

Hopeful or Hopless

by Tim Conway

True hope is based on faith in Jesus Christ and the promise of eternal life, while false hope is based on human efforts and self-righteousness.

Duration: 51:08

Scripture: Matthew 5:12, Luke 6:23, Romans 5:2, Romans 8:25, Romans 12:12, Romans 15:13, 1 Corinthians 13:13, Colossians 1:5, 1 Timothy 1:1, Hebrews 6:11

Topics: "Eternal Hope", "Christian Assurance"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of rejoicing in hope, focusing on the future glory that awaits believers in heaven. It highlights the distinction between worldly hopes and the biblical hope in Christ, which is characterized by assurance and expectation. The speaker challenges listeners to set their hearts and minds on the eternal hope in Christ, freeing them from being enslaved to worldly pursuits and encouraging radical love and sacrifice.

Transcript

Romans 12 this morning. Romans 12, verse 12. If you came today in anticipation of delving into some deep, mysterious part of the Word of God, we're not going there today.

Craig told me that there's some places in the letter to the Colossian church that he is already fearing having to deal with, because they're difficult verses. This is not a difficult verse that I want to take you to today. Romans 12, verse 12.

And I'm only going to deal with the first three words, at least as it appears in the ESV Bible. This isn't deep. This isn't mysterious.

But, that doesn't mean it's not important. This is crucially important. You see the words there? Romans 12, verse 12.

Rejoice in hope. Now brethren, let's just think about hope. That's where I want us to go.

I don't know, the next 40-50 minutes. Hope! Hope is not a foreign thing to us. Right? I mean, I got thinking about it.

You know what? I'm quite convinced of this. If you can find somebody that has the mental capacity to think, you have individuals that hope. Right? I mean, if you have a child that is old enough to put together thoughts in its mind, or you have somebody that's born, and even if they're slow some way, there's some retardation there, if they have the ability to think, they can hope.

Hope is natural to mankind. Now, here's the thing. Whenever you think about hope, think this way.

There's one word that I want you to think about anytime you think hope, and it's the word future. Whenever you think hope, think of the concept of future. Hope is an expectancy and a desire which looks to the future.

We hope in things which are to come. And you know, hope and faith, think about them. There are places, there are places like in 1 Corinthians, in 1 Thessalonians, there are places where hope is distinguished from faith.

You have hope, faith, love. Or faith, hope, love. Now obviously in the Bible, we find a distinction between the two.

And I don't think that all the time we want to try to really exaggerate and emphasize that distinction, because sometimes they seem to be used almost synonymously. And in fact, when you go over to Hebrews, the writer of Hebrews defines faith using the word hope. And there are other places in the Bible where it talks about hope that basically it seems like it's springing forth from faith.

And so sometimes they're used synonymously. Although there is a difference and we can describe that difference, we don't often want to exaggerate that difference a whole lot. Here's the thing.

Faith can look back. I mean, basically, hope springs forth from faith. You think about this.

Faith comes by hearing. That's what we're told, right? Romans 10. Faith comes by hearing.

Hearing what? Hearing the Word of God. And so basically, faith is planted in what? It's planted in the promises of the Word of God. Faith trusts those promises.

Faith believes those promises. Faith believes the facts. I can have faith that Jesus Christ died on a tree 2,000 years ago for me.

I believe that. I have faith on the present. I have faith that Jesus Christ is in Heaven right now interceding for me.

Faith is basically hearing the Word of God, believing those promises there. Hope is that which has the expectation that those promises in the future are going to come to fruition for me. Basically, hope is faith looking forward.

That's really the idea behind it. Paul says this, Romans 8.25, We hope for what we do not see. We wait for it with patience.

Do you see that? Hope is something we wait for. If hope is something we wait for, that means it's not here yet. It's still future.

So when you think hope, think future. Hope is an expectation of some future good. Now, that's not all.

Folks, you know what? When you want to define words, even though you might be able to go find the Webster Dictionary and you might be able to get the one that Webster actually wrote and not the one that's all watered down and has all sorts of words changed and everything. But you know what? Typically, when you want to define biblical words, you want the Bible to define that word for you. You don't want to go to secular resources to define biblical words.

The word hope, if you run to the modern Webster's Dictionary, is not really an identical concept with the hope that you find in the Scriptures. Let me explain here. Basically, the word hope oftentimes today is used simply to mean desire.

