

The Resurrection of the Dead

by Anton Bosch

This sermon delves into the profound topic of the resurrection of the dead, emphasizing the importance of understanding the hope and comfort that believers have in the resurrection. It explores the transformation believers will undergo, both physically and spiritually, to be like Jesus and stand in the presence of God. The sermon highlights the necessity of laying hold of the hope of the resurrection as an anchor for the soul, contrasting the unshakeable nature of heavenly hope with the uncertainties of the world.

Scripture: Hebrews 5:12, 1 Corinthians 15:1, John 14:1, Acts 24:15, 1 Peter 1:3, 1 John 3:2, Hebrews 6:17

Topics: "Resurrection", "Hope in Christ"

Description

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Transcript

So we're still in Hebrews chapter 6 verse 2, and I think this is about the fifth time we're in the same verse. So let's read from verse 12, Hebrews 5 verse 12, through chapter 6 and verse 3. Hebrews 5 verse 12, For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God, and have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.

But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith towards God. Of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

And this we will do if God permits. So we've come to verse 2f, I think, which is the resurrection of the dead. So we've dealt with repentance from dead works and faith towards God.

We've dealt with the four baptisms. We dealt with the laying on of hands last week, and now the resurrection of the dead. And this is a huge subject.

Again, it's impossible to cover it all in one session, but at the same time we want to give an overview. And then, obviously, we've covered this in great detail at other times in speaking on Thessalonians, speaking on 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and other passages. So you can look up those passages and then listen to the recordings for those who have access to the recordings.

So the resurrection of the dead. Notice he doesn't just say resurrection, but the resurrection of the dead. Now, obviously, 1 Corinthians chapter 15 is the chapter on the resurrection.

And we could probably spend five or six weeks just in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. I'm not going to do that. I'm going to give you a quick overview, but I want to just focus on the first four verses first, because in this we find that the resurrection and the gospel are synonymous.

The resurrection, you have no gospel without the resurrection. And, of course, Christianity is the only faith that has a resurrection. All other faiths have some kind of hope of an afterlife.

Either you die and you come back again at a higher level and so on, but no one has any guarantees that those things will happen. No other faith has evidence or proof that it actually works, that there is an afterlife, that there is something beyond the grave. But we have proof in the form of Jesus' resurrection, as we'll remember that next week being Easter Sunday, Easter weekend.

So we'll come back to the subject then. And so our faith is not in a hope so, or in a maybe, or in a theory, but our hope is in something that has been proven, that Jesus rose on the third day from the dead. And so because He is living, because He lives, we will live also.

So in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul says that this is central to the gospel. Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. So he says this is the heart of the gospel.

We've spoken about this passage so many times. For I delivered to you, first of all, that which also I received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and He was buried, and He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. So this is the gospel.

The gospel is not God has a wonderful plan for your life. The gospel is not for spiritual laws. The gospel is that Jesus died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again on the third day.

Now if we go through Corinthians, and I'm just going to go through it very, very quickly. If you have your Bible with you, it may be helpful to look through the chapter. But the first four verses tells us that this is the certainty of the gospel.

Verses 5 through 11, He gives us proof for the resurrection, mainly in the form of eyewitnesses. And remember that the eyewitnesses are important, because many of those eyewitnesses were killed, martyred for their faith. So many people testify to all sorts of crazy things these days.

I can't believe the nonsense that people propagate, particularly in the political arena. Oh, this happened, that happened, the other thing happened. The problem is that there are no witnesses to these things.

Oh, I heard someone else say this or that or the other thing, but there is no witness. If you can find a witness, the problem is that if you threaten those witnesses with death, they will recant. They will say, no,

it was just a joke, or whatever.

Nobody's going to die for a lie. Nobody's going to die for something that they know is not the truth. But these witnesses that Paul quotes in these verses, a lot of them died for the faith, and died because of the resurrection.

