

In the Hope of Eternal Life

by John Greene

Biblical hope is a sure expectation based on God's promises, which gives us a foundation for perseverance in the face of tribulation and a hope for eternal life.

Scripture: Leviticus 11:44, Psalm 116:7, Psalm 119:49, Psalm 119:81, Psalm 119:114, Psalm 130:5, Lamentations 3:22, Lamentations 3:24-26, Romans 6:18, Romans 16:19, Ephesians 4:22, Colossians 3:9, 1 Peter 1:3, 1 Peter 1:13

Topics: "Eternal Life", "Jesus Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a good hope of eternal life. He explains that a good hope must be based on God's Word, as God cannot lie. It must also be founded upon Jesus Christ and his work of obedience to the law and his sacrifice on the cross. The speaker further emphasizes that a good hope will be evident in a person's life, as they wait for the salvation of the Lord and seek Him. The sermon concludes with a reminder that the Gospel should not be taken for granted, as there will come a day when we will no longer hear it.

Transcript

Not well, but known them for a while and they've been a great blessing. Brother, you've ministered to me many times, times you probably don't even know. And I'm grateful to get to know many of you.

Brother Clint, it's a great joy to be here. I wouldn't rather be anywhere else in the world than right here this morning. Worshipping with the saints, thank you.

You've already testified and preached to me this morning and I've already been blessed to be here and I'm very grateful. I was raised in church, in Methodist church all my life. My family had me in church.

I was also in a very moral family. Maybe some of you were raised Methodist and you know that system. But as a junior high boy, of course I was sprinkled as an infant.

I'm not going to call it baptized, but I was sprinkled as an infant. As a junior high boy I was confirmed into the church. I just grew up believing that I was a Christian and everybody else that went to church was a Christian.

I was a moral young man. I grew up in a little hometown of Mount Pleasant. Went through high school.

I was very involved in sports. I got a scholarship to play football at Baylor University, the largest Baptist university in the world. Went off to school on the top of the world, really, thinking that everything was just great.

Went off to college and fell right in with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes group. Still not knowing really anything of Christ, I was just a religious, moral young man. And I say moral not in the way God would use moral and the way the world would use moral because inside my heart I was full of sin and wickedness and evil thoughts.

And I did my sin in the dark where no one would see it and I kept it hidden pretty well. I graduated from college and I married a girl against my father's counsel. My father, who at the time, I don't really even know if he was a Christian.

He was a very good man. I'm very thankful to God for my father, a good man, a moral man. I love my father.

My father is deceased, but he counseled me against it. And I said, Dad, I know what I'm doing. Just trust me.

This is right. Well, it was all wrong. I'll try to keep this a little briefer, brother.

But I married. I went to dental school. I graduated from dental school.

I went to Longview, Texas and started a dental practice. And my best friend lived in Longview at the time and he invited me to a Bible study on Friday morning. Well, I was religious and on this side, the woman I married was very raised a socialite and in the social scene, but she professed to be a Christian as well, even a Baptist.

And we went to church. But as I began to go to this Bible study and attended a Southern Baptist church there, the Lord sent a messenger to me. I lived in an apartment complex and his name was Alan Richburg.

He was the youth pastor there. And he had gotten to know me through this Bible study and through church. He invited me by his apartment.

He lived in the same apartment complex. And he invited me by one day and I came and sat down with Alan. And he said, you know, John, you say you're a Christian, but I've observed your life and heard some of your speech and it's not consistent with what the Bible says about a Christian.

And that really puzzled me because I was better than many people I knew that professed to be a Christian. Well, the Lord... This is all in retrospect because I didn't really know what was going on at the time. But looking back, the Lord began to use that to convict me of my sin.

I can see what was happening. The Spirit of God was coming and convicting me of sin and of righteousness and of judgment to come. And I see that now.

I didn't see it then. I didn't know what was going on. I just knew all of a sudden my world was beginning to be turned upside down because I had a burden that I never knew about before.

And I began to carry this thing around and it was a heavy weight. And this went on for weeks and weeks and weeks. And I tried to talk to my wife about it and she didn't want to hear any of that because that was

turning over the apple cart.

And so I went back and talked to Alan a couple of times. And he would mainly just listen and shared some Scripture with me, but one day I went by and talked to Alan and I said, Alan, I am wholly convinced that I am a sinner headed for hell. And I said, God's going to put me in hell.

