

The Security of the Christian Hope

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[0:00] In chapter 1, Colossians chapter 1, and reading again there at verse 5.! Well, we can read from verse 3.

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.

And particularly that last bit there in verse 5, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Now, Paul, as we know, is a great encourager. And in this letter, we find that he's giving thanks for the life of the Christians in Colossae.

And it is important that we recognize the gifts and graces that are evident in people. And that's what Paul was doing, because he's been hearing about their faith and their love and their hope.

And so he's giving thanks to God for these very things. And we know that these are the great virtues, the great graces that are so often spoken of in Scripture.

[1:15] We find that faith looks upward, and love looks outward, and hope looks forward to the future.

Paul spoke about these on another occasion, and where he said, Now abides these three, faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.

And the greatest of these is love because, well, we know that faith receives, hope expects, and love gives.

And the word tells us that it's greater to give than to receive. But tonight I want us to focus on what Paul is saying here about the hope that is laid up.

That's what it tells us, the hope that is laid up in heaven. Because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. And that's one of the great blessings that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[2:18] Sometimes we forget, we know that we've been born again, that we've been saved. And sometimes we say to ourselves, we don't examine or really dwell on what is it that we actually have in Christ Jesus.

What is there that we can really dwell on and become excited by? And one of the things is the hope that is within us. So I want us to think tonight a little about this hope.

And what first thing that we'd look at is what is our hope based on? Now, as we know, the hope of the Christian and the hope of the world is very different. We've often mentioned that.

The hope of the world is not based on anything really substantial or anything really foundational. The hope of the world is really no more than I hope so.

I hope that if all the things come together that that's the way it'll work out. There's nothing in this world that is really safe, really secure. We used to talk about being as safe as a bank.

[3 :19] But we know that banks can be broken into and we know that banks can actually collapse. We've seen things like that happen. But the hope of the world is, I might say, I'm going to Canada this summer.

Well, I'm not, so don't ask me when are you going to Canada. But I'm just as an example. I'm going to Canada this summer. And I booked the hotel.

I booked the flights. And I booked it through a reputable travel company. So it's all good. So that's where I'm going. And you've got this degree of certainty about it.

And you're getting excited about it. But the thing is that it's possible that you may become seriously ill and not be able to go away. The hotel that you booked may go on fire.

The airline company you're going might collapse. The travel company that you've booked everything with might go under. There are all these ifs and buts and uncertainties that could happen.

[4 :23] So our hope in the world never has an absolute utter foundation to it. It's always little more than I hope so.

I hope that this is the way it will turn out. But the hope of the Christian is something that is totally different. Because the Christian's hope is based upon God.

It's based upon God the Father. God the Father has made the most amazing statements in his word. The most wonderful promises in his word. And there's one thing that we can say that every word of God is true.

There's a question asked in the Bible. Are all things possible with God? And it tells us that there's nothing impossible with God. And that is absolutely true.

But there are two impossibilities regarding God. The word of God tells us it is impossible for God to deny himself. And it's impossible for God to lie.

[5 :28] God is not a man that he should lie. Nor the son of man that he should repent. Hath he not spoken and shall he not make it good? Has he not revealed the word?

And will he not fulfill it? That's what God is. He is utterly and altogether true to his word. He cannot lie. So when we have God's word, we know that this has come from one who cannot lie.

We also have the son. And the son follows through everything that the father has said. The son is ratifying all the promises given to us by the father.

And who is the son? Well, he tells us, I am the truth. Remember, he says, I am the way. I am the truth. I am the life.

So it is impossible for the son to lie. And so every promise that we have in the word of God comes with the authority of the father and the authority of the son.

[6 :31] And this is a pillow that we can lay our head down on and rest in complete security, knowing that every word is true. And then we have the ministry of the Holy Spirit, which ministers to our spirit, convincing us of the truth of what the word says.

And the Holy Spirit convinces us and stirs up that hope within us. And the Holy Spirit in that way is ministering to our spirit and enabling us to lay hold upon the promises by faith.

I'm sure all of you tonight have in the past and continue to do so, lay hold upon God's word. There are maybe some promises that are special to you.

There are promises you might have. You might have a promise up on your wall. You might have a promise underlined in your Bibles. You go back to it so often. It means so much to you.

This is God's word to you. And God's spirit has given you the faith where you're able to cling to it and base your life upon it. So this is a great thing. This is this hope that we have in our hearts.

