

# Hope

by Gareth Evans

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*Gareth Evans' sermon emphasizes the certainty of Christian hope and the importance of prayer for Muslims during Ramadan.*

**Duration:** 36:34

**Scripture:** Ephesians 1:17, Hebrews 6:1-11

**Topics:** "Hope"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the topic of hope and expresses his excitement about the things of God. He emphasizes the importance of being excited about Jesus and the hope we have in Him. The speaker criticizes a sermon he heard about hope, stating that it felt empty and lacked a true understanding of Christian hope. He then delves into the Greek language and how it offers a clearer understanding of the concept of hope. The speaker concludes by urging the audience to be diligent in seeking the full assurance of hope and to inherit the promises of God through faith and patience.

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## Transcript

As each week during this month of Ramadan, I want to remind you what Audrey has already done concerning our prayers for Muslim people. I had the privilege of working in Africa for four years among Muslim people. I think it's imperative that the Church of Jesus Christ really take seriously a call to pray through this month when Muslims around the world are focusing on prayer.

And so each week I will be reading to you, for those who do not have these little booklets, just some of the prayer requests that we can be dealing with concerning Muslims in Canada. So maybe as I just read this short list, you'd like to grab hold of one of these things and make this a prayer matter this week. Pray for Sean and Iris, Fayez and Vivian in the Calgary area, rich in Muslims and new immigrants for personal contact.

Pray for wisdom in responding to the many requests for assistance from inquirers. Pray for new believers, even in of friendships and opportunities to share the love of Jesus. There are 40,000 Iranians in the greater Vancouver area.

Pray that Iranians would know Christ and meet together regularly to encourage one another. I have a friend in Australia who was Ayatollah Khomeini's top Muslim Quran teacher who was sent to prison and his colleagues were all executed. Michael, as his name is, managed to escape to Turkey where he met an

Australian missionary.

He gave his life to Christ. He is now in Australia, pastoring a church in Sydney, Australia with over 100 Iranians converted to Christ through his ministry in Australia. He was the top man in Ayatollah Khomeini's government.

He was very much instrumental in getting him released from prison in France, if you remember those days. 40,000 Iranians in greater Vancouver. There is disunity and dissension easily plaguing new Muslim-born believers.

Pray that these new believers may learn how to cooperate and fight against the forces of fragmentation and division. Pray for vision, commitment and boldness among Canadian churches to start weekly fellowships among Muslims. There are 4,000 to 5,000 Afghans of several language and tribal groups in Vancouver.

Two families are known to be believers. Pray for boldness to reach out to their community. Ahmadiyya Muslims are aggressive in defending and promoting Islam to their Canadian neighbours.

They have over 20 mosques in Canada. This is just one sect of Muslims. Pray for their hearts that they will be open to receiving the good news of Christ.

And finally, pray for the following people ministering to Muslims in their cities. Wasby in Vancouver, Wes and Carol, David and Marlene, Albert and Tina ministering in Calgary. Pray for Ed and Joy as they prepare to move to Winnipeg as newly appointed Director of Ministry to Muslims in Canada for Arab World Ministries.

These are some that you can take hold of. And I'm sure there are Muslims who live in Nanaimo. I personally don't know any, but maybe you do.

Maybe your neighbours are Muslim. And I pray that you will take seriously this month the burden to pray for them. Amen? Amen.

I trust that will be true. I pray each day through this. I think it's so important.

I come up here every Friday morning with my goal to be in the office by 10 o'clock. And I like to stay here right through Friday, Saturday, Sunday. And I want you to know I want to be available to you.

Now, the bulletin does not have my telephone number. I have the privilege of having my daughter live in Nanaimo. My son-in-law is with us today.

And I'm going to take the liberty of giving you her telephone number. So if you want to contact me, please take this number down if you want to. And make sure it's in the bulletin next week.

It's 729-0600. I'd love to fellowship with you, or if there are concerns that you have, please call me. I'd love to come and spend time.

I don't want to twiddle my thumb when I come up here. Last night I called another one of the shut-ins, and he was not available for a visit. So I wondered what I would do because my wife was out with Pauline having a good gas and good coffee, I'm sure.

And so I was sitting at home, and so I decided to call Pastor Tim. And he said, I'm by myself. My wife has gone out.

I said, oh, we have two old bachelors by ourselves. How about playing crib? So I went over, and a lovely evening playing crib. If you play crib, I'll come and play crib with you.