I know it. I don't have any hope. Everything that I put my hope in is falling apart.

And Alan shared the Gospel with me. And Alan said, there's a Savior and you know His name. And He came to die for the ungodly just like you.

If you will turn from your sins. And he was Arminian, but he gave me the Gospel. He said, if you will turn from your sin and put your trust in Christ, He will save you and deliver you and wash you in His own blood.

And I did that. And I came to Christ. And the Lord saved me.

And many of you have learned when the Lord saves you, that is the end of your greatest problem. You are free from your sin, but it's the beginning of a whole new world of trouble. Because when the Lord saved me and I began to try to follow Christ and obey Christ and serve Christ, that was the end of the marriage.

It didn't end immediately. It went on for two and a half years. I was raised in a home where you just don't divorce.

That's just something you do not do. You marry for life. And I didn't want to shame my family.

And I said, Lord, I did this. I'm in this marriage. And Lord, just give me grace.

Help me to go on. Well, for two and a half years I tried. And finally, she would not abide any longer.

And she left me and departed. So we had no choice at that time but to dissolve the marriage. The Lord, in mercy, within a year, I was determined in my heart, I've shamed my family so much, I will never marry again.

I will live single the rest of my life. The Lord had other designs, as He often does. And within a year, the Lord introduced Michelle and I. I was in a parking lot on the way to Dallas with two of my friends from home.

I was going to pick up the car from my ex-wife, my car. We had dissolved the marriage and it was just part of the thing we had to do. And I was sitting in a parking lot and my friends went in to get a drink into the convenience store.

And I looked over and there was a car parked a couple of slots over. And I saw Michelle. And I live in a small town and I'd never seen her or that car before.

And I just took note. It was a pretty girl. She looked shy.

She didn't flirt or anything like that. And I just took note of her. And within about a month, I saw her again and introduced myself to her.

And the Lord, it truly was love at first sight. And the Lord, of course, found out she was a Christian and we fell in love. And within a year, that was in November, and we married in July of 1985.

And the Lord has blessed me with a good wife and wonderful children. And that's my story. It's simple, but it's the grace of God.

You made mention of that verse, Galatians 6.14, God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. And I was thinking about that, brother. When we consider the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, to me, that cross speaks all totally of God's work for His people.

You know, people boast in a lot of things. It's usually something that they've done that they could do, but that's why we boast in the cross because it's the mercy of God not getting what we deserve. And it's the grace of God getting what we don't deserve.

The robe of Christ's righteousness. When I consider the cross of Christ, only in that can I boast and I glory. And yes, in that I must and I will boast and I will glory in that because it's God's work on my behalf.

And it always will be. So brother, can I go on and preach? Everyone here has some kind of hope. I want to speak to you about hope this morning.

Hope is essential. You have to have hope. You can't live without hope.

As large a crowd as this is, there are probably some here who are yet unconverted. You're not saved for various reasons. But I want to say this, everyone here has some kind of a hope that when it's all said and done, everything's going to be alright for you.

It's going to turn out alright. You may not have thought about it that way, but you have some kind of a hope that everything's going to be okay for you. But I want to challenge you all sinner and saint alike to examine your hope this morning and make sure it is a biblical hope.

Because there is a hope that's sure and certain. And that's what I want to direct you to. My text is Titus.

The book of Titus. This is just going to be a springboard for me. We're going to look at a number of verses concerning hope.

But I want to try to paint a picture and build a case for biblical hope that you might be able to examine your own thoughts of hope, your own affections of hope, and make sure this is biblical hope. Because that's the only hope that's going to matter in the end. Titus 1. I'm reading for the King James.

I know many of you don't read the King James. I hope that's not a hindrance or a stumbling block. Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ according or for the faith of God's elect and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness in hope of eternal life which God that cannot lie promised before the world began.

We pray, Father, would You send Your Holy Spirit Lord, all is vain unless the Spirit of the Holy One come. Lord, we need to hear from You. Lord, my prayer, my harsh desire is that no one would leave here this day without a sure and earnest and biblical hope that no one would leave here without Christ.

Lord, help us all. May we prove these things and hold fast to that which is good. In Jesus' name I ask, Amen.

