

The Anchor of Hope

by Santosh Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of finding hope and comfort in God, even in the midst of afflictions and uncertainties. It highlights the need to hold onto the anchor of hope in Jesus Christ, who provides encouragement and comfort through the Holy Spirit. The speaker encourages believers to seek the ministry of Titus, being vessels of comfort and encouragement to one another, and to persevere in faith, growing in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: Romans 15:13, 2 Corinthians 1:3, Hebrews 6:18, Acts 9:31, 2 Corinthians 7:4

Topics: "Hope in Affliction", "Encouragement through the Holy Spirit"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of finding hope and comfort in God, even in the midst of afflictions and uncertainties. It highlights the need to hold onto the anchor of hope in Jesus Christ, who provides encouragement and comfort through the Holy Spirit. The speaker encourages believers to seek the ministry of Titus, being vessels of comfort and encouragement to one another, and to persevere in faith, growing in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

Yeah, this is a nice surprise to be here with you all. Until about 12, maybe 15 hours ago, I had plans to be in Colorado with our church family there that's meeting at the same time as we are right now. But the Lord had other plans.

So in a sense, I had an accident too. You can say, you know, you often hear if I told you, hey, I had an accident, you'd say you'd immediately want to know, are you okay? Is everything going well? I did have an accident in the sense that the plans I had made were changed. But I tell you, the moment I realized immediately that I would get to see you all in person, and you were meeting in person for the first time, it made everything okay.

But I was thinking that so often, even like the example that Bobby gave us just now, thank you for that. If immediately God was to show us how it's all going to work out for good, which happened in my case, within a few seconds, I was like, oh, I guess that means I get to be at NCCF. And that made everything okay.

But that's not always how it is. And even with the example Bobby just gave us, he doesn't yet know how it's all going to turn out for good. It is, because God says it is, in Romans 8, verse 28.

But we don't get to see that. And that's where faith comes in. It wouldn't require faith if within a few seconds I would immediately see, yes, that's how it's all going to work out for good.

But thank God that he ordains it that way. Like he told Thomas, blessed are you who believe without seeing. Blessed are us.

We're far more blessed when we can believe and we don't yet see how it's going to work out for good. In fact, we may not see until we reach the end of our lives. There's a couple of verses I want to show you to begin with that are on my heart this morning.

When you think about what God is full of, you know, I often think that what I'm full of is what will overflow with a little bit of a nudge. If this can was filled to the brim, a little jostling, a little shaking would immediately cause something to spill out. And if you didn't know what was inside because there's no label on it, all you have to do is shake it a little bit and you'll find out very quickly what's inside.

And I've often, you've probably heard that saying of Amy Carmichael's, it says a cup of sweet water can never spill even one drop of bitter water no matter how much it is shaken. If you're shaken in a circumstance and a bitter drop comes out, even one drop, you know that it had nothing to do with the shaking. It had to do with what was inside.

And for years, I used to blame the shakers, people who shook me, circumstances that bothered me for why that bitter drop came out until the Lord showed me that the way of the new covenant, the way, the reason Jesus came was to show us that we can be cleaned in the inside of the cup completely. When he said first clean the inside of the cup, we stopped blaming our circumstances for why that bitter drop came out. We say, Lord, thank you that after 10 hours of shaking, you finally showed me that there was a drop deep down inside that was bitter.

And thank you that your Holy Spirit can cleanse even that part of the cup that's deep down. But when you think about what God is full of, there's a couple of things that have come to my mind and I won't ask you to shout out your answers, but if you were to be asked, what do you think God is full of? I'm sure we would all come up with different answers and I think they would probably all be correct to some extent. But there are two things that are on my heart today that God is full of.

And the first is in Romans 15 verse 13. Romans 15 verse 13. Here I see that God is full of hope.

God is full of hope. Romans 15 verse 13 says, now may the God of hope fill you. God is full of hope and he wants to fill you with that hope.