We can talk about the Lord while I'm beating you. I cheat a little bit. No, I don't, seriously.

I come up from Victoria, and it's such a privilege to be with you each week. But last week we had a couple came here from Parksville I introduced to you. And this week I've got some very special friends who have come down from Courtenay.

Gary and Debbie, I had the privilege of teaching for three weeks in their church, United Church in Courtenay, last year on the subject of prayer, intimacy with God through prayer. They were a great, great blessing to me in the time I spent there. And they surprised me this morning by turning up in your foyer.

And so make sure, please, at the end of the service that you greet them also. And my last announcement, I mentioned to you the possibility of doing a Christmas cantata, and a small number of you indicated willingness or interest. So I thought that next week is the long weekend, Thanksgiving weekend.

But the following Friday, if we could put that in our diaries, and I'll make sure it's in the bulletin next week, to gather you, and I'd like to run through a suggested cantata. And if there is some of you who would be willing to act as pianists, even if it's only for one rehearsal session, please let me know. I'd appreciate that too.

I can sing all the parts. I can sing, but it's so much nicer when somebody plays the piano. So a week Friday.

Now, I've got to make sure that people understand what I mean by a week Friday. That's 11 days' time. And we can meet you at the church, say, at 7, 7.30. I have to be very careful.

When I became a pastor in Victoria, I remember their first week stand-up and make an announcement and say, Next Tuesday. Only to discover in Canada, next Tuesday means seven days away. Whereas in Wales, next Tuesday means two days away.

And then seven days away is week Tuesday. So I have to be careful how I define it. Week Friday, 11 days' time, the choir will be meeting for the first time.

Let's turn to the Lord's word. Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you truly that your word is a living word.

It has power to transform us. And so I pray this morning, Father, that you will take the words of this weak man and make them living words in each of our hearts. That each one of us this day might leave here with a renewed hope and with a deeper walk with you as our goal, our desire.

So, Father, bless these words of a talkist man, I pray. I ask you in Jesus' name. Amen.

Last week, I attempted to teach you my understanding of faith. The faith that pleases God. The faith without which it is impossible to please God.

And I came to the conclusion, I defined faith for you this way. I define faith as the finger of God or the word of God in the heart of a believer causing him or her or urging him or her to walk in God's will. I believe God is the source of all faith.

The faith that pleases him. It is he who works in our hearts to move us according to his will. The problem is sometimes our hearts are hard and we are stubborn and we do not easily yield to the prodding of God's spirit.

But the meek man, the meek woman, is that person who is moldable, teachable. So when God speaks or when God moves in our hearts, we are pliable and we move with him into the walk of faith. I further define it more succinctly in this way.

I believe it to be an attribute of the heart, not of the mind. And it's evidenced in obedience to the movement of God. As I taught in the Sunday school, the adult class this morning, Jesus once said to his disciples that they have little faith because they long to see a young boy delivered of demonic possession.

Concerning that, he said to them, this kind only comes out by much prayer and fasting. Then he said some remarkable words. He said, if you would face as small as a grain of mustard seed and you spoke to this mountain, it would be moved.

And we look at that and we say, well, that's impossible. No, it's not impossible. It's not at all impossible.

If we speak to that mountain in our own belief, in our own strength, we might be utterly convinced of the things of God. We might be super-Christians number two. No, super-Christian number one was Paul the Apostle.

We might be like Paul the Apostle. And in our strong belief and trust in God, we might say that mountain will be moved. It will not be moved because we speak into it out of our belief system and out of our own self.

But if God said to us, said to you, speak to that mountain, if God said to you, speak to that mountain, and then you spoke, the mountain would be moved, not because of your great belief, but because of your great God. We need to understand that aspect of faith. I want to speak this morning on another one of those three jewels.

We're told by Paul, as I mentioned to you seven times, I find he links these three things together. Most classically, of course, in that wonderful chapter, 1 Corinthians 13 about love. He said, now abide these three, faith, hope, and love.

And he links those three, faith, hope, and love, together at least seven times, I find. And Peter once, I believe them to be precious jewels. But we as Christians really need to grasp onto, they should be the first jewels in our treasure chests.

Faith, hope, and love. Now, we understand love, and I tried to teach last week concerning that jewel of faith. I want to teach this morning concerning hope.

Paul, writing to the Ephesian church, the text that I've taken for my past month, he said, I've heard of your faith. I've heard of your love for one another. Departure by Baptist church.

I've heard of your walk of faith. I've heard of your love for one another. But I pray, says Paul, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ will grant to you wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of himself.

