

Hope: Hold Fast

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[0 : 00] If you would, let your new Bibles turn with me to Hebrews chapter 10, page 1007, I believe.

And we're going to continue our series in Hebrews this morning. If you remember, we've come to chapter 10 and we're spending three weeks camping out on verses 19 to 25.

Looking at the three exhortations related to faith, hope, and love. So this week, hope is on the menu. And so, if you were there, let's read together Hebrews chapter 10, verses 19 to 25.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new living way that He opened up for us through the church, and that is through His flesh.

And since we have a great high priest, a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart and full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from the evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

[1 : 36] Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering. For He, the promise, is faithful. Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and new works, not neglecting to meet together as is to have a son, but encouraging one another and all the more as we see the day of God.

Father, we pray with Him. Oh Lord, we need You in the works.

We need You every day. We need You as I should do this morning. God, that You would awaken our sleeping souls.

You will soften our hard hearts. That You will open our dull ears. You will give sight to our blind eyes.

You will bring light to our dead hearts. That we might take hold of our community and all the years I can tell us in Christ.

[2 : 55] God, I pray this morning that You would help me and that the words I speak and the fitting instruments in Your hands and that Your Word would speak to each of us this morning.

Lord, that You would impart to us a hope that cannot be shared. We pray that we say this in Jesus' name. Christians have the best hope in the whole world.

Yeah? Yeah? Okay, so, now some of you may be sitting there going, okay, that's kind of arrogant, isn't it? That you would say that, like I could just say it better than everyone else.

Well, no. No. Because if the hope that Christians have was based on anything in us, then it would be an arrogant statement. But the Christian hope isn't about us.

It's about God, what God has done for us. And when we talk about Christian hope, we need to start from the very beginning, make sure it works clear, because hope in our everyday conversation is used in many ways.

[4 : 13] I hope it's not going to rain tomorrow. Or, I hope I pass my class. We have some desire that tends to be used in our common vocabulary word as wishful thinking, or some kind of desire that we would have.

And so, we need to clarify that the Christian hope is not that sort of uncertain future thing that we hope, that we think might happen, but it really doesn't know.

The Bible uses hope. It uses it to describe a future good reality rooted in God's work for us that is certain to come to pass.

Christians have the best hope in the whole world. And if you were the recipient of the letter of Hebrews in the first century, and you read it through, I think this is one of the main messages that the writer of the Hebrews would want you to get, is that Christians have the best hope in the whole world.

Why do I say that? Well, let's look at our passage from this morning. We've talked about it already. We're going to try to not rehash everything Greg said last week.

[5 : 46] But when you look at our passage, verses 19 through 22 is a summary where the writer of the Hebrews is trying to remind us in very brief fashion of all the things he's been teaching us about God and his work in Christ.

And you see these two since statements. Since, we have look at it with me. So we get it right. Since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by a new living way.

And then since we have a great high priest, there are two things that he wants us to remember about what God has done to give us hope. The first one is the word of Christ.

By the blood of Christ, that is, by Jesus' death on the cross for sinners like you and me, he has satisfied the wrath of God in sin.

He has, he has completed everything that needs to be done for people like us to approach a holy God. The death of Jesus Christ has opened up a new way so that we can walk into the very presence of holy perfection.

[7 : 02] not with fear and trembling, not with the certainty of condemnation for our wicked hearts and our rebellious natures, but with confidence and full assurance because of what Christ has done him.

And so what is the work of Christ that he has done? If you've been here, I hope this resonates deeply. Jesus is the perfect sacrifice that was offered in the heavenly temple for us so that we might finally enter into the holy of the Lord where God himself manifests his presence so that we can actually know him.

And the second ground in verse 21 is in the person of Christ. Since we have this work that Christ has done, but also the person of who Christ is.

Christ who is the Son, the final word spoken to us. Christ who is the second person of the Trinity who took on humanity so he can identify with us in our weakness, yet without sin, so that he can be the perfect sacrifice.

And not only that, he also is the high priest who then takes the sacrifice into the very presence of God and offers it on our behalf. He does all the work and he himself is the one in his person who carries this out.

[8 : 44] Right if you said, because Christ has opened this way and because of who Christ is, skipped down to verse 23, let us fall fast to the compassion of our hope to the power of the Lord.

Hope is a future looking forward to the goodness, to the certain goodness of what God has done. Not only has Christ done all of these things in the past, but there is a certain future that he has secured for us.