Yes, it's true he's full of holiness, full of purity, full of joy, full of love, full of peace. But there's one thing we often forget. God is full of hope.

That means that no matter how horrible your circumstances may have been, how much of a failure you feel like you've been, even up to this morning perhaps, maybe you were on your way to the meeting and it was the first time we're meeting in person and on your way you and your husband or you and your wife got into a silly little argument that even now you're thinking, why did I make such a big deal out of that? And God wants you to know he's full of hope for your marriage. He's full of hope for your job situation. He's full of hope for your physical situation, your financial situation.

But above all, full of hope even for your spiritual condition. I'm often most hopeless when I, you know, I find lately that when it's a financial situation or a physical situation or a job situation, I seem to be able to trust God for those a little bit more easily. Then I trust him that he can change this flesh, this wretched person that I am that I find is still so prone to selfishness, still so easily bothered and irritated about things.

And I start to get hopeless about that. I think, really Lord, I feel like you could come any day now. And are you really going to be able to finish the work of conforming me fully into the image of Jesus? God is full of hope, dear brothers and sisters.

God is full of hope. The other one is in second Corinthians chapter one, second Corinthians chapter one, God is full of comfort. God is full of comfort.

And I want to show you in what I shared this morning that we need both of those together. Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of mercies and God of all comfort. God is full of comfort.

That's a good thing for us to remember. And let's, I want to talk about hope. First of all, what does hope really mean? Let's turn to Hebrews chapter six, where we're told about this hope.

Hebrews chapter six. There's, this is a Bible I've had. I have a newer Bible now, but I've had this for about 25 years.

My parents gave it to me. And you don't have those pages in your Bible that you turn to more often than not. I was, I don't use this Bible as often these days, but I was reminded of that.

I have three pages in my Bible that I apparently turn to more often than others. That's Hebrews one through seven, Hebrews chapters one through seven in this Bible. So much so that Hebrews one through four is completely separated and Hebrews six is completely gone.

It came out at some point. And so I had to print out what Hebrews six actually says, I've got it here. So these are wonderful chapters for me.

I just say that in passing, I have turned to these pages more than any other pages a lot, just because of the tremendous hope that we have in the book of Hebrews. As you probably heard my dad say often, that's his favorite book as well, because it shows us that what God did for Jesus, he can do for us. And everything that was possible for Jesus as a man here on this earth is possible for us because the same power that the father gave Jesus, he's given to us as well.

And if Jesus could spend every single moment of his life, never being discouraged, never being without hope, no matter what happened, it's possible for us as well, because God is full of hope and full of comfort for us. And I believe the father comforted Jesus when he was here on this earth. You know, it says in Matthew four, that the angels came and comforted him or encouraged him, helped him after that intense time of trial.

And he made it through. Jesus needed comfort as well when he was here on this earth, because he had to be an example for us. And we're told in Hebrews chapter six about this hope.

Hebrews six, let's read in verse 18. I'll begin reading in the middle of verse 18. We who have taken refuge can have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast, and one which enters within the veil where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest, according to the order of Melchizedek. So this hope, first of all, I want you to see that it's hope for refugees. This word came alive to me.

Again, like I said, I've read these verses very often over my years of being a Christian, but this word came, sprang out of the Bible for me a few days ago, actually. Refuge. We who have taken refuge.

I don't know if any of you have come to this country as refugees, but you'll meet some of them. I didn't, but there are some, even some in our church in Colorado, who came as refugees. That means they were in a situation in their countries far away that was being ravaged with war or something else, and they had to flee that country.

And this country, America, out of, out of a large heartedness, you can say, earthly large heartedness, decided to welcome these refugees. Refugees from Sri Lanka or Ukraine or Syria or other countries all over the world. They're refugees.

And the refugees, can you imagine what it must have been like for refugees when they first came here? And I was hearing the story just recently. I believe it was Brother Andre, actually. I don't know.