Such knowledge only comes by revelation. So that you might know the hope of your calling. When was the last time you heard a sermon on hope? Very few pastors ever preach on hope.

I once put on my television on a Sunday morning, I was getting ready to go to church, and I won't give names, but there was a very, very prominent, well-known man standing up, and he was going to preach. And I never listened to him, but this day I just left it on, as I'm getting ready to leave the house. And he said, this morning my subject is hope.

I said, ooh, I want to listen to this. I've never heard anybody preach on hope. He said, I believe in hope because I believe in yesterday.

I believe in hope, second point, because I believe in today. The third point, I believe in hope because I believe in tomorrow. Basically, the message was, well, God has been faithful in the past, so I can hope for the future.

I find it so empty. Very nice listening, and he's a very popular speaker, but I find it so empty. Hope, what is Christian hope? Why is it that we don't hear many messages on hope? And I suggest to you it's because the English language, in this case, and in so many other cases, is a very, very poor communication language.

The Greek in which the scriptures are written have many words that we often translate by one single word in English that does not give a clear understanding of those many words. English is not a good language for communication in scriptural truth. And hope is one of those words.

Because we use hope in this way. The weather's pretty nice at the moment, but it's a little overcast. I hope it doesn't rain this afternoon.

But it may do so. Of course, you've got a driving test next week. I hope you pass.

But of course, you may not do so. Not feeling too good this morning? I hope you get better. The truth is you may not.

Hope in the English language always has possibility of a negative response. There's such a word. So when we talk about Christian hope, we don't really want to preach about it because we don't like saying, well, we have a hope, but, you know, it may not be true.

It may not be true. The Greek word *elpis*, translated hope, has no negative possibilities. Absolutely none.

I was teaching this once in a group of people, and there was a Samoan young man present. He came up to me afterwards. He's so excited because in the Samoan language, there are two words for hope.

They use one when there is a possibility of negative results, such as our English word. The other one they only use when there's absolute certainty. And that is the Greek word *elpis*.

Christian hope has got absolutely no negative possibility. That is why the Apostle Paul, when brought before the governor Felix, and later before the king Agrippa, before both men he stood, he had been accused by the Jewish leaders of causing riots and insurrection. They were causing trouble, and they

brought them to these Roman leaders hoping that they would truly punish him, maybe even crucify him as they had used him.

But before both men, Paul's defense, paraphrasing, is this. I count it a great honor, sir, to stand before you. I count it a great honor, King Agrippa, to be brought here before you.

For these men, my accusers, have accused me of causing riots and insurrection. But the real reason I'm standing here, the real reason why these riots and this harmony seems to occur, is because of one thing. It is because of the hope of the resurrection.

Now he's not saying, man, I hope there's a resurrection. No, I've given up a great career, I have a university degree, and I've given all I have to follow this despised group called the way, and their leaders being crucified, and they've been scattered, and people despise them, and I'm known as one of them, man, I hope I haven't made a fool of myself, I hope I haven't been unwise. He's not saying that, but what he is saying is, I know that I know that I know, that one day I shall be with my Jesus.

I know that I know that I know, that Jesus rose from the dead, he conquered death, I know, that's why I'm standing here. All the rest of those honors, and degrees, and fame, and everything, I count it rubbish, because I know him. There is not a question of maybes, in the hope of Paul.

I stand here before you Agrippa, I stand here before you Felix, for the hope of the resurrection, wow! That is what he is saying. So much so that Agrippa says, Paul, you almost convinced me too to be a Christian. That is Christian hope.

That is Christian hope. I took as a text last week, another text is the scripture, and I took it into Thessalonians. I'm going to do the same today, 1 Thessalonians.

I hope you got your Bibles with you. If you haven't, shame on you. 1 Thessalonians 5 verse 8. Since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love.

The breastplate covers the heart, the soul of man, the being of man, the center of man. That is where faith is located. It is not located in the mind, it is an attribute of the heart.

Let us put on the breastplate of faith and love. And for a helmet, the hope of salvation, the helmet covers the mind. Hope is an attribute of the mind.

It is hope that affects belief, or belief that is a part of hope. It is not faith that is associated with belief. Belief in the mind is associated with hope.

We have some churches today called word of faith churches, more commonly known as grab it, grab it, possess it, confess it, possess it, different names. One of the pillars is if you believe strong enough, then God will answer your belief. There's a lot of truth in some of the things they say because they take some scriptures correctly and want to grab onto them and hold them.