Paul begins this epistle with his credentials. It's very notable for every person here. If you consider the apostle Paul who wrote much of the New Testament, he commends himself first of all not as an apostle.

He was an apostle. But he commends himself first of all as a servant of God. Here's the great apostle Paul.

It teaches me, it ought to teach every one of us, if the highest officers in Christ's church are at best servants of God, where does that leave all of us? This is our highest credential, if you will. We're just a servant of God. And that word, it's *doulos* in the Greek, and I'm no Greek scholar, but it's really literally a bond slave.

He wasn't in bondage to Christ in a negative way. He was in willing bondage. The Lord had made him willing in the day of his power.

He desired nothing else other than serve God. So that's his credentials. He's a servant of God.

He's an apostle of Jesus Christ. A sent one. And he says, according or for the faith of God's elect.

Every man of God that stands behind a pulpit ought to have this as his harsh desire. He's there. This is our purpose.

We're here for the faith of God's elect to bring glory to Christ. We're here to see you come to faith in Jesus Christ, to take heed to the Gospel, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. And not only that, he says, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness.

God has given you much truth. Much more truth than probably many churches out there. But make no mistake, what is that truth for? That truth is after godliness.

Truth is like an arrow. Drawing back that bow and firing that arrow, the aim of truth is always godliness. Because this is your predestination as a child of God.

That you would be conformed to the image of Christ. So that's what truth is all about. And we'll build on that in just a minute.

But he goes on. Truth which is after godliness in hope of eternal life. Which God that cannot lie promised before the world began.

See, the further intent of the Gospel is to create hope in a believer. You've got to have hope. We hear about hope from politicians.

I'm not talking about that kind of hope. I'm talking about a sure expectation. This word hope is the Greek word *elpis*.

And it means a sure expectation. It's not hope like, well I hope I make it to Kansas City this afternoon. I hope my airplane makes it back to Texas.

You know, that may or may not happen. I don't know. I hope it happens.

But that's not biblical hope. Biblical hope is a sure expectation. Paul says in Philippians 1 and 20, I won't read the whole verse, but he says, quote, my earnest expectation and my hope.

So he defines hope right there. Biblical hope is an earnest, a sure expectation. And he defines it right there in verse 2. In hope of eternal life which God that cannot lie.

God promised it. Because God promised eternal life, we can have a sure and certain expectation of it in Jesus Christ. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13 and 13, and now abide faith, hope, and charity or love.

The greatest of these is love. But brethren, let us not discount hope. We don't preach a lot.

I don't think a lot about hope. But hope is vital. Hope is essential in your life.

Faith one day will be swallowed up in sight. But when we see the object of our faith, it will be swallowed up in Christ. And love will abide forever.

That's why it's the greatest of these three. It will never go away. It will just get greater and greater and purer and purer.

But hope, hope will also be swallowed up, but it will be swallowed up in reality. That which your faith is set upon when it comes to pass in reality and you receive the end of your faith, even the salvation of your soul, your hope will be fulfilled in reality. How many people right here hope they're going to go to heaven, but your hope is not a sure expectation? The Bible says in Romans 8, 24, in the Authorized anyway, it says that we are saved by hope.

Can you imagine? I thought we were saved by faith. Well, Hebrews 11 says, faith is the substance of things hoped for. You almost can't separate those two.

It's a razor's edge. Faith and hope are almost the same thing. You're just looking at it from two different aspects.

So I want to help you make sure this morning that your hope is sound. I don't care who you are here, young or old. You have some kind of hope that everything's going to be okay with you.

Your hope better be sound. It better be biblical. Just begin to think in these terms.

2 Thessalonians 2, 16, Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God, even our Father, which hath loved us and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace. Make no mistake, your hope, if it's a good hope, it's through grace. It's not through works.

Every other religion, every other sect in the world has its hope placed in what you do instead of what someone else has done. But our hope, a biblical hope, is through grace. That's a good hope.

Peter begins his epistle, 1 Peter 1, 3. He says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Brethren, our hope is living. It's not in dead works.

It's not in dead people. It's in a living Savior, Jesus Christ our Lord. And then you know the passage in Romans 5, 5, tribulation works patience, patience experience, and experience hope, and that hope maketh not us ashamed because the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

This biblical hope doesn't make us ashamed. So may we make sure as we go through these verses this morning that we have a good hope through grace, that we have a living hope, and that we have a hope that makes us not ashamed. So I have four things to consider this morning.

