



#2 In the Hope Series

Hope In Grace

Forest Park Church

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3/17/24

Intro - The Word Is Near

Paul, in Romans chapter 10, is earnestly seeking to bring readers to an understanding of the profound greatness of what God has done in Jesus.

That they no longer need to seek outwardly for righteousness.

In his explanation of this, he makes the point that we don't need to seek hi and low and find Christ to bring Him back here.

If we can have Him here then we will have our salvation...

And salvation is of course in Him!

So how do we get this righteousness leading to salvation?

By Faith...

Romans 10:8-13

...“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); 9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. 11 For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.”

13 For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

What a powerful promise by which we can live and have hope and joy.

In light of this, let's do something together this morning. Would everyone be willing to pop up to your feet and find a couple of the brothers and sisters around you for the next 60 seconds are so, greet them, tell them hi, and spread the joy that we have in Christ with each other this morning? Let's do that!

Hope In The Unchangeable Promises

Hebrews 6:17-20

...when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, 18 so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. 19 We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, 20 where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

How great a hope we have! And the wording here is so extremely powerful... as an anchor for our souls.

- *Those trials you're facing? It's not the end of the story.*
- *The struggle with your own desires? There's a hope to keep in mind as you resist and stand firm.*
- *The ministry that God is using you to accomplish, that sometimes we just get so negative about? It's all leading up to something great.*

- *The everyday battle where you feel as though you have a target on your back in the eyes of the devil as a christian? As Jason spoke on last week, through that suffering we are accumulating a tested genuineness of our faith.*

Brook's Circles

The other day I was relaxing on the couch after a full days worth of events. The tv was on in the background with a show Erika and I are enjoying right now, and I was pretty low on energy, trying to take it easy.

If I'm being honest, I had my phone with me and was probably waisting time looking through Facebook marketplace, not paying attention to too much of what was going on.

Suddenly Brooks started making a lot of noise and cuttin' up, giggling and laughing; and this must have caught my attention.

I looked up and he was literally running in a circle...

Full speed ahead and full of energy and joy, he just ran and ran and ran... round and round he went until he felt like pausing to playfully slam into the couch, throwing his arms down on in for fun.

This was only a momentary pause, as he was only resetting to begin again.

Round and round he ran in a circle again.

And of course, as kids love to do, he eventually suckered me into this.

And round and round I went running in a circle and getting excited and joyful about who knows what...

And you know, I can't help but stop and wonder at the mystery of his great joy.

Why is he so joyful? What is causing him to run around in circles?

Is it the cookies and ice cream?

Was it that we let him have to much of the sugary drinks or soda?

No no no. This can't be written off that easy.

This is the joy of life.

The joy of a child.

The little bundles of joy we receive from God Himself.

He's so knew from the Lord that He still has a beautiful dose of it.

Matthew 18:3-4

*3 And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you **change and become like little children**, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

How can we do this?

Hebrews 12:2

*2 **fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.** For the **joy** set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Jesus had many sorrows in the world.

He had many reasons to feel down, upset, rejected, and discouraged.

But it was for the joy... that joy set before him, that he pressed on.

I really love the way the NIV version uses the word "fixing" in this passage.

It puts an emphasis on the action of placing our vision on Jesus.

You might wonder...

How do we even accomplish this...?

Lets come back to this question.

In Peter's writings he makes the point that he's really trying to remind the believers of some very important things.

To me, it feels as though it's like a grandpa of the faith who's concerned about the real focus of the church, trying to encourage them to keep their sight set on the right things.

Like an older person that has little time left here, who's focus is on what's next.

And this is no ordinary individual writing these words, since he had been with Jesus and at the time of his writing, is believed to be not far from his own death that was prophesied by Jesus to him.

2 Peter 3:1-2

The Day of the Lord Will Come

3 *This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, 2 that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles,*

Peter is urging us to remember.

So maybe you're going to hear a lot of things from this message today that you know about.

