and seeing that we do not want to stay in the place where we are at.
 1. Story of fleeing the flash flood camping in AZ
- B. The first question that might arise in your minds could be "where are we fleeing to"? The answer, quite simply, is God. The image in [vs. 18] is of a dispirited, fearful, and hopeless person seeking refuge in Christ.
- C. The second question that might arise in your minds could be "from where are they fleeing"? Anything that is plaguing the soul and causing fear or lack of hope in our lives. Because the context of this is built around the promises and oath of God, we can understand that which we are fleeing being from the false promises and assuranceS of the world.
 1. This listening to the false promises and assurances of the world goes way back in human history; all the way back to the garden of Eden. God created the perfect world, and Adam and Eve were in perfect relationship with God, yet the great enemy of God and of humans, Satan, gave Adam and Eve a false promise, that they could be like God. He was the false source of assurance, because it was God's word verse his, and they listened to Satan. And what

happened, but death and destruction entered into the human condition and into God's creation.

2. Read from "Jesus Story Book Bible: the Terrible Lie"
 - a) We see that Adam and Eve trusted Satan instead of God, and ever since then we have been fighting the same battle. Our hope is built upon whom we trust. If we trust what the world says will make us happy and have a better future, then we will only experience disappointment, sadness, and brokenness.
 - b) Paul describes this in [Eph. 2:12] "remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world."
 - (1) Strangers to the promises of God
 - (2) Without hope
 3. What false promises are you hoping in this morning?
 - a) The false hope of financial success or security?
 - b) The false hope of intimacy through sexual immorality?
 - c) The false hope of having a plan for your life and hoping in the plan?
 4. Listening to the promises that the world offers and dreaming of a better future on that will only lead you to disappointment at best, and usually, death and destruction of your soul. It is so subtle and easy to find ourselves doing this. I found this out when I was in college.
- D. In a couple of passages that Paul exhorts the believers, he calls them to "flee" from the sin. This is so similar to the imagery found back in our text
1. Perhaps you are here this morning and you are finding yourself putting your hope in false promises and false assurances of the world or yourself, let me encourage you to flee and to flee to Christ!
- E. This passage also reminds us that we are fleeing a world that is broken and full of sadness and sin. This year, 2016, has been full of much disappointment, disillusionment, anger, sadness, even despair at times. As believers, we are aware that this world is not as it should be, and that is why hope is such an important part of our lives as Christians. It reminds us that one day, things will be exactly as it was created to be, living in perfect harmony with the LORD and with each other. There will no longer be any sadness, or hate, or violence, or lies, death or tears anymore. The old things will pass away, and Christ will make all things new!
1. The imagery of [v. 18] is two-fold:
 - a) Cities of refuge [Deut. 4:41-42] "Then Moses set apart three cities in the east beyond the Jordan, that the manslayer might flee there, anyone who kills his neighbor unintentionally, without being at enmity with him in time past; he may flee to one of these cities and save his life"
 - b) Clinging to the horns of the altar [1 Kings 1:50-51] "And Adonijah feared Solomon. So he arose and went and took hold of the horns of the altar. Then it was told Solomon, "Behold, Adonijah fears King Solomon, for behold, he has laid hold of the horns of the altar, saying, 'Let King Solomon swear to me first that he will not put his servant to death with the sword.'"
 2. The refuge that we have in Christ is almost identical to the OT images:
 - a) An eternal city of refuge, where we will live eternally with the Living God
 - b) And mercy to be found at the mercy seat of the cross of Christ
 - c) We can be alerted to the danger of placing our hope in false promises and flee for refuge in the sure and steadfast promises of God! The hope of eternity and mercy set before us is our motivation to flee this present evil age and find our protector in Jesus!

IV. Priest [vs. 19-20]

- A. Not only is Jesus our Protector, He is also our great high priest. This might sound a little funny to our modern ears, because the idea of a priest is not widely used in our culture anymore.
- B. Let me very quickly highlight some of the imagery in these two verses and then apply them to our topic of hope. The author is mixing two different cultures in these two verses:
 1. The image of an anchor was widely used in the Gentile (specifically Greek) poems and writings as an analogy for the hope of a soul.