I hope I'm not speaking about you behind your back, Brother Andre. But I think if I remember correctly, he was saying how he had to travel from one country to another before they finally came here. In a sense, running for their lives.

I don't know if that was true, but Andre, but certainly for many refugees, that's how it was. They were running for their lives. And I pictured myself as that refugee who needs strong hope.

I was running for my life. I didn't even know it to some extent. But even now, if you feel like you're running for your life, if you find that that battle between the flesh and the spirit is so intense that you're running for your life, we who are refugees looking for refuge can have strong encouragement, strong hope, because we've taken refuge.

And the reason that often we're discouraged, I really believe that the reason that we're discouraged is because we've taken refuge somewhere else. It's not because God has failed us. It's not because of the circumstance.

It's because I found a shelter somewhere else. If I have found a refuge in God himself, then we would find strong encouragement and hope. And I found that to be true.

I'm sure you can testify to that as well, that whenever I was discouraged, whenever I was hopeless in a particular situation, when I finally ran to God and found refuge there, everything was okay. Not necessarily in the circumstance, but I finally found that strong encouragement that God wanted me to have. And this is the secret, dear brothers and sisters.

There is hope. God is full of hope. If you're in a situation where you're discouraged today, the only reason that you're still discouraged is because you're not yet close to God.

So run to him. He's full of hope. Now the devil wants you to think, um, I don't want to run to God because he's angry at me.

He's upset at me. And the longer he can keep you far away from God, the longer you will remain without hope. I imagine that prodigal son that we heard about already in Luke 15, the devil probably tried his best to keep him as far away from the father's house as possible with thoughts that don't go back.

It's not going to be worth it. Your father is going to be angry at you. Remember how, uh, whatever it is that the father, that the son was offended at with the father that caused him to run away in the first place.

I'm sure all those things, uh, the younger son was reminded of. And when he finally came to his senses and became a refugee and said, I got to run back to my father, everything was okay after that. So if you're a refugee today, if no, not a refugee today, I hope you'll become a refugee soon and run to Jesus.

There's hope there, but we're also told that this hope is like an anchor. If you're a refugee, this hope is like an anchor. Now an anchor, if you know, is, is something that you drop from a ship, this long rope or metal chain that you drop across overboard into an area that you cannot see.

If you've ever been on a ship and dropped anchor, I don't know that I have, but the way I've seen the way that I know it works, you're on a boat on a, in a, in a situation that you can see, you can see what the boat looks like. And you can see that the sea is turbulent, that the waves are choppy, but then you drop anchor into an area that you cannot see. It's like I was saying, we trust, even though we cannot see, but I know that deep down under those tossing waves is solid ground.

I just know it. I can't see it. It may be 30 feet deep, a hundred feet deep, but I know that it's there.

And this is the picture that we're given about having hope, that this hope is within the veil. And that veil is our flesh. We're told in another place in Hebrews, there's the flesh of Jesus for him.

And it's our flesh now that this veil through our flesh that deceives us, that tempts us, that hides the reality, the physical reality of God from us within the veil is this anchor where Jesus has entered as a forerunner. So here I am on this boat, which is my life or my marriage or my home situation or my job situation or the spiritual battle I'm in. And God wants me to drop anchor into the most holy place through that veil where Jesus is.

I know he's there. I believe he's there. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

And I drop anchor there. And that anchor becomes my hope that I can hold onto. So here I am holding onto this anchor.

And anytime the waves, the ship starts to get tossed to and fro, I know that my anchor is cast. Like we sing in that song, will your anchor hold? We have an anchor that keeps the soul steadfast and sure while the billows rolls, an old hymn like that. Will your anchor hold? If your anchor is cast in Jesus Christ, it will hold.

This is the hope that we have in Jesus Christ. And we're told here in, let's turn to Romans chapter 15 about this hope. We saw in verse 13 that God is full of hope and he wants us to abound in hope.