I believe Jason eluded to this last week, pointing out that most of us have heard these things before.

Turning Point:

It's in the midst of some of these reminders that we can take another look at important truth, with our current set of experiences fresh on our minds, and hopefully, understand them better in our hearts.

So again, how do we fix our eyes on Jesus and the Joy he pressed on towards?

A. We Love Him

1 Peter 1:8-9

8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, 9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

There's a reason why we sail our boats out into the storm to look for a way to salvage them.

There's a reason why we strategize and decide that the best route is to go through the storm, face it, and make for certain we are anchored.

A reason why we throw those anchors down in hopeful anticipation that we will make it out okay.

It's because we love Him.

We are those who love Him.

Church family, I hope you'll allow me to say it this morning more plainly.

If we do not love Jesus, we haven't come here for the right reason.

If you're here this morning because you...

- *Want your grand kids to be in church.*
- *Want to see your own kids raised with some moral principles.*
- *Want to get some motivation for life.*
- *Want to see some of your family or friends.*
- *Want to be around good people.*

Those are all really good reasons to be here.

But they only serve well as a byproduct of the truest form of what will help you weather the storms in life...

We are here, because we love Jesus.

The Beluga Whale

You may know that beluga whales use echolocation to do many of their normal life activities.

They have an incredible ability to make various sounds that their brains are then able to track the duration of echo off of their surroundings, and convert to an understanding of not only how far objects may be away from them, but also, what they are.

Many echolocating whales are not only able to do this, but can distinguish between their own sounds and the sounds of other whales when they are moving in packs.

It is thought by many researchers that these whales emit low frequency noises when they are swimming around casually, to log various information such as the density and depth of the water, and important information about their surroundings, while emitting higher frequency noises to track their prey and be able to track it's density and the type of material it is made of.

God's creation is incredible.

Not only the parts of it that we can wrap our minds around, but of course, the various layers of complexity that exist in the world.

We have this problematic perspective where we sometimes only appreciate the things we ourselves can see, and understand.

Your Kids

God created a powerful muscle in the body of each of your children.

It's their brains.

They have an unbelievable ability to log information about other people. Their behaviors, intentions, emotions, and maybe one of the coolest things... Why they do what they do.

It may be a stretch for me to say this.

Your children are extreme echo-locators.

They make various sounds and body language gestures, reactions and responses, to see what you as a parent, grandparent, uncle, aunt, family friend who's just watching them for a couple of hours will do.

Your kids will absolutely know if you are doing something for them, or you are actually bought into something yourself.

So let me say it like this.

If you want your kids to love Jesus, you need to love Jesus. Amen?

They have powerful radar systems that I believe God gave them while they temporality catch up on the knowledge of life.

They may not understand, but they absolutely feel what's going on.

They not only log what you say, they test it and refine it based on what you do.

So if you love Jesus, your kids are going to know it. And truthfully, everyone will; especially in the face of a storm.

1 John 2:15

Do Not Love the World

15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

B. Set Our Hope

1 Peter 1:13

Called to Be Holy

13 Therefore, preparing your minds for action,^[a] and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

There's a lot of things in life that we can help each other with.

If someone has a limb go down or an injury, many times family members will come around them to pick up the slack, help them accomplish daily life activities, and fill needs when necessary.

As most of you have noticed by now, Jason nearly lopped off his thumb, and I'm sure there are things that become much more difficult to do with a big bandage getting in the way.

Thankfully he hasn't asked me to type out his sermons yet for him, and if he does, that may be the day you guys don't see or hear from me for a while... I might be in hiding until that thumb recovers...

There's a lot of things we can do to help each other. But there's something sticking out from the verse above that I'm not so sure anyone can do for you.

You look at that first section it says...

“preparing your minds for action”

In this, we can help each other.

You may have a beautiful opportunity to help someone else learn what it looks like to be ready to respond like Jesus.

You may be able to disciple someone on how to live out of love.

And the next part.