We'll see in some of the verses that the resurrection was a real problem for the Jews and for the Romans. And so you can say, well, you know, Jesus was raised from the dead. I saw him raised from the dead, but are you willing to put your life to it? That's the question, and that's the point that Paul makes, is yes, these people were willing to put their life to it.

They were willing to lay down their lives for this truth that Christ was raised from the dead. So that's verses 5 through 11. Verses 12 through 19, he defends the resurrection.

Verses 20 through 28, he shows that the resurrection is essential to our salvation, that without the resurrection, we are yet in our sins, and Christ died in vain. Many good men have died. Many martyrs have died.

Many people have died in the place of someone else, trying to save someone from drowning, or from a fire, or whatever it is. But none of them have been raised from the dead. So Jesus was the one who laid down his life for us, and who was raised from the dead.

And so it is essential to our salvation, he says. And then verses 29 through 34, he gives us more arguments, more proof for the resurrection. And some of those arguments are a little bit difficult to follow.

As I say, I suggest that you listen to the series that we dealt with that, and study the chapter. Verses 35 through 49, the question is, what will we be like in the resurrection? That's the question that everybody wants to know. Are we going to have wings? Are we going to be looking down on people down here on earth? Those sorts of questions, and he answers some of those.

And then verses 50 through 53, why do we need new bodies? Why doesn't he just resurrect us spiritually? Why does he give us new bodies? And we know that this is part of the resurrection. We're going to see some of this later on, when we speak about the mechanics of how this happens. And so we're not going to be raised spiritually, which some faiths have this idea, that yeah, we'll have an afterlife, but we'll be like spirits floating around.

No, we will be physically raised from the dead. Jesus was physically raised from the dead. And you remember that when he appeared to his disciples, some of them said, no, this is an apparition, this is a ghost or a spirit.

And Jesus says, come and feel me. A ghost or a spirit does not have flesh and bones like I have. And so he invites them to come and feel that he is real and genuine.

And he even eats some food to show them that he is not an apparition, he is not a ghost. And then verse 54 through 58, he speaks about the final victory. So that whole chapter, 58 verses, all deal with the resurrection.

And I wish I had time to go through this in detail, but then we'll still be in Hebrews chapter 6, verse 2, for another six months. And we need to move on. All right, now the next thing I want to deal with is that there

are two resurrections.

And I'm now speaking about resurrections for people, not Jesus' resurrection, because obviously his resurrection is the prototype for our resurrection. But then the Bible teaches two different resurrections. And this is something that many Christians have never even thought about, so let me show you a few scriptures.

John chapter 5 and verse 28 and 29. Do not marvel at this, for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear his voice. And come forth, in other words, be raised out of the graves, speaking about the bodies, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, those who have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation.

So he's saying everybody who has died will be raised. We speak about part of the gospel is eternal life, God so loved the world, whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal or everlasting life. And so we say, well, everlasting life is something which belongs to those who are born again, those who put their faith in Jesus.

No, in fact, everlasting life belongs to everyone, everyone will have eternal life. The question is simply where are you going to spend that eternal life? And so he's saying that there are these two resurrections, the resurrection of life, and then those who have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation. Two different resurrections.

In Acts chapter 24 verse 15, Paul says, I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both for the just and the unjust. And he's basing this on the Old Testament. So there's a resurrection for the just and for the unjust.

In Revelation chapter 20 verse 4, And I saw thrones, and they sat on them. Judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshipped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads and their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Now, there's a lot of important and complicated stuff there, but the point of this verse is simply, or that I want to highlight this evening, is that they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. Then he says in verse 5, But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

The first resurrection is the first one he's referred to in the previous verse. So he is saying then that there is a first resurrection and then a period of a thousand years, and then there is a second resurrection, a thousand years between them. Obviously we know that a thousand years is what we call the millennium, or the thousand years of peace.

Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with him a thousand years. Now here's a very interesting and important point that the book of Revelation makes.

Notice he says, Blessed and holy is he who has part of the first resurrection. That's the resurrection of life. Over such the second death has no power.