The question I want to ask, the question I want you to ask yourself, what makes for a good biblical hope? First of all, a good and biblical hope is a hope that you can explain. Brother, I appreciate you inquiring about how the Lord saved us. But that reminds me of 1 Peter 3.15. Peter says, Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you for the reason of the hope that's in you with meekness and fear.

So consider this. If you have biblical hope, you ought to be able to explain it. You ought to be able to give some testimony of why you have this hope.

Now it may be just as simple as I know I'm a sinner. I know that God sent His only begotten Son to lay down His life for sinners just like me and I have turned from my sin and I have laid hold on Jesus Christ as my Savior. That's a good explanation of the hope that you have within you.

But we ought never to be ignorant as Christians. I think of the Pilgrim's Progress. Many of you have read the Pilgrim's Progress.

How many in our day just hope they'll be saved and yet they have no grounds for that hope? If you remember the character in the Pilgrim's Progress named Ignorance. Ignorance, he reached his journey's end and he was carried over the river by Mr. Vane Hope. He made it all the way over the river by Mr. Vane Hope and he made it there without much trouble.

But in the end, ignorance was not admitted to the celestial city. See, no one enters there except those who know what and know whom they have believed. And that's what Paul said, I know whom I have believed.

And I'm persuaded that he's able to keep that which I've committed unto him against that day. So if you have a biblical hope, if you have a sound hope, you will be able to give some account of it and give some reason of it just like all the Scripture writers have. Secondly, and this is essential, if you have a biblical hope, it's a hope that will be drawn from the Scriptures.

It will be drawn from the Word of God. There are many, many verses and I just chose some, but one of them is right there in our text in verse 2 of Titus 1, in hope of eternal life which God that cannot lie promised before the world began. It speaks of God's promises.

Our hope is attached to God's promises. A sound biblical hope must be attached there. And where did God make those promises? He made it through the prophets and the apostles.

They're right here. This contains the promises of God. God which cannot lie promised eternal life before the world began.

Just listen to some of these verses. Psalm 119 is full of them. Psalm 119 verse 49, Remember the Word unto thy servant upon which thou hast caused me to hope.

See the Word? And you caused me to hope on that Word. Psalm 119 verse 81, My soul fainteth for thy salvation, but I hope in thy Word. Psalm 119 verse 114, Thou art my hiding place and my shield.

I hope in thy Word. Verse 116, Uphold me according to thy Word that I may live, and let me not be ashamed of my hope. And Psalm 130 verse 5, I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in His Word do I hope.

I think this brother made mention just a while ago, probably the first song I ever learned in Sunday school. Jesus loves me, this I know. Why? The Bible told me so.

We hope in His Word. God which cannot lie promised eternal life in His Son, Jesus Christ. If your hope is in what God's Word says about you and about Him and about His promises in Christ, that's a good hope.

That's a good hope. So if our hope is sound, we ought to be able to give some reason from the Scriptures. This is why Paul preached.

This is why these men preach here. This is why we exhort you to study, to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth. We all desire that you have a good hope of eternal life and it be founded and based in what God's Word says.

And without reading the Word of God, without studying the Word of God, without hearing the Word of God preached, you will live and you will die in ignorance. And you'll have nothing more than a false hope. Paul there in Acts 20 is charging the elders at Ephesus and he says, I commend you unto God and what? To the Word of His grace which is able to build you up.

It doesn't use the word hope, but that's what it is. The Word of His grace builds you up. It gives you some hope that's real.

Some hope that's not going to pass away. Oh, you young people that are still outside of Christ, if you're putting your hope in anything else, the strength of your body, young men, their strength is going to fail. Your health is going to fail.

Your friends will fail you. Your money will fail you. Anything and everything else in this life outside of what this Word has promised in Jesus Christ will fail you, but He fails not.

He will never fail you. So I do commend you to God and to the Word of His grace which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified. That's a good hope.

And that's a good hope of eternal life. Thirdly, and to me this is most important, and I don't know why I put it third here, but what makes for a good hope? A good biblical hope obviously is one that rests entirely on Jesus Christ. This is in our text in Titus, this is that which God promised that He cannot lie, that which He promised before the world began.