“being sober-minded”

You will also notice that in life, there may be opportunities to encourage, challenge, and even help someone take the necessary steps to sober their mind.

Whether this be a step away from things that effect the chemical balances in their mind, a step away from sinful or evil thought processes, or even a step towards truth, you may find yourself helping someone else walk through their journey in this area.

I'm fairly confident that this next section, we cannot do for each other.

“Set your hope”

Church, we get together today because we have a similar hope.

But truthfully, the target of each mind and heart in here this morning is something that happens internally.

Not a single person in here can “set” hope for someone else.

We can absolutely share our hope.

But it's the responsibility of each person to set their own hope, and he finishes...

set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 6:20-21

...lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

It's your hope, your treasure, and your heart.

We don't have the luxury of attaching ourselves to someone else's hope.

And it's a good thing, because I don't think that would be good for us.

I don't think that would cause us to love Jesus ourselves.

I think that would allow us to feel as though we have what we need when we don't.

I think it would make us feel sufficient when in reality we need growth.

What does God want but that we should learn to love Him and of course His Son Jesus, and to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

If your finding this morning that your hope is not “your hope”, then you will also find it hard to rejoice in the midst of trials.

We may be able to live out a christian walk when the world is limited on pressure towards God's people, but when that pressure increases, those who have an abiding hope will remain.

Romans 8:18-19

Future Glory

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.

Romans 8:23-25

23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

How Do We Set Our Hope?

We of course prepare for action, but I believe most of us here if we're honest, would admit that we have our hope in something...

If we hope in something, then we most likely know the level of focus and attention it takes to have hope.

So then, the question is not how, but what?

What do we set our hope in?

1. Grace

set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

“Grace Greater Than Our Sin”

Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that is greater than all our sin!

We have already begun experiencing God's grace, but we look forward to the fullness of that grace that will be brought to us at the coming of Jesus Christ.

And in this, we place our hope.

We look at this as extraordinarily valuable, much more precious to us than anything that the world has to offer.

Matthew 13:45-46

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Value

45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, 46 who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Our hope won't do well in multiple pearls.

2. Holiness

1 Peter 1:14-16

14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, 15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

It's our job to set our hope on the beautiful opportunity that God has given us to become holy.

We don't have to be holy, we get to be holy.

Holiness begins in your thought life. What you think determines how you live.

One of the most practical things I can tell you about living the Christian life is:

- Deal with sin on the thought level!

- Judge wicked thoughts the instant you have them, confess them to God and replace them with thoughts of Him and His Word.
- If you are envious of someone, judge it, confess it, and ask God to replace it with His love for that person.
- If you are lusting after a woman (or man), deal with it instantly.
- Flee from it, both mentally and physically!

As Paul put it, take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5).”

To be holy people, we must be obedient (1:14, 15b).

There are three things involved in such obedience:

A. MAKE A BREAK WITH OUR PAST LIFESTYLE.

“Do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance” (1:14). The word “conformed” is used only one other time in the New Testament, by Paul in Romans 12:2: “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind [there’s that concept again!] that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” Phillips paraphrases it, “Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God re-mold your minds from within ...”

Saving faith involves repentance. It makes a break with the past lifestyle and seeks to follow Jesus as Lord.

B. ESTABLISH A HABIT OF OBEDIENCE.

“As obedient children” (1:14) is a Hebrew expression that means “characterized by obedience,” or “habitual obedience.” The implication is

that God is our Heavenly Father whom we obey. His Word tells us how He wants us to live. We ought to obey God as a conditioned response. Such obedience is not legalism, but rather should characterize those under grace.

C. ERASE THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN SACRED AND SECULAR.

“Be holy yourselves in all your behavior” (1:15b). The word behavior is another favorite for Peter (6 of 13 New Testament uses are in 1 Peter, with two more in 2 Peter). It refers to conduct or, what we would call “lifestyle.” That Peter here links “holiness” with “behavior” and adds the word “all” is significant because many pagan religions of that time separated “cultic holiness” from everyday life. Peter is saying that our separation unto God is to affect every area of life, both private and public. There is no such thing as secular life that is not sacred for the Christian.