Now just hold on to that thought, because we're going to come back to that in a few moments. So he's speaking about a first resurrection and a second resurrection, but in the second resurrection he is saying it is also called the second death. So why is it called the second death? Because they are raised to die, but not to die in the sense of expiring and of there being nothing, but they are dying in the sense that they are in hell, and this is eternal death.

So they are dying all over and over and over for all of eternity. But just remember that idea of the second death. All right, Revelation 20 verse 11.

I saw a great white throne, and him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which are written in the books. Now, remember in the previous verse he speaks about the second death.

Over such the second death, Revelation 26, has no power, but they shall be preached unto God. Then he says, I saw the dead, small and great. Now, these are, if you read Revelation 20, I'm just taking isolated verses because of our limited time, but if you read Revelation 20 carefully and try and put things in its proper order, what you'll see is that he's speaking here about those who were resurrected at the second resurrection, just before, at the end of the thousand years, I'll show you a chart in a moment, at the end of the thousand years, and before the great white throne judgment.

But he refers to them as the dead. Why are they the dead? Because they are, even though they have been resurrected, they are sentenced to death. Remember when we dealt with the book of Revelation with this verse, we spoke about the fact that those who are on death row, when they march to the, or walk them to the place of execution, they say, dead man walking.

He is walking, but he is dead, because the sentence is hanging over him. It just needs to be applied. And so, these people are, we have passed, the scripture says, from death into life.

That's the, we're not waiting for eternal life, we already have eternal life. The body needs to be changed, but we have no, there is no death for us. They simply, being absent from the body, Paul says, for the believer is to be present with the Lord.

And that, he says, is far better. So, the believer has passed from death into life. Those who are unsaved are the dead, and they are always dead, whether they're walking here on earth, or whether they're in the grave, or whether they've been resurrected at the last day, they are still the dead, because they have no hope, and they have no eternal life.

Verse 13, and the sea gave up the dead who were in it, and death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one according to his works. Then death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

This is the second death. So, remember, we saw the second death earlier on, now he's saying, what is the second death? The second death is when death, the idea of death, is cast into the lake of fire, and Hades, the place of keeping, where the unbelievers are in the heart of the earth, that is cast into the lake of fire. Remember that the devil has already been cast, and the false prophet and the antichrist, they have already been cast into the lake of fire.

This is eternal hell, or Gehenna. This is the second death. And anyone not found, written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire.

Notice the book of life. So, it's very clear when you see, he's speaking about the book of life and the dead, and the second death applying to them. All right, so now, how does the resurrection, how does it happen? And I want to spend a little bit of time on this.

I know we've gone over this before, but there are concepts that some of us struggle to grasp and struggle to remember. Now, remember that man is made up of three parts. A body, a soul, and a spirit.

We're not going to deal with the spirit. Let's just deal with the body and the soul to keep it simple this evening. The soul is the real me who lives inside of this body.

Paul speaks about my body as being a tent or a tabernacle. It's a thing I live in, and it's a thing in which I find my expression. But when we die, we know what happens to the body.

It goes into the grave, or it gets cremated, or it gets thrown in the sea if you get buried at sea, or whatever. The body decomposes. The soul goes, for the believer, goes to be in the presence of the Lord.

And there we're waiting for the resurrection. So, the problem with 1 Thessalonians 4 is that it's easy to confuse these things. So, let's have a look then.

For the Lord himself would descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God. Now, this is what we call the rapture. The rapture and the resurrection happen simultaneously.

When Jesus comes in the rapture, remember that there would be two kinds of Christians. Not good ones and bad ones, but living ones and dead ones. Our brother Henry and others of the faith who have died and passed on.

And so, they obviously need to be dealt with separately. What happens with those who have already died, and then those who will still be alive when he comes. And it doesn't matter when he comes, there will always be Christians alive on the face of the earth.