Other scriptures, sadly, they often take, I believe, out of context. Health, wealth, and prosperity doctrine. But the truth is they should not be called word of faith churches, they should be called word of hope churches in those things in which they are correct.

Because what they're taking are words of scriptures and they are believing them and acting upon that belief. And that is what hope is. I define hope this way.

Let me come back. I define faith this way, an attribute of the heart, evidenced in obedience. I believe hope to be an attribute of the mind, evidenced in confidence.

Have you met a confident Christian? Have you met a man or woman who knows where they stand in Christ or confident that they sit in a heavenly place and live out that life? Have you met Christians who know they are the children of the king and they live accordingly as sons and daughters of the king? So when they walk through the valleys of darkness, they still know who they are in Christ, confident that he is going to bring them through. But they walk in hope. Not hoping he will bring them through maybe, but confident as they walk with him.

This is the whole theme of John's letter. John who was the beloved disciple. If you read 1 John, I love 1 John, a lovely letter, five chapters long, the whole emphasis of that book is confidence.

He uses the word know, K-N-O-W, many, many times in that book. By this we know that we are sons of God. By this we know that our sins are given.

By the witness of the Spirit of God within us, gives witness with our spirits that we know we are children of God. And then he sums it up with this verse in 1 John chapter 5. He says this, I write to you who believe on the name of the Son of God that you might know, if I asked you this morning how many of you believe you're children of God? How many of you believe your sins are forgiven? I trust every hand would go up. If not, today's the day when you can make that assurance.

But if I said to you, how many of you know? It's rather different. I find most Christians, I mean, I was a physics teacher, so you forgive me for expressions such as most, because I tend to be one who operates in numbers and pictures and patterns. My experience is that most Christians are not walking in confidence in assurance.

I remember the day I was given a book. I was already been a Christian many years. I preached many times as a layman.

I was leading a youth work. I had led a successful youth work. I remember the day when I was in a little camp in Wales, in the caravan, and I'd been given a book by Watchman Mead.

You may have heard of Watchman Mead, a Chinese pastor who was in prison who smuggled a lot of his writings out to his parishioners and his writings became books. Some wonderful, wonderful books. What Shall This Man Do? Changed into his likeness in books by him.

The Normal Christian Life, in which he implies that the average Christian life is subnormal. But he wrote a book. It's only about 90 pages long called Sit, Walk, Stand.

It's based on the book of Ephesians. And I read this little 90-page book, and for some reason I was lying in bed reading it. And I was so thrilled when I finished that that I got out of bed, got myself a pen, and read it again, went right through it, marking right through the entire 90 pages.

His emphasis is this, that in chapter 1 of Ephesians, God has exalted Jesus and raised him far above all principalities and powers. That I knew. I believed that.

But then he went on to say, and you also, Gareth Evans, he doesn't mention me actually, I didn't see it there anyway. And you also, God has quickened and raised up to be seated in heavenly places in Christ

Jesus. And that day, God the Holy Spirit made me understand that I'm seated in heavenly places.

And I began to live in the reality of that. And that reality changed from believing to knowing that today I am seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. That means I can walk through this world with my head held high, not like the bowed head of so many people in this world.

I'm in Christ Jesus, secure, hidden in him. The Father accepts me in the beloved world. Nothing can separate me from his love.

I'm in him, I'm seated in heavenly places. Oh, that's my hope. That transformed me.

That book, I read a book that day. And from that day on, I was able to live in a different level, a different plane in confidence. Christian hope.

So John writes the letters, and if you read through the letter of John, you'll find that his goal always is to develop confidence in his readers. Not the confidence that comes by being persuaded, but the confidence that comes by God, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, granting you revelation in the knowledge of himself so that you might know, so that you might know. Turn with me, please, to Hebrews chapter six.

You ever, you know, when you were young Christians, you ever go to youth meetings and they had one of these competitions, they called out a verse, and the first one to finally get a point, remember? I said, I have the deacons up in front of me, you're the one who gets the first one to find my references. Hebrews chapter six, verse one. Leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us, men and women of Departure Bay Baptist Church, press on to maturity.

Two weeks ago, I spoke about the walk to maturity, coming to know him who is from the beginning. And to come through a stage of young men who become overcomers for the word of God. Let us press on.

We do not need to lay again the foundation of repentance from dead works, of faith, of instruction for washing, laying out of hands, the resurrection of the dead, eternal judgment. We don't need to keep on going back to the foundations. We should be mature enough now, people, so that we have grown from the foundations.