But look at this verse in verse 4. How will we lay a hold of this hope? We read already in that verse in Hebrews 6 that we might have strong encouragement to lay hold of that hope. And this is what I want us to remember, dear brothers and sisters, that the purpose of comfort, the purpose of encouragement, you know, have you thought about what comfort is when you say, I want to comfort my brother, I comfort my sister. Often you think about maybe they've lost a loved one, somebody they were close to has died and

you want to comfort them.

What does comfort mean? It doesn't mean coming alongside and just patting them on the back and just giving them some false sense of, oh, I feel bad for you or, oh, I can relate to you because I also lost a loved one. No. Comfort is essentially this, what we read in Hebrews 6, lay a hold of the hope that we might have strong comfort to lay a hold of the hope.

When you want to comfort somebody, if you really want to give them the comfort that is of the Holy Spirit, the encouragement that is of the Holy Spirit, it won't be a false patting on the back or, oh, everything will be okay. It will be this, dear brother, dear sister, yes, you're going through a hard time and I may not have gone through that hard time myself, but lay a hold of the hope. Our comfort is based not on whether we can relate to each other here on the boat.

Our comfort is based on the fact that we all have an anchor that's cast in the same place. You know, sometimes I've had people tell me, well, yeah, I know you can't really relate to what I'm going through because you've never gone through that myself. Yeah, that might be true.

And we may not all go through the same circumstances. In fact, we won't. But our comfort is based on the fact that our anchor is in the same place.

That's fixed in Jesus Christ. And it doesn't matter if you're holding to an anchor on that side of the boat and I'm holding to an anchor on this side of the boat. Our anchor is cast within the veil where Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father.

Our anchor is fixed at the same place and we're all holding on to that anchor. That's the basis for our comfort. So don't be deceived by the false sense of that's in the world.

A lot of psychology that teaches that you have to go through something to relate or to be able to help somebody else. Because, you know, most importantly, why that's true. How can Jesus be of comfort to us in our battle against sin? And even when we fall into sin as one who has never fallen into sin himself.

Let me say that again because there was a long sentence. Jesus never sinned. We know that.

And yet how can he be an example to me who has sinned? Who's still tempted very strongly. We know Jesus was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. How can Jesus be of comfort to me even though I've fallen into sin? Because it has nothing to do with whether I've fallen into sin or not.

Jesus has already solved that problem. He's taken care of my sin. He's forgiven my sin.

He's justified me. I stand before him today. Actually, I sit here before him today as one who has never sinned because the sins I've committed have been cleansed so thoroughly and so completely.

But now my comfort and my encouragement that I receive from Jesus Christ is based on the fact that when he walked on this earth his anchor was cast in the father. In heaven where the father is, Jesus had cast his anchor there. And that's what carried him through this life.

And that's what will carry me through this life. I've cast my anchor at the same place that Jesus cast his anchor. And if Jesus' boat never sank for his entire life, not even once, since my anchor is cast in the same place, my boat will also not sink.

As long as my anchor is cast there. Now the devil wants you to pull up the anchor. Wants you to remove that anchor and say well no it's not.

Wants you to look at things around you or to cast your anchor in your bank account or in this thing or that other thing. My anchor is cast at the right hand of the father where Jesus is seated. So this is the purpose of encouragement.

That word comfort encouragement is really the same thing essentially. And that's why you know it says in 1 Corinthians 14 that the purpose of prophecy in the church is to build up, to encourage, to comfort. 1 Corinthians 14 verse 3. So when we gather, this is God's purpose for us.

That when you talk with somebody, whether it's before the meeting, during the meeting, or after the meeting, our conversations are full of this. Brother lay a hold of that anchor more firmly than you have. Sister lay a hold of that anchor.

I hope you're holding on to that anchor strongly in your circumstance. This is what encouragement and comfort are. So this is Romans 15 verse 4. Whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction.

That's true about the Old Testament and it's true about the New Testament for us as well. Whatever was written in God's word, you can say, was written for our instruction that through perseverance and the encouragement of the scriptures, the comfort of the scriptures, the help of the scriptures, we might have hope. So how will you have hope? Through the comfort and the encouragement of the scriptures.