If he comes tonight, if he comes in a thousand years, it doesn't matter. There's always going to be these two groups of people. So, the Lord descends from heaven.

Then he says, at the end of the verse, and the dead in Christ will rise first. In other words, those who have died as believers. Remember that death is the final judgment, the final decision as to our salvation is made at the point of death.

There's a separation that happens at that point. Those who belong to Christ go to be with the Lord. Those who do not belong to him go into Hades.

Alright, so the dead in Christ will rise first. Now, what is he speaking about here when he speaks about the dead in Christ? Is he speaking about their souls? No, their souls are in his presence. We'll see that in a moment.

So, he's talking about the bodies of those who've died in Christ. Now, I know that this creates all sorts of problems. We say, well, you know, if the guy's been dead for thousands of years, there's nothing left.

Well, if he's able to raise the dead, that's no problem for God. And that's not my concern, as to where and how he's going to reconstitute the body. Now, just for those who are technically inclined or theologically inclined, we do not believe in what is known as annihilationism.

This is taught by Jehovah's Witnesses, amongst other things. And that is that when we die, we just cease to exist. Then at the resurrection, God recreates us out of his memory.

No, David says, in my flesh, I will see the Lord. In my flesh, I will see the Lord. And there are a number of other scriptures in the Old Testament where the saints had this assurance that this body will stand before God one day.

All right, so the bodies that are dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, notice he says we. So Paul was expecting to be alive when the Lord returned.

So we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them. Who's the them? Those who've died and now being resurrected to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

So those who are dead Christians, this does not deal with unbelievers. This is only dealing with Christians. So the Lord comes.

He doesn't come to earth, but he appears in the sky. There's a trumpet sound. And he says that those who have died in Christ, their bodies are raised.

Those who are alive, they are caught up together. So together we go to meet the Lord in the air. Notice, then we who are alive and remain, obviously at that time, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

Incidentally, it's becoming very popular for people to say there is no such thing as the rapture. Well, I don't understand what they do with this verse, because clearly it speaks about the Lord's second coming and where he will come to Israel, to Jerusalem, and he will come to the Mount of Olives, and the events of the last days will all happen. He's physically going to be coming down to earth.

Here he's not physically coming to the earth. He says he's going to catch us up to meet him there in the air. It's plain.

It's simple. All right, so verse... Oh, okay. I think I missed out a verse there.

All right, so he also speaks about the fact that he will bring the spirits or the souls of those who have died with him. So let me get to the chart. I'm not sure how well you can see.

So what happens here, and so this is the point of the first resurrection. So the Lord descends, and those who have died in Christ are raised. Those who are alive, their bodies are changed.

So here's one of the things that happens at this point, is that those who are raised from the dead receive what we call a resurrection body. It's different to... and that's what Paul deals with in 1 Corinthians 15. There are similarities, but there are big differences.

One of the differences is that that body will never age. It will never grow old. It never gets sick.

It never dies. It is an eternal body. That's what Jesus had when he was raised on the third day.

Remember, he could go through the wall because they closed the doors because they were scared, and they were eating their meal, and Jesus comes through the door. And that's why they said, oh, he's a ghost. And they said, no, no, no, come and feel me.

So what we can see is that there are... that this is a different kind of animal, a different kind of body that we will have. And that's what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15. He says that the sun and the moon, there are similarities, but there are differences, huge differences, between the moon and the sun.

There are differences between animals that walk on the earth and birds that fly. There are some similarities, but there are massive differences between them. And so he is saying that the resurrection body that we're going to have, there will be similarities to the ones that we have now, but there's going to be huge differences.

All right, so let's get back to the chart. So at this point, the dead are raised. Those bodies are instantly transformed into these glorious resurrection bodies.

Those of us who are alive don't die, but we are changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, as the scripture says. So instantly we are changed, and we receive our resurrection body. So by the point... and obviously all of this takes the twinkling of an eye, a nanosecond, literally.