Let me give you an example. Somebody comes in and they say, I hope it rains today. But if you say, well, do you expect it to rain today? No, I don't expect it.

I hope it will, but I don't think it will. You see, that's not the hope of the Scriptures. Hope, as it's defined biblically, and I went through and I'm looking at all the different places it's used, and definitely, biblically, the concept has to do with not only a desire that it will happen, but with an expectation and an assurance it will happen.

Hebrews 6.11, listen to how the writer of Hebrews says, the full assurance of hope. You see that? There's an assurance that goes with hope. A true hope.

Now look, don't any of you fall away here. Because I'm going somewhere with this. This matters.

This matters to all of us. Hope is future. Hope is not just a desire.

Hope has an expectancy. Hope has an assurance. There's some faith in this thing.

The biblical concept of hope has expectancy. Now listen, even the biblical concept of hope with its desire and its expectation, it doesn't actually mean that that which is desired and expected will happen. Hope can be set on something that we are certain, we have an assurance it's coming, and it not come.

And I'll give you a perfect big biblical example of that. It's found in John 5.45. Jesus Christ says this, there's one who accuses you, Moses, on whom you have set your hope. The Jews put their hope in Moses.

You know what their hope was? Their hope was that they were going to keep the law of Moses, and their hope was that keeping the law of Moses now, in the future, they'd have heaven. They'd have glory. They'd have God's approval.

They did have a hope. They had a hope. But the problem is they never kept the law.

And so even though they had that hope, even though they had that expectation, they never realized their hope. So true hope, at least as it's found in the Scriptures, always has that expectation. Not just desire, it has expectation.

But a hope can be a false hope, folks. What you expect. We have people all over this world running around who really believe they're going to heaven.

And I'll tell you what, that hope in the end is going to be wrong. It's going to be proven to be a false hope. So that's what you have.

Biblical concept of hope, it's always future. It's more than just desire. It's more than just saying, I hope a check for \$10,000 comes in the mail today when you have no reason to expect one will come.

It's a desire for some future blessing accompanied by an assurance, an expectation of such a blessing that will actually be received. Though it's definitely possible that such a hope, even if it's filled with great expectancy, may not be received. But I'll tell you this, folks, for the Christian, for the Christian, we are told, and Paul says this over in Romans 5, he says that we have a hope that does not put us to shame.

And you know what? That means we're never going to bow our head. We're never going to bow our heads in shame. It's not that way.

We have hope for certain. We have come to the very trinity of hope. When Paul talks about the trinity, he talks about Romans 15.13. Paul calls the Father the God of hope.

Romans 15.13 again, he says, it's by the power of the Holy Spirit that you may abound in hope. 1 Timothy 1.1 Christ Jesus is our hope. If your confidence is in Christ, the whole trinity must fail and fall before your hope will.

Bottom line. Colossians 1.5 Right there where Craig's going. Paul says, if you're a Christian, your hope is laid up for you in heaven.

Now listen, it is in heaven. It is laid up there. It is a certainty.

That's the only hope that doesn't put us to shame. Let me tell you something. Every person on the face of this earth will have their hopes dashed unless that hope is in Jesus Christ.

Every one of them. Now, I know. I know.

I know for a fact. I've got lost people here today. There are people here right now.

I know you're there. I see you sitting out there. You are there.

You've come in here today. You may have come in here today for a lot of different reasons. Your parents may have did.

You've got children here. Whatever it may be. You just wanted to check it out.

You're curious. But I'll tell you this. You listen to me.

There is something that is true about you. You may be hiding behind a profession, but you know, you know in the depths of your heart, you're not fully resigned to the Lordship of Christ. You have not fully submitted.

You know that there are things in this world you love more than Christ. You know it. Oh, you don't like to admit it, but deep down you know there are things.

You know you have a secret love for money. You have a secret love, a lust. You know it.

Can I tell you something? The Bible says something about you that in my estimation is absolutely chilling. It is the most eerie thing said about hope in all the Bible. And I've got people listening to my voice right now of whom this is true.

And this is absolutely fearful. And if you hear me right now, it ought to scare you. And I want it to scare you.

You know what Paul says? Paul says, look, I'm not talking about the prostitute here only. I'm not talking about the criminal over there in the jail where our brother Stephen is right now. Although it includes them.

I'm talking about the person who's lugged a Bible in here today and you sit there and you have never truly forsaken all for Christ. You don't love God. You're not saved.