[7:44] So it's foundational. It's true. So then I suppose we have to ask ourselves the question, what are we hoping for? What is a Christian tonight hoping for?

Well, there's many things and just suggest a few. And the first thing as we look into the future, the first thing I would say that every Christian is looking for is to be forever with the Lord.

I think that would be your number one. To be in the presence of Christ forever. And to see him as he really is. You see, in this world, we've only seen by faith.

And sometimes we don't see very clearly. And I'm sure it's one of the things, if you're anything like me, you say to yourself, I wish I could see the Lord Jesus more clearly.

I sometimes feel that my faith is so dim. And I want to see Jesus more clearly. We're like the Greeks that came, remember, to the disciples and they said, we want to see Jesus.

[8:49] And I'm sure that that is often the question or the desire that we express within our own hearts, within our own lives. Now, the thing is, we know that supposing we said, wouldn't it be wonderful if Jesus was to come from heaven to earth and to spend a few days in our presence?

Well, the thing is, that couldn't happen. We couldn't look on him. Our sinful humanity could not abide in the presence of Christ.

Even as Christians, we couldn't look upon him because of the failure of what we are. There's examples given to us when Jesus gave a quick revelation of himself to the Saul of Tarshish.

He fell to the ground blind. He was dazzled by the glory and the brilliance of who he saw and the words that he heard.

The other example is John, the great disciple of Jesus. And we find that in the book of Revelation. When Jesus, the exalted, glorified Jesus, revealed himself to John, John fell down at his feet as one dead.

[10:09] That's the impact, the power of the risen Savior. And it's not until we die and we're told at death we're made perfect in holiness.

It is only then that we have the capacity and the ability to behold Jesus as he really is. But it's a great mark of grace.

And I would say this, even if you're not somebody who has yet come to a place where you professed the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior.

If you can say hand on heart, my great desire above everything else is to see Jesus and to be in his presence forever. Then that is a true mark of grace.

Because the world can't say that. The world, if you said to them, do you want, because the world has a very different idea of what heaven is.

[11:09] Heaven is being in the immediate presence of Christ. And it's logic when you think about it. If a person in this world says, I'm interested in the gospel, but I don't want Jesus to be king and lord in my life.

And you're kind of holding him at arm's length. If you think that that's the way, how could you spend the whole of eternity in his immediate presence?

That logic itself tells you that that's how it is. So the world, as they are just now, do not want to live in the immediate presence of Christ forever.

But if you do tonight, then that is an obvious mark of grace. Because only somebody who the Lord has touched in their heart is able to think in that particular way.

And then again, we hope and long for the day when sin will be no more. Now you and I know that there's nothing that has bogged us down in this world.

[12:17] That has shackled us. That has just frustrated us. Like the sin that clings to us. The sin, the besetting sin.

The sin that's just part and partial of our life. And like the apostles so often we've said, you know, the good that I want to do, I don't do. And the evil that I don't want to do, that's what I end up doing.

You see, sin has such a grip on us. It sucks us. We're drawn by it. Because we have that. Remember before describing it like if you're playing balls.

And there's a bias in the ball. So that when you roll that ball, you obviously have to have the ability to do so. But you roll it in such a way so that the ball will go out like that.

Working the bias which draws it in towards the jack, you call it. Well, we're like that ball. We cannot go straight.

[13:16] If you roll it down, it won't go straight. It's going to twirl this way. And that's the way we are with sin. We're inclined to it. It's there. It's part of us.

And if we love the Lord Jesus, we're so often frustrated with ourself. And so often we've gone to the Lord and say, Lord, forgive me. Forgive me. Here I am again.

And we're so aware of how it bogs us down. And so this is part of the hope that we have for the day when sin will be no more. It won't even be on the horizon. And side by side with that, we long for the day when Satan won't trouble us anymore.

Because Satan's always snapping at our heels. Always firing his darts at us. He's always tempting us. He's always causing disruption in our lives.

Things that hinder us and hurt us. And if we could see behind the scenes into the spiritual realm, where the angels are administering spirits around us, helping us, and also the evil spirits that are out in order to trip us up and to attack us, there are unseen forces at work all the time.

[14:35] And Satan so often, he discourages us. He brings all these accusations against us. He drags up our past to cripple us.

All these things. And we long for the day when none of these things will be any more. When we will have this freedom, this deliverance from all these things that are part and partial of our lives.

And then again, we long for the time when our service for the Lord will be perfect. In this world, it is imperfect service.