But in that time, we are changed, if we're alive at that point. The dead are changed, and the Lord will bring the souls of those who have died with him. And the bodies and the souls are reunited, and then it says, so will we ever be with the Lord.

And now, I'm not going to deal with what happens after that. But down here on earth, we have seven years of great tribulation. This is not to scale, obviously.

And then we have the thousand years of peace. I'm sorry for those who can't see this side. So we have the seven years of tribulation in this period here, and then this is a thousand years.

If I did it to scale, we'd have to go around there somewhere. And so, at the end of the thousand years, those who died without Christ remain in the grave. They are then resurrected at that point, and we have the great white throne judgment, which we saw.

And then after that, it says they are cast into the lake of fire. All right, I trust that that helps a little bit. We'll look at this chart, or maybe a similar one next week when we speak about eternal judgment, because what we have here is we have a judgment here, and we have another judgment here, but that's for next week.

All right, let's get back to Acts 23, verse 6. Now, the resurrection is our hope. And remember, we've said this so many times, it's not hope in the sense in which a few million people have some kind of hope of winning the lotto. It's not that kind of hope.

This is a sure thing. He's using the word hope in the sense that there is something definite which is encouraging us, that we're looking forward to. That is what keeps us going.

Remember, when we spoke about suffering, baptism into suffering, that Jesus, for the joy that was set before him, and Paul touched on this on Sunday as well, the joy that was set before him endured the cross, so there was a hope in front of him. The hope was the joy of purchasing for himself a bride and of

the church. Those were the things that kept him going through, and so we have a hope.

All right, so Acts 23, verse 6. And when Paul received that one of the part was Sadducees and the other Pharisees, so Paul is brought before the Sanhedrin, and some of them are Sadducees who, you remember, don't believe in the resurrection, and others are Pharisees who believe in the resurrection. He cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged. Now, let's not get into all of the other details, but notice he says the hope and the resurrection of the dead.

The resurrection from the dead is our blessed hope. Acts 24, verse 15. Paul again, I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust, the two different resurrections.

So he's saying this is our hope. In 1 Peter 1, verse 3, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. There are, in fact, many, many scriptures in the New Testament that use the idea of hope and resurrection together, that our hope is in the resurrection.

So our hope is not to win the lotto. Our hope is not in having our guy in the White House, or in retirement, or in some kind of bonus, or some kind of great event in this world. No, our hope is in the resurrection.

Unfortunately, too many Christians have their hope in this world, and they are disappointed, as we'll see in a moment. 1 John 3, verse 2. Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it is not yet revealed what we shall be, but we know that when he is revealed, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself just as he is pure.

So look again. So he's speaking about the fact that when he is revealed, we will be like him. Speaking about, remember on the chart, when he comes, he changes us, and he makes us to be like him.

Now when we are changed, we are not just physically changed, but we are spiritually, emotionally changed. We can't go into heaven, and Paul deals with this also. One of the reasons we need the resurrection is because these diseased bodies can't go into heaven, because heaven is a perfect place.

And you take a body that is diseased, and of course all of our bodies are diseased. We all have some kind of sickness or the other. And even if we're perfectly healthy, we have the sentence of death in our DNA.

Our DNA has determined that we will die at a certain point. And those of us who are older are very aware of the fact that every day you're a little weaker, every day you hear a little worse, every day you see a little worse, every day you're a little bit more tired. We're heading that way.

When we're young, we don't notice that, because we reach sort of a peak when we're 30 or something, and then the slide down begins. And so to take a body like this and to translate it into heaven would be crazy, because it doesn't make heaven heaven. Because what's the point of being in heaven and you're sick and you've got pains and aches and all of these kinds of things? So we need a new body.

But we also need to be transformed, because one of the things that we struggle with, we ought to be struggling with as Christians, is the problems with temptation and sin. And we all have flawed natures that we have inherited, that we brought with us from our old life, and that spoils life, that spoils our relationship with the Lord. And we ought to be struggling against the flesh all the time.