He promised His Son to redeem His people. A couple of books prior to Titus when He wrote to Timothy, He begins His first epistle to Timothy this way. He says, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope.

Yes, our hope. You must be able to explain your hope. Your hope must be drawn from the Scripture, but your hope has to be Christ.

And Paul says to the Colossians, Colossians 1.27, Christ in you, your hope of glory. You don't have any other hope of glory of things turning out right. You have no other hope other than that which is in Jesus Christ.

But in Him, you have a good hope. You have a sound hope, an eternal hope. A hope that fades not away.

So any hope of salvation from our sins and hope of eternal life is not founded entirely in the person and the work of Jesus Christ is that which is built on sand. See, it might look good in times of health and wealth, but it's going to fail in the times of trial and death. Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, and that being Jesus Christ.

His active and His passive obedience. We sing the hymn, My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. You think about what that hymn says.

My hope of everything turning out well for me. For eternity is founded on nothing less than Jesus' shed blood for my sins and His perfect righteousness robed upon me that I might find acceptance with God. Is that where your hope is? You better have a hope.

You do have a hope. You better have this kind of hope. Because it's the only one that's going to stand up.

A decision for Christ. A prayer prayed sincerely. Godly parents.

Godly children. Good deeds. Good doctrine.

Church membership. Water baptism. Taking regularly the Lord's Supper.

All these are good things, but your hope better not be built on any of those things. Your hope must be built upon Jesus Christ. None of those things is a sure foundation.

Those things point to the sure foundation, but they're not the sure foundation. Jesus Christ is. Christ alone is the only true foundation of good hope.

He is the rock. He is a stone. He is a tried stone.

A chief cornerstone. Look quickly at Isaiah 28 and 16. You're familiar with this verse.

Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation of stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation. He that believeth shall not make haste. In these days when they built the building, they had a cornerstone.

And this cornerstone was cut with square walls, precise corners, and it was laid initially. And every other stone in the building was related to that stone. As it was rightly related to that stone, the building went upright, and the building was sound and sure and strong.

So can you see the application for you and I? If your life is rightly related to the chief cornerstone, this precious cornerstone, it'll be built right, and it'll be sound and sure and strong. If you're not rightly related to Him, the building is going to fall. It's not going to hold up.

And in the Authorized, it says, He that believeth shall not make haste. What does another version say there? You're not going to come away from that cornerstone. In other words, you're not going to look for anything else.

You're not going to make haste to go anywhere else. You're not going to be disturbed or taken away from that. You're going to stay right there because you realize as you're rightly related to Him, you're built on a strong and sure foundation.

This is the doctrine of salvation that all true Christians in every age have entirely agreed on. This is the foundation of the believer's hope. Not one saint has ever left this world trusting in his own righteousness.

Christ has been all their confidence. Paul said in Philippians 3.3, We are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in our flesh. All our confidence is in Christ.

That's another way to say all our hope is in Him. I think there's a good example in the Scriptures of this in Luke 18. Luke 18 and verse 9. A very familiar passage.

The word hope is not used in this parable or this story, but it's all in here. It's easy to see it. And Jesus spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves.

In other words, they had hope in something other than Christ. They trusted in themselves that they were righteous and they despised others. Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a publican.

So here are two men going to worship. Here are two men who have hope. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

I fast twice in the week. I give tithes of all that I possess. Now let me just stop there and let's analyze this Pharisee's hope because he had some hope.

The first thing he had hope in was a moral righteousness. He said, I thank Thee that I am not like other men. I am not an extortioner.

I am not unjust. I am not an adulterer. Do we have any extortioners here? Do we have any adulterers here? If you're not, who are you going to thank for it that you're not? You're going to thank God that you're not, right? So is there anything wrong with him thanking God that he wasn't an extortioner or an adulterer? We don't know the truth of the matter.

Maybe he really was. But he said he wasn't and he was thanking God that he wasn't. But the problem is that's where his hope lies.

He thanked God for this moral righteousness he had, but that's where his hope was. It was in his moral righteousness. And he goes on.

He not only had a moral righteousness, he had a religious hope. He had a moral hope and now he has a religious hope. He said, I fast twice in the week.

