

LOOKING FORWARD

“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” —HEBREWS 11:1

Looking forward is a theme that runs throughout the book of Hebrews. To share in God’s holiness is the goal of the Christian life to which we look forward, but underlying this, there is an ingredient we do not talk much about. It is called ‘hope’.

Paul said, “Now these three remain: faith, hope and love” (1 Corinthians 13:13). We will agree that faith and love are essential, but hope sounds like wishful thinking or a form of escapism. The Scriptural meaning of hope is not “I hope it’ll be a sunny day,” kind of thing, but is a confidence we have in the present, which orientates us to a future confidence. Paul tells us the great mystery hidden for generations and now unveiled is “Christ in you, our hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27). The hope of glory is attaining to the moral likeness of Christ, which we won’t reach to its fullest measure in this life, but is a certainty upon entering our eternal home.

Viktor Frankl, an expert on the impact of hope in our lives, was an Austrian Jew who in the 1930’s specialized in psychiatry, a field which was then in its infancy. He worked with patients who had attempted suicide, and when asked why they wanted to end their lives, they all told him things dealing with their past. He came to the conclusion that their problem was not their past, but a lack of a

sense of future. He began to develop this idea of orientating our lives around a future that held a future hope.

In his book called, “Man’s Search for Meaning”, Frankl tells his own story in which he declined a scholarship in the United States and remained in Austria. In the late 1930s, the Third Reich was growing in power, and Frankl was taken to a concentration camp, first in Dachau, then in Auschwitz, where he lost his wife and parents. During this time, he noted those who had a vigour and strength, which others didn’t, was because they were looking forward to the future, continually planning and imagining things they would do.

The glorious thing is that no matter what situation we’re in, we can look forward to a future where God is taking us. In our journey to spiritual maturity, look back at the great cloud of witnesses who have gone on before us; look up to Christ, the author and perfecter of our faith; look out to hardships and sufferings, knowing God is moulding us. Finally, look forward in this journey with confidence, because we’ve been sealed forever by the Holy Spirit, and will one day stand before God, fully clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, with all my heart, I want to know Christ better. This is my confidence now and for my future. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Do I imagine what it will be like to one day stand before God fully clothed in the righteousness of Christ?