Paul speaks about the war between the flesh and the spirit. Well, if we take that into heaven, well, it's not going to be a great place either, because the problem is our internal struggles invariably spill over to other people, and we involve other people in our arguments and our fights and our pride and our nonsense. And so these things all have to be dealt with.

So we're not just physically going to be changed, we're also going to be, our souls will be changed, and we will be like Jesus. Now, it doesn't mean we're going to be God, but we will be like him in his holiness and in his purity. All of the stuff of sin will be finally dealt with.

And so he says, it is not yet revealed what we shall be. In other words, what Paul says, we have some ideas, but we don't really, God has not revealed it to us fully. And in fact, John says in his gospel that eye has not seen, ear has not heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those who love him.

So we can't even begin to imagine how glorious it's going to be. But, he says, we know that when he is revealed, in other words, when Jesus appears in the sky, we shall be like him. We're going to be changed to be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

There's one of the other reasons, and I need to draw to some kind of conclusion, but there's one of the other reasons why we need to be changed. We cannot see God in our human body, with our human messed up emotions and character and personality, because God's holiness will consume us. I think I've used the example before, in the Air Force in the old days, they used these massive searchlights to find airplanes that were bombers that would come over.

In the Second World War movies, you'll see this all the time. Now they use them when they open a mall or something. But they're massive arc lamps, about ten feet in diameter, and they shoot up thousands of feet into the air, very, very bright.

And I remember watching moths fly into, not even where the flame is, because there's glass over that, but just flying into the beam of light, and just being vaporized, just like that. There's no ashes, there's no nothing, they're just instantly vaporized. And if we had to appear in God's presence, in our present bodies, we would be vaporized like those moths are vaporized.

And so we need new bodies and new souls in order to stand his presence, to be fireproof, if you will, to be able to be in his holiness, and not to be consumed. Because remember that no man will see the Lord and live. In other words, you can't survive the experience.

People who tell you they've seen the Lord know they lie. And we know Paul said, well, I was caught up and I saw certain things, and Moses saw certain things. But remember that even Moses, who probably had the greatest experience of seeing God, even though he had spent 40 days and 40 nights, and then again another 40 days, 40 nights up in the mountain, in the presence of God, he still says, Lord, I want to see you.

So he never really saw God. And then you remember God says, well, I can't show you myself. But what I'll do is, I will put you in the cleft of the rock and I'll pass by, and then he says, when I pass by, I'll take my hand away and you can see.

The afterglow. You can see the backside of me as God sort of fades in the distance. That's as close as Moses, who was the man who talked with God in a very real way, far more than any of us ever probably

do.

And so we need these things to be able to be in heaven, and we need to be able to be in his presence, and to see him face to face, because he says, for we shall see him as he is. Remember, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13, we're now seeing through a glass, darkly. We're looking through a very ancient kind of mirror, and we're seeing something about God, but we really can't see him for what he is.

But on that day, we will be able to see him as he is. And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself just as he is pure. Now, there's a consequence.

There must be an outworking of the teaching of the resurrection of the dead. If we really have this hope, then John is saying that everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself just as he, as God, is pure. So, if we believe in the resurrection, it must change our approach to sin.

It must change the way we see being holy. And then in Hebrews, and I'm going to go through this very quickly, because we're going to get there in time, in Hebrews chapter 6, later on in the same chapter, Hebrews chapter 6 and verse 17. Thus God, determining to show more abundantly as a promise, the immutability of his counsel confirmed it by an oath.

Let's not get tied up in all that. That by two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. So, remember, what is the hope? The hope is the resurrection.

That's our hope. Now, he says, what does this do for us? We have strong consolation. Consolation, comfort.

And so, the hope of the resurrection gives us comfort. What is it that causes the martyrs to be able to deal with the pain and the suffering as they are killed for the faith? They are comforted by the hope of the resurrection. If there is no resurrection, Paul says we are of all people most miserable.