No matter what we do, it's always imperfect. And there are so again, it's because of sin. But in glory, our service, there will never be any self-seeking.

There will never be any self-indulgence in it. There will never be any flaws or failings in our service. It will be pure. It will be honorable.

[15:36] It will be right. It will be perfect. And we long for that when that's how it will be. And again, we long for the time when we'll be freed from all the troubles of this world.

The Bible tells us the troubles that afflicted just in number many be. And they sure are many. And when you think of all the problems and the issues, the doubts, the fears, the anxieties, the illness, the sickness, the crosses, the bereavements, all these things that are part and partial of life.

Things that hurt us. Things that so often spoil everything about our life. So our hope in heaven is fixed upon us.

And along with that, we long for the day when death will be no more. Scripture tells us that. That's part of the heavenly environment. Where the king of terror is removed.

You'll never hear of anybody dying. There'll be no death notices. It's eternal life. Hell is death. Hell is a second death. And everything associated with death.

[16:52] But heaven is the very opposite of that. Everything that is pure. Everything that is lovely. Everything that is good. We're told that the Lord will wipe away all tears from our eyes.

No more sorrows. Sorrow and sighing shall flee away. And finally, we see the security of our hope. Because it tells us, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.

If you have a particular treasure or something that's really precious, you want to put it somewhere that's completely safe. Somewhere where nobody can get to it. Now we know we live in a world where there's so much stealing.

Stealing used to just be from houses. But we know that constantly there's car thefts. There's stealing online. The amount of online stealing nowadays and the fraud and the deception. In some ways you think there's nothing safe anymore.

That's the kind of world we live in. Well, Jesus tells us of our treasure in heaven. And we're told that our life is hid with Christ.

[18:07] That's one of the expressions that the Bible tells us. It's hid with Christ. So here you have the special treasure. It's hidden. Where is it hidden? It's hidden in Christ.

Christ. Your life is hidden in Christ. And this is where your hope is. Because our hope is in Christ who is in heaven. And it can't be safer and more secure than that.

Because no robber, no thief can in any way enter in there and steal Satan and all his legion of evil spirits. They can't enter in and take away your hope, my hope.

Because it's fixed in heaven. It's secure forever. And again, Jesus talks about the security of it where no moth or rust can wear it out or corrupt it.

And we know that many things in this world, they wear it out, they get spoiled. We lose them, they break, there's all sorts of things. Well, our hope can't. It is secure.

[19:08] It is secure. It is fixed. It is there forever. There's no more precarious position to be in than to go through this world on our own and just to get everything that the world gives.

Because as we've often said it, the world only gives on loan. And when you're loan, when something is on loan, you have to give it back. And that's what we have to do with everything that the world has given us.

At the end of the day, the world takes it back. But Christ doesn't. What Christ gives you is forever. And what the Lord Jesus is saying to you, I give you eternal life.

But you know what I'm going to do for you? I'm going to keep your life in me safe. It's with Christ. So this is where our hope is. It's laid up in heaven.

Because we know why we're here and we know where we're going. Of all people in this world, we are the most privileged. And we wish that more could understand the benefits of being a Christian.

[20:15] And as you go on in the Christian life, you discover more and more of what it means to be a Christian. What you get in and through following the Lord Jesus Christ.

So this is one of the great things that we have. Hope. So we said so different to what the world offers and what the world gives. The hope that we have is there.

And nothing can take it away from us. Let's pray. Lord our God, we give thanks for the hope that is within us. And that that hope burns bright.

We give thanks for the expectation that the Christian has. And although there are days where the clouds of sin can dim our love and dim our faith and even dim our hope, yet it will never take it away.

And we give thanks, Lord, that you are steadfast, that you are sure, and you are eternal in your purposes. And we pray that we will have the faith to rest upon you.

[21:21] Come what may. And we pray to bless everybody here tonight. We give thanks for all who are here. Bless them, Lord, in their own homes, in their own families, in their own sphere of work, wherever they are, whatever they're involved in, whatever you're engaged in.

Lord, we pray that your blessing will be upon them. Grant us all safety on the way home and freed from any trouble, any accidents, because we know that life is so unsure and so uncertain.

And we pray to bless us as a congregation as we heard at this time of vacancy. Oh, Lord, lead us in the right way. You've always done so in the past.

And we pray that you will continue to do so in the present. Our hope is in you. Watch over us and part us with your blessing, we pray, cleansing us from our every sin.

In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen. We're going to conclude today.