Recently at our church in Colorado, we decided since the summer time is time of more freedom for the children, we've started to embark on this discipline of reading God's word together. And we were sharing within our church a reading plan that we're following. Now whether you use a reading plan or not, it's a good discipline children and parents help your children in that to read God's word every day, at least a little bit, read God's word.

And the reason, you know, have you ever noticed that the devil would love for you to read anything else or even watch a movie about the life of Jesus than actually open this book? He'll do anything. I mean, he'll say, well, listen to this message about the Bible or watch that movie about the Bible, anything but the Bible itself. And I'm thankful, especially more for movies, yes, but especially messages that point me back to God's word where when I listen to that message or even watch that movie about Jesus or Paul or somebody like that, I want to go back and read the only book that actually has life in it.

So good to read God's word. But what we read here is that the scriptures have comfort. And this is the place where God will give you his comfort, the encouragement, the comfort of the scriptures.

Now you may think, well, I've been going through this last week without any comfort, without an encouragement. How will you get that? Verse five, may the God who gives perseverance. You know, when I, if I was to encourage you, dear brothers, you need to be, you need to persevere automatically.

I know what my mind thinks of. Okay. I need to try harder.

When I hear perseverance, I think I need to grit my teeth a little bit more. I need to buckle up and you know, pick myself up by the bootstraps. There's no such thing in the Christian life.

God gives perseverance. Do you know that? If you lack perseverance in your life, don't try harder, run to God and say, Lord, give me perseverance. May the God who gives perseverance give us this day, our daily perseverance.

I like to think of it like that, Lord, I need perseverance. I want to make it to the end of this day. Uh, what are we on June 27th, 2021.

I want to make it to the end of this day, honoring you and glorifying you may give me perseverance, Lord. And Jesus said in Matthew 24, that the one who perseveres until the end will be saved. Does that mean that you have to try harder? No, it means that you have to run to God.

It says, Lord, give me this perseverance that I will be one who endures until the end. May the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another, according to Christ Jesus. Here's a verse in Acts chapter nine, like us to look together before I close chapter nine, this situation in Acts nine is happening right after Saul of Tarsus was converted.

You know, he named changes his name to Paul and then he becomes perhaps the most effective man, uh, that ever lived on this earth after Jesus for God's kingdom. Um, just at least from what we read in the scriptures, amazing how God used him having, uh, and that's why Paul writes so much about hope and comfort. I imagine that Paul was often played with discouragement, with temptation to be discouraged over his past.

I'm sure that every time I feel quite sure that every time Paul got up to preach, perhaps he was in a church somewhere and sitting in that church was the widow of a man whom he had killed or had sent to death. And there was that widow with her children widowed and fatherless because of what Paul had done. And immediately I imagine the devil tempted him.

How dare you get up here and preach Paul after what you did. And, uh, and I'm sure his gaze was constantly going to that woman who was, who was widowed because of something he had done. You know, Paul persecuted the church and I'm sure that there were many of those Christians that he had to still encourage and give comfort to having persecuted them.

And Paul needed encouragement. Paul needed comfort. Paul needed to be so rooted and grounded in the fact that God had forgiven him and justified him so thoroughly and cleansed him from that past and not let the past slow him down.

Because if the devil had succeeded, God could never have been able to use Paul. Paul probably did far worse things than any of us has ever done. I've never persecuted anybody for the sake of Christ.

Never. I hope never to either by God's grace. I won't, but Paul did.

And if Paul had allowed the devil to discourage him or to weigh him down or to press him down over his past, he would not only have caused him to sin in the past, but also made his future ineffective for God. Think about what Paul, God was able to accomplish through Paul in the last half of his life. The way I understand it, Paul may have been around 28, 30 or so when he was converted.