We have nothing if there is no resurrection. But because there is a resurrection, we can be comforted. We can be comforted in our weaknesses when we struggle with sin.

Remember, this is one of the themes in Hebrews. When we struggle with sin, we can have comfort, because one day I will no longer struggle with sin. When we struggle with losing loved ones to death, we can be comforted, because there is hope that we will see them again.

There is hope that there is eternal life. As we get older and older, and as we see our lives fade from us, we have comfort and we have consolation in the hope of the resurrection. But notice, he says, we might have strong consolation.

Not just comfort, but strong consolation. Comfort. Who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope that is set before us.

Again, just an important aspect here is that we need to lay hold of. When you lay hold of something, you grab it with all that you have. I think we've all seen these crazy people on Black Friday.

When they find that big screen TV that they've been sleeping on the sidewalk for, for two days, and they grab that thing, and they lay hold of it. And nobody's going to get it away from them. Now, he's saying, we have fled for refuge to lay hold of this hope that is set before us.

You know, they grab those TVs, or whatever it is that they find in the store. We have something far greater. We need to grab that thing, that hope that we have.

We need to lay hold of it, the hope that is set before us. And then, this hope we have as an anchor for the soul, both sure and steadfast, which enters the presence behind the veil. And so, we've spoken about this verse many times.

We'll get back to here when we get this far in Hebrews chapter 6. But that surety that we have, the hope that we have, is not in this world. Because everything in this world is shaking. Everything in this world is changing.

The value of the dollar is changing all the time. Every time we go to the grocery store, we can't believe how much more everything costs. Every time we go to the gas station, it costs more and more.

This is just the way it is. The country is not getting any better. No country is getting better.

Crime is going up everywhere. Corruption is going up everywhere. Inflation is everywhere.

There's war. There's all sorts of troubles going on. If you have your hope set in this world, you will be disappointed.

And your life will be insecure. You'll be going up and down. As your pay packet goes up and down, as the stock market goes up and down, as the crime statistics in the city go up and down, depending on the politics, whether your guy's in the White House or not in the White House, everything is moving all the time.

Nothing is sure and steadfast. No, the hope we have is an anchor, and that anchor is not in this world, but the anchor is in heaven itself. Heaven does not move.

Heaven is unshakable, immovable, sure, and steadfast. And that's where our hope is. Our hope is not here, but it is there.

And it enters the presence behind the veil, and that speaks about death. We're the forerunner, Jesus. Now, remember we said that he is our prototype, but he's also the forerunner.

He's the one who goes before and shows the way. So, he has shown the way through death, into the resurrection, and into the presence of God. And we're going to go the same way.

We're going to die. If Jesus doesn't come, we're going to be resurrected, and we're going to be brought into the presence of God. So, he is the pathfinder, the pioneer, who goes ahead and shows the way.

So, the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become a high priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek. Father, we pray that you'd help us understand. Lord, we've covered so much ground this evening.

There are so many concepts, Lord, that may be new and strange to us. I pray that you'd help us to just spend time in your word and to grab hold of these ideas, and, Lord, to come to terms with them. Lord, this is important for us to understand the hope that we have, because, Lord, we live in a world which has no hope.

Lord, for two years now, over two years, the world has hoped for the day that the virus will go away, and it still has not gone away. And many are losing hope, because it seems that nothing is changing. Lord, we have our hope in all sorts of things in this world, and we're just disappointed.

Day after day after day. But, Lord, we thank you that we have a hope in the resurrection. Lord, that one day everything will be changed, everything will be different, and everything will be made new.

And so, Lord, we thank you for that glorious hope. And, Lord, we thank you that it is not an if or a maybe or a vague hope, but it is a sure and a steadfast hope in that which Jesus has proven, that he is the forerunner, that he has gone ahead before us and proven that this is true. And so, Lord, help us to grab hold of this hope, that it may bring stability into our lives, I pray, in Jesus' name.

I pray that you'd go with us, keep us, and bring us together again safely on Sunday or Saturday, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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