I give tithes of all that I possess. And he was thanking God that he did that. And in all this, he believed that these gifts, they were from God.

His moral righteousness was from God. His religious righteousness was from God. These things were his hope.

But we can contrast that to the publican. The publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven. But he smote upon his breast.

You ever wonder why they did that? They realized the problem is here. Not in this organ that beats. But they realized it's a problem inside of them.

As David did in Psalm 51. Here's David, a man after God's own heart, and David says, Create in me, what? A clean heart, O God. What do you mean create a clean heart, David? You're saved.

You're a man after God's own heart. David was saved, but David still had another principle within him that he hated more than anything else in his life. He knew it took a work of God in a Christian that he would be holy as he is holy.

And I hope we know that. I'm going to deal with that in just a minute, a little more thoroughly. But you have to know, Christian, you need a constant supernatural work of the Holy Spirit going on in your heart that you might be conformed to the image of God's Son.

We're totally shut up to Him. And I'm going to deal with your responsibility in a minute, but you need grace. We need grace daily.

We need a work of creation constantly in our own heart that we would be clean. But here's this publican. He would not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven, but he smote upon his breast saying, God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

God, be merciful. God, make an atonement for me. God, be propitious unto me.

May there be one that shelters me from Your wrath, O God, is what he's saying. You see the difference between the Pharisee and the publican? The Pharisee looked within himself. He thanked God for what he had in himself, his own righteousness, and he recommended himself unto God.

Not this publican. This publican looked outside of himself unto God to provide for him mercy. And verse 14 says, I tell you, this man, this publican, went down to his house justified rather than the other.

For everyone that exalted himself shall be abased, and he that humbled himself shall be exalted. This publican had a good hope because he looked outside of himself. He looked to God for God to make an atonement for him.

Well, a good hope of eternal life, one you can explain. I hope you remember this. If you have a good hope of eternal life, you ought to be able to explain it.

Secondly, it ought to be that which is drawn from God's Word. You can open up the Bible and you say, this is why I have a good sound hope. Because God who promised cannot lie.

But thirdly, it must be founded upon Jesus Christ, His person and His work, His active obedience to the law for you and His passive obedience at Calvary for you. But lastly, and this is very important, what makes for a good hope? If you look at 1 John 3, the fourth piece of this, the fourth piece of a good, sound, biblical hope is this, brethren. It's a hope that will certainly show in your life.

If you have good, sound, biblical hope of eternal life, it will show in your life. And this is what this text says, Behold what manner of love, chapter 3, 1 John, Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God. That's the indicative. Right now, this is every Christian, now we are the sons of God.

And it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. So if you have this hope in you, this sound, biblical hope that's centered in Jesus Christ, if you have this hope in you, you will purify yourself now.

Your life will be occupied with Christ, but as it's occupied with Christ, it will be devoted and dedicated to being holy as He is holy. To purifying yourself. And I want you to see these two things.

It's a holy paradox in the Scriptures. You have indicatives, and what I mean by indicatives, these things that are absolutely true of every Christian. For instance, now we are the sons of God.

I'm going to cover a lot of these verses in just a minute. You have the indicatives in the Scriptures. What you are, who you are in Jesus Christ, absolutely so.

But you also have the imperatives in the Scriptures. These are things that you must do. In light of who you are, then you have to do this.

And you will do this. And the imperative here is you will purify. If you have this hope in you that you are now a son of God, you will purify yourself even as He is pure.

The transformation begins now, brethren. If our hope is to be like Christ someday, and that's what this passage speaks about, when we see Him, when He comes again or we die and we see Christ, we will be like Him. Because we'll see Him as He is.

If you're a Christian right now, the very best that you are is a reflection of Christ. You're like a mirror. When I see Brother Bob, I see much of Christ.

But it's not Bob. It's in spite of Bob. Bob's a mirror.

But you know what, brethren? In this life, the very holiest saints are mirrors that have lots of smudges on them. But what this passage says is one day when we see Him, the mirror is going to be clean. We're going to be a perfect reflection of Him.

And that's what He says, It does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we'll be like Him. And we're not going to be a god. We'll never be a god.

We'll be like Him in righteousness. We'll be like Him in holiness because everything that hinders us now will be gone. That's our flesh.

That's the human nature that you still have. It'll be gone. And that mirror will be clean and we'll be a perfect reflection of the righteousness of Christ.