And the way we know he lived till he was in his sixties, I think. So that was about half his life that he wasted, not only in living for himself, but in being an enemy of Jesus Christ. And when the Lord turned him around, he became the greatest witness for Jesus Christ.

But all of that would have been useless. Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus would have been useless if the devil had succeeded in continuing to defeat him with discouragement. That's why Paul needed to be encouraged and comforted through the Holy Spirit.

And right after this, when Paul is converted, you read this about the church, and this is what I want you to see in verse 31. You know, you read in Acts 2 that when the Holy Spirit came upon the church, there was amazing things that happened. Many were converted.

3,000 came and were baptized on that first day and many were being added. And a lot of people focus on those things that happened that day. Now, that was a wonderful time.

That day must have been an amazing day, the day of Pentecost, when not only the Holy Spirit came and dwelt within men and women for the first time, but also radical conversions. But the story doesn't stop there. You read of so much else that happened through the work of the Holy Spirit.

And here's a verse that I didn't notice until very recently. Acts 9, verse 31, how did the church grow? How did the church increase? And perhaps that's more applicable to us here at NCCF or other churches like us, where God has been able to work in us through the Holy Spirit. Now we're seeking to grow on into the deeper and more mature things of Christ.

It says, the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria. This is the fulfillment of what Jesus said, going to all the world, Judea, Galilee, Samaria, the uttermost parts of the earth, including Milpitas, where we are now. The church throughout all these places enjoyed peace, being built up and going on, going on.

This is my encouragement for us, dear brothers and sisters. Are you going on? Are you going on from where you were last month spiritually? While you've been away for the last year and a half, have you been going on or did you sort of stall? Did you stall spiritually because you couldn't meet in person? Tell you honestly, during the time that we were away from each other, I went on with Jesus because he moved on. Even though we couldn't meet in person for a long time, Jesus moved on.

The Holy Spirit moved on in areas in which he wanted for you and for I. And if he went ahead and you find that you're still stuck here, this is a word of encouragement and exhortation for us. Move on. Are you going on with the Holy Spirit? Going on in what? It talks about two things here, the fear of the Lord.

Do you fear God more today than you did yesterday? And you know, you've heard this from my dad as well. The fear of the Lord is not that you're afraid that he will harm you, but that you will harm him, that you will grieve him. Harm is not the right word, but you will grieve him.

Show me, Lord, is there any unchristlikeness in me? Is there any untoward way in me, David said in Psalm 139, any way that causes you grief? This is the fear of the Lord. Is there more of the fear of the Lord today than the last time we met as a church? And you've been going on in the Lord. Now we've heard a lot about that, so I don't want to dwell on that.

But the second thing is often easier to forget also in the messages that we hear, and that is, have you gone on in the comfort of the Holy Spirit? Do you know the Holy Spirit more today as a comforter, as an encourager, than you did last month or last year? Then you've gone on with the Holy Spirit. Then you're increasing. Then we're increasing.

It continued to increase. Let me read the whole sentence now. The church in Milpitas, NCCF, enjoyed peace.

Thank God that we can meet in peace like this. Being built up and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase. It continued to increase.

Let me show you one more verse, if you will, in 2 Corinthians 7. How does God do that? And this has also been a tremendous help to me, how to do this practically. How does this work practically? I told you how Paul needed encouragement, and it wasn't just the past. He doesn't talk about being tempted to be discouraged about his past, except that one of my favorite verses, 1 Timothy 1, it says, it is a trustworthy statement deserving acceptance that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners among whom I am the worst.

Paul said this towards the end of his life. He didn't forget that he was one of the worst sinners, that he was the worst sinner, he says, and yet for this reason I found mercy, he says in verse 16, in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate his perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in him. So Paul here and there talks about this temptation he would have had to be discouraged about his past, but he was also tempted to be discouraged over his afflictions here on this earth.

It seemed like Paul's life got more difficult the more God tried to use him. The more God used him, the more he was afflicted. Paul suffered much more after his conversion.