Do you remember chapter 6? Turn with me back to chapter 6. It's actually kind of an inclusio. Chapter 6 and chapter 10 kind of frame this thing.

Chapter 6, verse 18. 18. I want you to see it. He's been making the argument about how God has prepared us and how God is going to prove himself to be trustworthy through an oath and through a promise that he made to Abraham and how there's this greater promise that he's made for us.

So in verse 18 he says, so 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.

[10 : 16] That's the exact same phrase we see in chapter 10. Hold fast to the hope. Hold fast to the hope set before us. We have this as a sure steadfast anchor of the soul.

A hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain where Jesus is gone as a forerunner on our behalf. Having become high priest forever.

in the order of the Lord, his name. Not only is Christ a forerunner for our future. What does this mean? Well, this word, we've talked about this before, but it means that he has gone ahead and secured away.

He has placed the anchor of our hope in the very presence of God because he himself has gone there and now sits there.

having made a way for us. I don't know if you've ever been to the forbidden city in Beijing.

[11 : 23] It's a magnificent, awe-inspiring place. place. And if you've ever seen any of the movies that feature those huge courtyards, basically the forbidden city is a series of gates and courtyards and gates and courtyards.

And in the very middle of it is the place where the emperor would entertain those who would come to see him. And then beyond it is the private palace, so to speak.

But you go through and as you walk in, you walk in and you pass these massive walls through this massive gate into this huge courtyard and you walk down into it and walk back up and through another gate and then down and back up.

And if the emperor was there, at least in my mind's eye, those courtyards were filled with soldiers. And there's always a question as you walk through, are you actually going to get to the emperor or not?

Do you actually have access to him or not? And as you walk through, your very life is a danger because if you ever showed a threat, unless you're gently in a bad movie, you're never going to get there because he is well protected.

[12 : 40] the holiness of the emperor is protected by the guards in each of these courtyards. Friends, Jesus has walked through the courtyards.

He has satisfied every requirement, every demand. And when we walk into the heavenly, forbidden city of the presence of God, God, if we look ahead, we see the throne of God and Jesus standing at the right hand.

And he is the one who is saying to the emperor, and therefore to all of the angels, well, to all of the forces that would protect the holiness of God, I vouch for him.

I have done what he needs to approach you. He is with me. He is here under my invitation, and he is here under my heart.

Jesus is the forerunner who has gone ahead and now invites us into the very presence of God, having done everything we needed. And this is now awful.

[14 : 00] This is not just a past reality of his death, but it is also a future reality that for our eternity, we will be with Christ in that place with God.

By his past life, death, and resurrection, Jesus, cured for us a certain future with God that cannot be shaken, that cannot be overturned.

As I was meditating on this tree this week, as I've been thinking past for you, as I long for you to get the weight of how glorious this is, that we have this past word and future hope that is certain and secure and completely done for us, my fear for you is rooted in what I see in my own heart, which is a little bit of hope, hope.

the hope that Christ has secured for us. This glorious, wonderful hope doesn't actually seem particularly attractive to us.

Now, some of you may be going, no, this is the best thing in the world, amen, amen, and we'll get there at the end. But my fear is that for many of you, the hope of being with God in His presence for eternity isn't a very attractive thing.

[15 : 50] It's not something that grips our hearts. And I've been thinking about why that is and trying to figure out what is it, what is it for the writer of the Hebrews that makes him have to say, having laid out how glorious his work is in all sorts of detail, why does he have to say, hold fast?

Who in the world would turn away from access to the unburnt world for all eternity? But we do don't. We do turn away.

It's hard to hold fast. Why? Why? Because I think it can be hard against what the hope can be given to us.

I think there are a number of reasons for this. Sometimes I think as Christians we can be embarrassed. We can think, well, hope of heaven is really nice, but I don't want to be one of those high-in-sky Christians who just pretends like everything's okay, I'm just going to go to heaven.

I think we can be embarrassed about being high in the sky or too heavenly minded and the earthly good or whatever critique that you have heard. And so we kind of downplay it in our hearts.

[17 : 18] I think honestly it's probably need to come in that though. I think that we have lost the sweetness of hope and future because we live in culture and because we have embraced values that we look for the present to be everything we hope for.

we are looking for this life, our 70 or 80 years, to actually be the fulfillment of our lives.