2. The images of the curtain and the great high priest was a uniquely Jewish allusion to the temple and the system of sacrifices from the OT.
 - a) The curtain = separation from God due to sin, and the holiness of God
 - b) The priest = the representative of the people to God.
- C. Now that I have caught us all up to speed on the analogies, let me go in reverse order as we look at Jesus being our High Priest, and how that gives us a hope that is the anchor for our soul
 1. Who is Melchizedek? [Heb. 7:1-3] "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever."
 - a) Jesus is the true King of Righteousness and the King of Peace, having no beginning or end since He is very God of very God.
 - b) He is also able to serve as the perfect priest, since He is able to make atonement for us alone. He does not need to make atonement for Himself, as He is utterly sinless and perfect. And because He is the eternal God, He is able to satisfy the eternal debt, thus, able to make one sacrifice for all time for all of His people!
 - c) [Heb. 7:27] He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since He did this once for all when He offered up Himself."
 - d) [Heb. 7:25] "Consequently, He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."
 2. Why does this give us hope? Because of the promise that all those who come to God through the High Priest Jesus will be saved to the uttermost! That all of your sins have always been totally covered and forgiven by the blood of Christ! There is the assurance we long for! No fear that I will ever lose my salvation or be lost beyond saving but the full assurance that I am saved and will be saved to the end!
 3. What does this mean for me now? It means that I can live my life for the glory of God to the fullest. I do not need to live in fear or questioning, but in assurance.
- D. Jesus is called the great High Priest, or one could also say, the True High Priest. But He is also called a "forerunner" in [v. 20]. This is the image of a person who goes on ahead to clear the way for others to follow. But it also has the further assurance that those who are following Him will make it to where He is at.
 1. "He is there as His people's forerunner, the surety of their admission to the dwelling-place of God" - F. F. Bruce
- E. Jesus is also the anchor for the soul. This is probably the most simple image for us to grasp in terms of the immoveability of our hope. We all know how anchors work, they are cast over the side of a boat to find a rock to hold onto so that the boat stays safe where it is. Jesus is the Rock upon whom we have thrown the anchor of the soul to hold onto. Jesus, as the eternal Rock of our Salvation, and the One who has conquered death and lives eternally in His resurrection and has procured salvation and future glorification for us, is the best Rock upon whom to hope and to have as the anchor for the soul.
 1. [Matthew 7:24-27]
 - a) Similar analogy to anchor, but a warning for us to be careful where we place our hope and build our lives. If it is on anything else other than Christ, we will be blown away and find ourselves drowning.
 2. An anchor is held onto the boat by a cable, and for us as Christians, the cable that is connecting us to the hope of Jesus is the double cable of the promises of God and the oath of God. Faith grasps onto these cables and is thus secured.
 - a) Anchor = the hope of our soul
 - b) Cables = faith connecting us to our hope.
 - c) There will be times when we will experience great storms, even to the point of threatening to capsize our boat, and the cables will be stretched and pulled to the point of breaking,

but they will not break for they are the unchangeable and unbreakable promises and oath of God fulfilled in His Son Jesus Christ!

V. Conclusion

- A. We have talked a lot about hope and especially about Jesus, our truest hope. The question that I ask myself as I studied this and meditated on it was this: how shall I live today with this hope?
 1. With great assurance built on the promises of God, confirmed in Christ Jesus.
 2. With great peace, knowing that even the storms and squalls of life will only bring me closer to the eternal haven and shore of God.
 3. With great joy, seeing the end and what Jesus has done for me.
 4. With great zeal, desiring for others to have the same hope that I myself possess and which gives me the assurance, peace, and joy I feel.
- B. Puritan Prayer
 1. O Lord of the oceans, my little bark sails on the restless sea, Grant that Jesus may sit at the helm and steer me safely; Suffer no adverse currents to divert my heavenward course; Let not my faith be wrecked amid storms and shoals; Bring me to harbour with flying pennants, hull unbreached, cargo unspoiled. I ask great things, expect great things, shall receive great things. I venture on You wholly, fully, my wind, sunshine, anchor, defense. The voyage is long, the waves high, the storms pitiless, but my helm is held steady; Your Word secures safe passage, Your grace wafts me onward, my haven is guaranteed. This day will bring me nearer my home, Grant me holy consistency in every transaction, my peace flowing as a running tide, my righteousness as every chasing wave. Help me to live circumspectly, with skill to convert every care into prayer; Halo my path with gentleness and love, smooth every asperity of temper; let me not forget how easy it is to occasion grief; may I strive to bind up every wound, and pour oil on all troubled waters. May the world this day be happier and better because I live. Let my mast before me be the Saviour's cross, and every oncoming wave the fountain in His side. Help me, protect me in the moving sea until I reach the shore of unceasing praise. Amen.
- C. Communion
 1. At the cross we see how far Jesus would go to confirm the promises of God for His people