We should know these things, we should grasp them, we should be able to teach them to others. But the writer of Hebrews said, let us press on from that. This is what we're going to do.

This is my goal during my four months with you. This is what we're going to do. Press on from foundational things, if God commits.

Let's go down now to verse nine. Beloved, I'm convinced the better things concerning you, concerning, talks about those in between, those verses. Concerning the things that accompany salvation, though we are teaching this way for God is not unjust, so to forget your work.

And the love which you have shown towards his name, and having ministered and still ministering to the sinners. God is not unjust with that. Verse 11.

For we desire that each one of you shows the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope. My desire for you is that you become a diligent people seeking to come to that place of full confidence, full assurance of hope. So that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises of God.

Hope is inheriting the promises of God. What has God said? Do you believe it? Have you grasped it? Has it become a reality? That is what hope is. Through diligence, perseverance, seeking through faith and patience, walking the walk, waiting upon him.

We might inherit the promises of God. God has made many wonderful promises to us in this world. We are to inherit those.

We are to possess those. They are to become ours, that we live and base our life upon because we've come to the place of not only believing them, but knowing them to be true. What guarantees do we have that God's promises are true? Well, let's continue.

In the next few verses, I'm going to give you three guarantees that you can trust in God's word. The first one is this. When God says something, says a writer, when he made a promise to Abram, he backed it up with an oath.

Have you ever made an oath? When you were kids, you know, you used to say, as God is my witness, oh, I swear by Saul's name, we are encouraged as Christians not to do that. Any of you ever been called as witnesses in a trial? They bring the Bible too. You have to place your hand upon the word.

You're backing up your word by swearing upon the Bible. I'm privileged as a pastor. I don't have to do that.

They allow me not to have to swear upon the Bible if I give testimony, when the privilege is of being a pastor. But we always back it up. But when God makes a promise, and when God says something, how does he back it up? I swear by the heavens? No, he doesn't waste his time doing that.

He made the heavens. He's more permanent, more solid than the heavens are. How does God back up his promise? Well, the word of God says, when he made a promise to Abram, he backed it up with his own name.

So it's not just his word that we have to trust in, but it's his name that backs it up, his whole character backs it up. As though his word isn't good enough, we know his word is good enough. He affirms his word by backing it up with his name.

He made an oath to Abram, and he said, Abram, if my word isn't good enough to you, I want you to know I'm backing it up with my whole character. It's just not my word might fail if it is untrue, but my whole character fails if it is untrue. That's a pretty good guarantee.

So when God says something to us, says our writer, he backs it up with the oath of his own name. I think that's a pretty good guarantee of his word being true, don't you? And then he goes on and says these words. Let's come down to verse 17.

God desiring to show to the heirs of promise the unchangeableness of his purpose, interposed with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, that's his name and his character, his name and his word, we might be able to take refuge with strong encouragement in the hope set before us. Verse 19. My second guarantee is that their hope is like an anchor that's fixed within the veil.

Now, I lived on a ship for four years in Africa, big ship. I think it was 13,000 ton, nine decks, as long as a football pitch, carried 350 passengers or crew. When we came into various countries, we came into dark side, but certain countries like Eastonia were to anchor out.

We were not allowed to anchor ashore. And so we dropped the anchors, big anchors. And the ship would drift around the anchor, but it never drifted away from the anchor.

I told you I live on Foul Bay Road in Victoria. That is because Captain Cook anchored his ship in the little bay when he came to this island. During the night, the ship drifted because the anchorage was poor, small stones.

And Captain Cook is reputed to have said, this is a foul bay! And that's why my road is called Foul Bay Road. If I want to anchor my hope in something, if the word of God promised me or says something to me, and I want to trust in it, I want to know how well that word is grounded, how well it's anchored. Well, first it's anchored in the very name and the word of God.

Second, it's anchored as an anchor within the veil. There is no more permanent, solid, eternal place than within the veil. That's in the very presence of God himself.

That's where my hope is anchored. It can't be anchored more firmly than that. I guarantee that it will hold, it is true.

The third guarantee is the next verse. Because within that veil, I find one has entered who is my high priest. I have a high priest entered into that veil.

And so the word becomes true because right now, at this moment, when God says to me various promises that I take as my hope, he says to me, do you want to believe it? I said, I believe it, Lord. He said, I'm going to back it up by guaranteeing it by my name. My whole character stands behind this.