And you know friends, this is not normal. If you go back and read throughout the history of the world, most people, and particularly in the church, most people throughout history have thought that we have a very short life here and then we die.

And most people in the world, throughout most of history, have spent their time on earth trying to figure out how to be prepared for eternity. And the church, in its history, has seen the Christian life as preparation for heaven, not satisfaction here on earth.

I think that we set our hopes on the things of this world. And so we have to get it all now. He knew the most boys wins, so on and so forth.

[19 : 04] And when we focus our hearts on the things of this world, hope slips away from us. You can simplify it different ways because when we get what we want and our hearts are satisfied, when our desires and longings are fulfilled in this world, then hope seems unneeded.

We don't need anything else. If I have everything that I'm longing for right now, how good is it going to be if I haven't been with God?

It doesn't seem any better than what I've got right now. And when we don't get what we want, when we face the disappointments and the discouragements when the world isn't meeting our desires and satisfying our health, we fall into despair.

We see hope as a dangerous thing that will only lead us ultimately to discourage our lives because we won't get it.

You see the danger? So prosperity dulls are needed for hope. You know the C.S. Lewis quote but it has a slightly different take in this world.

[20 : 33] Our desires are too small, not too great. We're too easily pleased with the things of this world and so we prefer the month-pies of this world to the glories and the joys in his image of the vacation in the sea.

So prosperity dulls our heart and trials overwhelm them. when we get the news we get the call your dad is in hospital.

You didn't need to get into the program. I need to return this ring to you. there's nothing more we can do.

Feels like life crashing down around us, slipping through our fingers. Disappointment crushes our spirits. And when we put all of our hope in this life and it slips away, there's nothing left.

nothing wanted. So of course we despair. And we might drown our despair and eat and drink and be married, for more we may die.

[22 : 07] We may sink into darkness, loneliness, depression. When we make our present reality the greatest reality, the thing that we put our love is hope.

Hope has more meaning than else. There's a third reason why we can lose hope in the world. It's not true for those of us.

It's true for the Hebrews though, those who are receiving this letter. For them following Christ was a very cost of being in their culture. I cost them their jobs.

I cost them their belongings. In fact, chapter 10, if you look down in verse 34, it says, for you had compassion on those in prison, you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property.

That seemed to be real for these believers that they were suffering deep social injustice, and probably material poverty, life and physical suffering.

[23 : 19] for being a Christian. It can be hard to hold on hope then too. Where is God? Have you abandoned me?

I believed in you and what am I getting here? Suffering and trial. But do you see that even then, the reason why it's hard is because we think that the promises of God have meant to be fulfilled here and now in this time.

instead of receiving our blessings and our prosperity as a forte of heaven, instead of receiving our trials as a reminder that this world is never meant to satisfy us, we lose hope.

We lose hope. But friends, holding on to hope is possible. Seeing hope as good and taking hold of it and holding fast to it.

The image of holding fast is a great one. It's a nautical term where if you take a rope and you tie it to the worry, yeah, and you pull, the idea is that when the knot is tied well, it will hold fast.

[24 : 48] And the harder the pressure is on the rope, the tighter the knot will be. Friends, this is the picture of what the writer of Hebrews is adoring us to do, is to take hold of the hope in Christ without wavering like that.

so that when the greatest storms blow, so that when the greatest prosperity comes, we are not pulled away from this coming.

Now, it would be very easy at this point to think, and I'll end the sermon with, so hold on, cling harder, do more, try harder to hold on.

But thankfully, we would be verse 23. The writer of Hebrews knows that that is not actually the God's way. hold fast to the confession of hope without wavering for explanatory grounds.

The reason for why we can do this is he promised his faithful. Friends, the reason why we can cling to hope is God will not let us go.

[26 : 20] In the argument of Hebrews, he's already proved how God was faithful in all of the promises and all the hopes that were laid out in the Old Testament found their critical and their fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ.

When he came, he was the temple and the sacrifice and the high priest and the king. He was the one who would come and fulfill all of those hopes. And so he has already demonstrated his faithfulness in sending Christ to do what he did on the cross.

But friends, his faithfulness doesn't end there. His faithfulness is anchored in the cross saying, I will not forsake you, I will not obey you, I have done all that I need to do for you to be secure in me.