That's the way I read the biography of his life. Paul's life, if you will, maybe it's two parts to his biography, part one, part two. Part one, he was an enemy of the cross of Christ and enjoying relative ease, highly respected among the Pharisees.

He talks about that in Philippians 3. He was top class, respected among his religious peers as the guy. If you want to listen to somebody preach, get a sermon of Paul's, and then he met Jesus, the true Jesus, and his life turned on its head, and then the problems started. Have you ever experienced that? You really decide to follow Jesus.

You become a wholehearted disciple. You give everything to him. You surrender it all, and then, as it were, all hell breaks loose because the devil is against you now.

Until then, you didn't shake his kingdom. Until then, you didn't bother him that much, but now that you became a radical disciple of Jesus, now that you were committed to wholeheartedly following him, he came at you full force. That's the life I want to live.

I want the devil to be so mad at me that he's bringing everything against my marriage, against my children. I'm not afraid of it. He's a defeated enemy.

He brought everything against Jesus Christ, and it didn't work, so let him bring everything against us. It won't work if your anchor is cast where Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father, but here we read in 2 Corinthians 7. When we came, look at this. First of all, verse 4, 2 Corinthians 7, verse 4, great is my confidence in you.

Great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort. I am overflowing with joy.

Why? Not because, oh, well, everything's getting better, or finally we can meet together as a church. No, in my affliction, he says, in all our affliction, I'm overflowing with joy and filled with comfort. Oh, a wonderful testimony Paul gives here.

For even when we came into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, kind of like what Bobby was talking about even now. This flesh is just irritating you in sickness. I imagine, you know, the way I read Paul's missionary stories, when he went here, one of his co-workers got sick, and they were like, oh man, it slowed us down, and then he got sick, and then somebody else, something happened, and then they missed the boat, and then the boat sank, and he's swimming around.

You know, he had to tread water for a day and a night, he says in one place. I was recently trying to tread, I don't swim very well. I made it through about 30 seconds, and there was Paul.

I imagine that Paul didn't have swimming classes or any of the luxuries that we have today. He had to learn to tread water in real time, speaking scriptures to himself, and there's Titus next to him, and Silas maybe, and they're trying to tread water, and Titus is wondering, it's like, Paul, are we going to drown? He says, no, my anchor is cast. If Jesus couldn't die before his time, I won't die before my time, and Paul had a mission to go somewhere.

God, he says, God will keep me afloat, and he had to still swing his arms around and kick his feet, but God was the one keeping him afloat. My dear brothers and sisters, you and I will have to do the earthly things. We'll have to go to jobs.

We'll have to take care of our children. We'll have to do all the things that we need to to provide for our families here on this earth, but God is the one keeping you afloat. I hope you know that.

God is the one keeping you afloat while you're treading water, and here it says, when we came into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest. We were afflicted on every side, conflicts without, fears within. You know, Paul was plagued with the temptation to be afraid.

Those fears were prodding him from inside, but God who comforts the pressed down, the humble, the weak, the ones who are being pushed down. Do you feel like you're being pushed down? God is in the business of comforting those who are pushed down. God is, you know, you hear this phrase a lot, I identify as, people say.

You know how God identifies as, according to his word? God identifies as the one who comforts those who are pressed down. That means if you're pressed down today, if you're feeling pushed down today in some way, God says, I'm the one you need. God who comforts the pressed down.

Comforted us, how? By the coming of Titus. It's, I love that. It wasn't, yeah, it's through the scriptures we read already, but have you coveted the ministry of Titus? You know, you meet a godly man, somebody whom God has used in a mighty way.

I think of my dad, how God has used him. Have you ever thought that God wants to use you or I to comfort that older brother? Comfort somebody else that you think is ahead of you spiritually. Somebody that you think, well, how could I be of help to them? That's somebody who's so far ahead of me spiritually.

Paul says, here is my younger coworker Titus, and here I was, I had conflicts without and fears within, but God sent Titus to me to comfort me. God comforted me through the arrival of Titus. I've been coveting the

ministry of Titus.