But the transformation, brethren, begins now. If our hope is to be like Christ someday, we will seek to be like Him now. Now we are the sons of God.

And everyone that has this hope in him purifies himself even as he is pure. Would you follow with me real quickly? I don't want to take much more time, but this is very essential. Go to the book of Romans.

And I want to show you indicatives and imperatives. And again, indicatives is what you are, who you are now, positionally in Christ, but the imperatives are what you must do now because of who you are. Look in Romans.

Romans 6, verse 6. Here we have an indicative. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him. I won't read the whole verse.

I just want to take that part. Your old man is crucified with Christ. That's indicative.

That's true right now if you're in Christ. But look at verse 11. Likewise, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ.

You have to reckon it so. See, there's the imperative. The indicative is true.

The imperative is so as well. If you look at verse 14, the same chapter. Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but you're under grace.

But if you look back at verse 12, he says, let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body. I thought you said sin shall not have dominion over us. That's the indicative.

The imperative is don't let sin reign over you. You must hold both of them with faith, with all you have. A few more.

Verse 18. Being then made free from sin. I'm a Christian.

I'm free from sin. But look over at chapter 16 and verse 19. A Christian is free from sin.

But verse 19 of chapter 16, the second half of the verse. But yet I would have you wise unto that which is good and simple concerning evil. Colossians.

Just listen here unless you want to follow because I'm going to go even quicker. Colossians 3.9. He says, Lie not one to another, seeing you have put off the old man with his deeds. That's the indicative.

Christian, you put off the old man. He's put off. The deeds of the old man are put off.

But if you look at Ephesians 4.22, he tells you the imperative. The imperative, you know what it is. He says that you put off concerning the former conversation of the old man, which is corrupt.

So the old man's put off. Now put him off. The old man's dead.

Now wake up out of your bed every day and kill him. Die to self every day. The indicatives and the imperatives.

Over and over and over again. I'm going to read a couple more. Colossians 3.10. He says, You have put on the new man, which is renewed and knowledge after the image of him that hath created him.

You put him on. Now you know what Ephesians says. 4.24, he says, Put on the new man.

You put him on. Now put him on. Galatians 3.27 says, As many of you have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.

And then Romans 13.14 says, Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ. Galatians 5.24 tells us, They that are Christ have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. And right where we were, Romans 13.14, Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof.

Well, these things are both true. And we get in trouble when we just camp out in the indicatives. That's where our hope lies.

But if we have this hope in us, and that's what John says, everyone that has this hope in him, these indicatives, these things that are true of you as a Christian, then you will purify yourself even as He is pure. If the indicatives are true in your life, the imperatives will be true as well. So when we get off way over here or way over here, we get in trouble.

And you look around, you see many that are over here, all they preach are the imperatives to the disregard of the indicatives. But you also have the danger of getting over here where we just glory in the indicatives and we pay no attention to the imperatives in our lives. We get in trouble if we do that.

We have to stay on the plumb line, on the straight and narrow, which is Jesus Christ. Because Jesus Christ in His person was grace, full of grace and truth. He was a perfect picture of the grace of God, but He was also a perfect picture of a responsible man.

He kept every jot and tittle of the law. Why did He have to do that? He was sinless. He was perfect.

He did it because He was numbered with the transgressors. He did it because He was standing in my place and in your place if you're a believer. So if we truly have this hope of eternal life in us, it's going to show in our life.

It will make us strive to be holy in all manner of conversation. So again, I want you to examine your hope. I'm trying to examine mine.

If I have good, sound, biblical hope, am I striving to be holy in all manner of conversation? Because if you're not, you need to examine your hope. My hope may not be biblical. It will make you feel a constant obligation.

At the time when the Lord began to deal with me as a lost person, and I began to feel this weight of sin, the only way I could describe it at the time I became aware of God and an obligation to please Him. And the harder I tried to please Him by doing, the heavier that weight got. And when I finally heard the Gospel and it came to me in power, I realized it was not my doing.

I smoked my breath and I said, God, be merciful to me, a sinner. It was someone else's doing. It was Jesus Christ's doing.

But I began to feel that obligation and I still feel the obligation to please God. And I'm glad. I don't want that to pass from me.