And that anchor now points forward and God's faithfulness looks ahead. It looks ahead to the dead where you can finally applaud all that he has accomplished in Christ.

And the dead will be raised to life and sin will be no more. There will be no more sadness, no more sickness, no more tears.

[27 : 37] There will be no more sorrow. There will be no more death. And the prosperity that we have will be the riches of the presence of God which will be secure than anything.

He who promised is faithful. He has taken hold of us in Christ. And so the exhortation to hold fast is rooted in God's faithfulness and his taking hold of us in Christ.

By doing what we could not do and by calling us to himself and by turning our hearts towards him and by allowing us to make a profession of faith, I believed that Jesus is all that I need.

He has done this for us. And that is how we think about him. How do we cultivate this in our hearts?

There are things to do. We're writing a few reasons to learn it out. Chapter 3, consider Jesus. Think on him. Remind yourself potentially of who he is and what he has done for you.

[29 : 02] Chapter 7 talks about boasting in our hope. Friends, do you boast about Jesus? Do you boast that the power of sin and death has been broken?

Do you boast about the fact that if you die, you know exactly where you're going? Not because you have done anything to deserve it. When you boast about something, it's the thing that's captured your affection to this thing everyone knows about you.

draw near to Jesus. Seek him. Seek him in personal devotions. Seek him in regular Bible reading.

Seek him corporately by coming and being together with his people, reminding us of the work that Christ has learned.

And finally, we have a gospel in chapter 12. Look to Jesus, the author and effector of our faith, who through the joy set before him endured the cross, despising his shame, and now seated at the right hand of God the Father.

[30 : 26] Friends, it's possible to do this. Chapter 11, the will remind us of those who died in faith, having not received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

These people who speak with us make it clear that they're seeking a better homeland, a different homeland, to seek a better country that is a heavenly one.

As I was poking around, I found a story of a woman on her blog. Her name is Starry.

She lived in England. She died last December of Hodgkin's lymphoma. Last month before she died, she wrote this.

One thing I noticed, though, she's kind of got a funny grade writing, so bear with me. One thing I noticed, though, is that people will always tell me how faith and hope, it's an interesting concept, faith and hope, that is.

[31 : 40] It's interesting because the real and more important question is what should the object of my faith be revealed? What am I asking for faith and hope in?

God, my faith and hope are firmly rooted in God. That does not mean that I'm praying and asking God to keep me alive. Having faith and hope in God is knowing that your salvation is safe.

I know where I'm going. We've all got died at some point and of something. For me, that's what it means to have faith and hope.

God loves me. He knows how hard this life is. I want to go home and have every tear wipe away. For my eyes, here in time, be well done, good and faithful servants.

Welcome home, my child. Let's pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[32 : 45] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Lord, we want to repent this morning looking for satisfaction in this moment for thinking that these 70 years are the son of our lives.

For you have created us for eternity. Create us for eternity with you. Lord, you have done all that we need in Christ and that that may be ours.

We need you right now. Lord, I pray that you would help us to live with you. Help us to hold fast.

[33 : 59] Help us to hold patience. Lord, you are faithful. Lord, you do this. Lord, we pray to Jesus. Lord, we pray to Jesus.

It's fitting to end the sermon on hope with the table. When Paul writes to the Corinthians about the Lord's table, he reminds us that this is a table of remembrance.

We remember back to what Christ has done, but it's also a table of remembrance where we look forward and making fun real and making fun real of all the things that he hoped for.

He said, for our sake of the Lord, but I also delivered to you that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, this is my body, which is for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. And in the same way, also, he took the cup after supper, saying, this cup is a new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

[35 : 27] Or as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. We live in the between times where the pastor of Christ that secured a certain future for all of our in Christ is able to give us hope today to persevere in faith.

To persevere in cherishing, serving, and worshiping in Christ. And that's what we celebrate here. Let me ask those who are going to serve and come forward.

And as they come forward, let me just say, if you're here this morning and if your hope has not been in security in Christ, if you don't know if that's where your hope is yet, we pray that you can just let these pass by.

Let these pass by so that you can spend time considering what it is that would mean the body and blood of Christ that was shed for your sin and broken for you so that you might turn by the meaning of Christ have access to God so think on these things.

But if you're here this morning and you know that Christ is your hope, even if your hope has been wavered, take hold of this as a reminder of the certainty of what God has done and the certainty of the future for all He's seen Jesus Thank you.