I'm going to back it up, my son, because it's anchored in the veil. An anchor that will never move. I'm going to back it up, my son, because right now, my son Jesus is sitting at my right hand as a high priest interceding for you.

Wow. Wow. And you say to me that Christian hope is a maybe when God backs it up as a guaranteed thing? You say to me Christian hope is a maybe when it's anchored inside the veil, the very heart of God, where the permanent, the rock of ages stands? That's why hope is anchored this morning.

You say to me that hope is a maybe when Jesus, Jesus, my precious Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father right now making intercession for you and for me. Woo-hoo! Doesn't that excite you? I'm sorry, I get too excited. I'm sorry, I shouldn't get so excited.

Naughty boy, shouldn't get so excited. Don't you get excited about the things of God? What's the matter with the people of God that we can't get excited? I went on the internet yesterday and discovered my soccer team, Cardiff City, is top of the table by five clear points. Wow, I'm so excited.

If that excites me, how on earth can I go through this life without being excited with Jesus? So what's your hope this morning? Paul stood before a gripper and feel it. He said, I'm here for the hope of the resurrection. What's he saying? He said, I know that I know that I know.

How do you know it, Paul? Because the witness of the Spirit within me, God has made revelation to my spirit and I now know that what I believed once has now become a reality. I can't make you, I can't give you hope. I can't make your believing into knowing.

I can't do that, but God does. That's why I said you will. And my prayer for you, dear friends of mine, already friends, friends here in Departure Bay Baptist Church, I pray that you will come to a place of knowing the rock upon which you stand, not just believing.

Let me tell you some of my hope. If I confess my sin, he is faithful and just to forgive me my sin and cleanse me from all unrighteousness. Do you believe that? But do you know it? To know it means that you've experienced it and you're willing to stake your life upon it.

Let me tell you my hope. Nothing, I've said this before to you, nothing, nothing can separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Do you believe that? Do you know it? You see, the man who knows it, the woman who knows it, when they fail yet again, when they feel down, when they go through the valley and all is darkness about them and they begin to doubt and think that God doesn't love them, they stand upon this rock and say, my hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

I know, I know, I know that nothing can separate me from the love of God. That's a statement of hope. So what's your hope this morning? Come on, come on.

Shout out to me what your hope is this morning. Not what you believe but what you know because you've experienced it. It's coming again.

You have a witness within. You have a deep witness within. Oh, we've heard the lessons, we've heard the preaching from the pre-tribulationists and the post-tribulationists and the mid-tribulationists.

We've heard all these doctrines and theories and we believe. But have you had that inner witness of the Spirit of God where you say, I know. That's what hope is.

That's what hope is. Philippians, Paul writes, this is my hope. He who began a good work in you is going to bring it to perfection, fruition, completion.

Do you believe that? Do you believe that God is so interested in you, just you, that day by day he's nurturing you and leading you because he wants to make something very special of you? Do you believe that? Do you know it? Do you believe that though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I can fear no evil because he holds my hand, he's my shepherd? Do you believe that? How many of you have been through great valleys of darkness and death? Do you know it's true? That is Christian hope. In 1 John chapter 2, let me give you my last Christian hope here in just a moment. 1 John chapter 3. Behold how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God.

And such we are. Do you believe that? Do you know it? For this reason the world does not know us because it does not know him. Beloved, now are we the children of God.

It does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know. Not believe. John is talking about those who have come to know because of the inner witness of the Spirit of God.

We know that when he appears, we shall be like him. For we shall see him as he is. Woohoo! I can hardly wait.

And then he says this. And everyone that hath this hope in him purifies himself. You see, we may celebrate, and I might do my little dance.

I don't know if Paul did a little dance. His toga would have been too tight. Maybe, I don't know.

But we might do the little dance. We might celebrate our hope. But the reality is that our hope demands a response.

For he or she who has come to this knowing place where God has made our believing into knowing and given us hope, that jewel, that man, that woman has an imperative to purify himself. To walk a life according to that calling that Jesus Christ might be glorified in us. Amen? I pray that we might become a people of hope walking in this world with our heads held high, confident in our calling and our position as children of God.

That he might receive glory that is his. That Nanaimo might see a people, a strange people, a peculiar people walking in the midst, a people of confidence who have come to know the hope of their calling. The Lord bless you.

We come to the communion table. I'm going to invite the service, the deacons to come forward and join me.

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Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/15/SID15891.mp3>  
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