I've never heard a sermon on the ministry of Titus, and you know, but this is the ministry of Titus. That when Titus showed up into the situation, into the conversation, all of a sudden it was like, yes, I know where the anchor is now. That's all Titus was doing.

He was coming to Paul, and if the devil was trying to get Paul to think, oh no, it's not going to work for you, and God's going to let you down. Titus came and said, Paul, hold on to the anchor. Yes, we all need that.

Wives, think about it like this, that your husband could come home from work one day, and he is on the drive home. He's pressed down by the devil. Maybe the boss yelled at him, and he was just worried about what the situation is going to be like at home, and the children are going to be tugging on him, and you probably had a harassed day yourself, sisters, but imagine that you could lay a hold of the ministry of Titus, and you say, Lord, my husband's about to walk in the door.

He usually comes in about six o'clock, or maybe it's eight o'clock, and you're tempted to be upset at him that he said he would be home at six, but it's two hours late, and instead of berating him over it, you say, Lord, give me the ministry of Titus, and your husband walks in the door, and here I was pressed down, and conflicts without fears within about how my wife would react because I was late. Now, husbands, I hope you're not actually like that. You call ahead and say, I'm running late, honey.

It's not my fault, but if you didn't, here's your wife who's coveting the ministry of Titus and saying, I want the ministry of Titus, where your husband could say after that as he's falling asleep, God who comforts the pressed down, that was me, comforted me when I walked in the door through my wife. When I walked in the door, she came and just gave me a hug, or she encouraged me, and she had no thoughts for herself because God fills our hearts with comfort, with encouragement, so don't believe the lie of the devil that your husband should ask you about your day. Please do that, husbands, but believe that God can fill your heart, so that you will abound with comfort, so that if it was God was full, God is full of comfort, you too can be full of comfort, and when your husband walks in the door, what spills out into him is not, oh, you know, why this or why that, you know, not my day.

It is comfort. Now, I started with the wives, but husbands, we're the leaders of the home. That means we are called to do that even more.

Instead of walking in the door and thinking, well, why didn't my wife ask me about my day, you're saying, God, I want the ministry of Titus. My wife has probably had a much more stressful day than I've had with all the children at home, and this thing not going right, and then the lunch got burned, and we had to feed the kids some leftovers, and it was unhealthy and all that, and then the living room's a mess, and the carpet, there's juice spilled on it, all that, and instead of worrying about all of those things, you say, Lord, give me the ministry of Titus, so that my wife, as she goes to bed tonight, can say, oh, my day was so horrible, as I look back on my day, but God, who comforts those who are pressed down, comforted me by the arrival of my husband. When he walked in the door, oh, I received such comfort.

God, who, and then think about it like the church, God, who comforts those who are pressed down, comforted me by the arrival of this brother into the conversation, or this sister into the conversation. God, who comforts those who are pressed down, comforted me, because that brother happened to send me a text out of the blue, just saying, bro, how's it going? How's your day going? And that's it, and just the fact that this brother of mine was thinking about me, comforted me so much. Lay a hold of the hope, brothers

and sisters.

This is our ministry as a church. Yes, we receive good teaching. Yes, we want to go on and increase in the fear of the Lord, but I hope we're encouraging each other to lay a hold of the hope that we have.

Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he's coming back soon to take us to that place. Until then, we have one ministry, essentially. That's the ministry of encouragement, the ministry of comfort.

This is the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, I will give you an encourager. I will give you a comforter.

You seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit, don't seek for tongues, prophecy, miracles, all these things that Christendom around us is seeking for. Far more useful for us will be that God can fill us with the gift of encouragement, with the fullness of comfort. He has plenty to give.

God is full of comfort, full of hope, and his body here on this earth, likewise, full of comfort, full of hope. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/fNHa663hWXc.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/santosh-poonen/the-anchor-of-hope/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net