That kind of integrated living eliminates hypocrisy. There’s nothing that turns people off more than to see someone who professes to be a Christian, but whose lifestyle denies it. Kids read it loud and clear in their parents. This doesn’t mean that you must be perfect. It means that you live with integrity, confessing sin when you blow it, making your Christianity practical in every aspect of life. We’re the only “Bible” many unbelievers will ever read. Just as we can learn quite a bit about a father by watching his children, so the world learns about our Heavenly Father by watching His children. That means that we must learn to obey our Father in all of life.

Thus, to be holy people we must be focused on Christ’s coming and obedient in all of life.

D. WE CONTINUE GROWING TO LOOK LIKE JESUS

To whatever extent we gain insight on the holiness of God, we will gain equal insight on the magnitude of our sin. At the same time, we will revel in the amazing grace of God who saved us through the cross of Jesus Christ. That knowledge will make us more holy in all our behavior.

The above section in blue was written by Jason Corder

3. An Impartial Judge

1 Peter 1:17-19

17 And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, 18 knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

There is an interesting fascination that some people have with the mistakes of a referee, judge, national leader, business leader, coach, or even popular singer.

Social media creates a central place for this fascination to be unleashed to the world where groups of people can voice their concern about an issue and come together, backing each other's point of view.

Timelines are filled with statements like...

- "I can't believe that ref didn't call a foul."
- "Did you see this national leader accidentally trip walking over a curb"?
- "It's unbelievable what this well known popular singer said in an interview."
- "That coach needs to go, my grandma can call plays better than he can."

While many of these statements might be the result of something that really did happen, it's always a little disconcerting how shocked the accusers really are at the mistakes made, or the lack of morals from a non-believer.

Maybe the problem is that we've placed a certain level of our hope in them.

Every human judge and leader will make mistakes.
We place our hope in the one Judge who is impartial and makes no mistakes.

Jesus did this, and we follow His lead.

1 Peter 2:23

23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

Conclusion

Dory and Marlin "It's Time To Let Go"

The belly of the whale seemed like the place where all hope was lost.

The water sloshed around, and the darkness caused a doom like feeling, while Marlin went into panic mode and Dory swam around like nothing was wrong.

Marlin, with his need to control and his overwhelming touch with reality, tried to slam his small little body into the front portion of the whale to break free, not even making a dent, while Dory obliviously used the current from the moving water in the whale to do cool swimming tricks, making fun noises and insisting on Marlin trying it with her.

He of course barked back at her total carelessness with great frustration, completely dedicated to his meaningless fight against the front portion of the whale's mouth. Eventually, he gave up his strength and let his body fall to the whales tongue.

It's here that Dory would find him, and the two would have a conversation where their opposing views would be exposed even more. This would be quickly

interrupted by the whale beginning to swallow the water that they were surviving in, causing it to go down.

In a flash, the whale lifted its tongue to throw everything in its mouth down to its stomach, and the two of them would be left holding on for dear life, not knowing whether or not this would be their end.

Marlin, concerned about finding nemo, would hold on till his death, but Dory's opposing perspective just kept coming through. In Marlin's frustration, he continued to bark until Dory hit him with a line that cut straight through every ounce of his need to control everything, when everything in front of him obviously spiraled out of control.

"IT'S TIME TO LET GO" Dory said,

Marlin replied by saying, "how do you know something bad isn't going to happen."

Dory replied, "I don't."

Church, we don't know if sometime bad is going to happen.

We don't know the future struggles, or the future pain.

We do know that we have an abiding hope in heaven. A grace that will be revealed to us, that we can't yet see. This is how we make it through... We let go of our hope in all the wrong things, and set our hope fully on this grace that will be revealed to us at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.