I want to feel an obligation to please Him. Part of the promise of the New Covenant, He says, I'll put my fear in their hearts. And I'll cause them to walk in my statutes and judgments and do them and keep them.

So if we truly have biblical hope, we will feel a constant obligation, a constant desire to serve and please God who gave us this hope. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 7 and 1, Having dearly beloved these precious promises, these precious promises from God who cannot lie, having these precious promises, he says, let

us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. That's an imperative, isn't it? That's both of them.

Having these promises, we glory in the cross of Christ, we have these promises. These promises are sure because God cannot lie. But having those promises, then let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit.

You've got to deal with that. Filthiness is not just what you get on your skin. It's something deeper than that.

Where does lust come from? Lust comes from a man's heart. Lust comes from a Christian man's heart. And you've got to deal with that.

We all have to deal with that. We have to mortify it. We have to cleanse ourselves by the Spirit.

That's what he says in Romans. If you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live. But what if you don't? It seems to me like if you don't, you're going to die and you're probably already dead.

Because God's Spirit will constantly move you to that. If there's light in the house, it's going to shine through the windows. And if there's hope in your soul, it's going to be seen in your ways.

It's going to be seen in your life. Just a few more verses and I will close. Peter again says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath according to His abundant mercy begotten us again into a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

He goes on in 1 Peter 1 verse 13. He says, Gird up the loins of your mind and be sober and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to your former lust and your ignorance, but as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.

Because it is written, Be ye holy for I am holy. You see how he puts the two together? You have this great hope. And since you have this great hope, then be holy as He is holy.

Lastly, I just want you to read through this with me. Lamentation chapter 3 and then I'll close. Lamentation chapter 3. Begin in verse 22.

And you'll be very familiar with it, I believe. But maybe not with the second portion of the passage. Verse 22, It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.

They are new every morning. Great is Thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul.

Therefore will I hope in Him. The Lord is good unto all them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.

Brethren, this is a good hope through grace. My prayer to God would be that no one leave here today without this good hope. I know you've heard the gospel over and over here.

But do you all realize there's going to come a day for every one of us when it will be the last day that you hear the gospel? It will either be your dying day or it will be the day that the Lord returns. One or the other.

You won't hear the gospel anymore.

It could be today. And I know the Bible says, Paul said, I'm not ashamed of the gospel, for it's the power of God unto salvation. Normally, God uses the proclamation of the gospel to save sinners.

And I plead with you all again today, sinner and saint alike, that your hope be put entirely in Jesus Christ. What He has done, who He is, and what He continues to do. He intercedes.

He ever lives to intercede for us. Saint, do you realize Christ now, right now, He is praying that your faith fail not. And I know the fervent, effectual prayer of a righteous man.

Jehovah said, the Lord our righteousness, it avails much. And that's the only reason I stand here today before you with hope, because Christ has prayed for me. That my faith and my hope would not fail.

That my faith and my hope might be centered wholly and solely and only in Him. Where is your hope today? Every other hope is going to pass away. Every other hope is going to vanish.

It will be like those bubbles we saw at the wedding yesterday. You blow a bubble and there it is for a time, and it's gone. Every other hope other than Christ is going to go away.

But He will abide forever. His Word will abide forever. He's a sure foundation.

So these four things, it's simple, but maybe you can keep it in your mind. A good hope is a hope you can testify of. A good hope is a hope that's based in the Scriptures.

A good hope is one that's centered entirely on Christ. And last of all, a good hope is a hope that will show in your life. So I'll close with the words of the Apostle Paul, now the God of hope.

Fill you with all joy and peace in believing that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. Lord, what can we say to these things but amen? Lord, You are our hope. You are a living hope.

You are an all-sufficient hope. You're a sound and sure hope. And Lord, our hope is that one day we will see You as You are.

And when we see You, Father, in Your Son, Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, the fullness of the Godhead bodily, when we see You, our hope is that we will be like You. Lord, our great grief is that we are not more like You. Lord, our great grief for our children, our family that are still outside of Christ, that they do not know You and they are not like You, and they are not bringing glory unto You.

Lord, would You come this day in power as You did unto me, as You did unto my wife, as You've done unto many here today. Lord, would You come in mercy, in power, and give us that hope. Thank You, O God, for Your Son.

We bless His holy name. We glory in His cross. Amen.

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