You have not trusted Christ. You have not committed yourself. You know what? Paul comes along and he describes that person this way in Ephesians 2. He says that you are separated from Christ.

I can't even describe what that alone means. Without Christ. Separated from Christ.

You're alienated from the commonwealth of Israel. Strangers to the covenants of promise. Now listen to this.

Having no hope. And without God in the world. No hope.

You know what? Many people have this idea getting into heaven is easy. Being a Christian is easy. Repenting is easy.

Believing is easy. It takes the grace of God. It's as easy as trusting Christ.

It takes the grace of God. I tell you what, people on their death bed don't find repenting easy. People think they're going to put it off until tomorrow.

I tell you, sometimes that season of grace passes by, folks. No hope. Think about that.

The Bible says, we are led to believe when we read our Bibles that few are Christians. Because our Lord says, few there be that find it in Matthew 7. Few there be that find it. You know what that tells me? When I look out across this wide world of ours, most men are without hope.

Now I tell you this, men can... You know what? I've read the account of Corey Ten Boom in Robinsbrook. I've read about accounts of people in the concentration camps. I've read about people in prison.

You know what? People can keep going as long as they've got hope. When all the hope runs out, brethren, I've seen it. I've seen it.

If you haven't seen some of these pictures that come back, they're not only from far away places, but I think about the pictures of Muslims and Hindus when they get older in life and you look at them and there's that empty stare in their eyes of hopelessness. And I'll tell you what, it's not just out there in other places. It's not in Indonesia and China and India only.

I'll tell you this, you go into our nursing homes and you look at people and you look in their eyes and you look at the stare of hopelessness and some of you, you're young enough in your life, you're young enough where the hopelessness of this life hasn't sucked all that joy out. It hasn't sucked the earthly pleasures out. But you look at people coming to the end of their life that have bowed down to Allah their whole life, that have served this multitude of Hindu gods or the Buddhist gods, and you look in their eyes.

And you know what you see? You see the same reality that is true of some of you sitting here. Hopelessness. Hopelessness.

Most men alive on this earth have no hope. I mean, you look at the hopes of the world. We talked about it.

You live here in South Texas. You've got people going around, saying, well, I hope it rains. But you know what? Even when that thunder cloud comes and it dumps rain on the land, most people can look up and in that cloud it's just written hopeless.

So whatever your grass is green, it's hopeless. It's written over your door. I told you about that guy that Craig and I used to work with.

His one hope, he had cancer. He said, my hope in life is that I'd see the Spurs have one more victory. Across his TV as he watches it, it just says, hopeless.

Hopeless. Hopeless. My neighbors came home last night at 2 o'clock in the morning or whatever.

They were over there and I'm thinking, here's this life, and I saw them go off earlier about 6, 7 o'clock, and you know, music blaring in the car, and off they go. And I remember that lifestyle. And you go out to the club, and you go to that party, you go to that restaurant, and among all the clank and all the clamor and all the noise, I tell you what, if you'll listen, if those people will listen off there, the echoes just ring out.

That's not saying lots of people don't hope. People hope all the time. They have a hope of a better life to come.

They have a hope of some sort of future paradise. They have hope that they can be good enough to receive favorable treatment when this life runs out. Men and women all over this world have this hope that they've done enough.

And some of you have sat there and you've been in church a long time, and you've got a morality that you can pin on your life. But you know it, and the conscience breathes it within you. Hopeless.

And death is coming, and yet, hopelessness, hopelessness, hopelessness. Brethren, people all over the world trying to measure up. 1.5 billion Muslims.

And they are trying to work. And they are trying to do things that please Allah. And they are trying to pray.

And they're trying to do it. Folks, they're pouring themselves into it. 1.1 billion Catholics.

900 million Hindus. 400 million Buddhists. You know what they're building a hope on? I hope I've been good enough.

Well, I haven't been that bad. Everything within them screams. Folks, you know it.

Eternity is written on the hearts of men. And you know what just screams at men? That you don't have any hope unless you're good. Men feel it.

It burns inside them. If I don't have a righteousness that brings us into God, I'm in trouble. People feel it.

They feel the hopelessness of not having a righteousness to offer God in that day. It screams within them. But Paul says, you know what? Have any hope? None whatsoever.

They have a desire. They do have a hope that it's going to turn out well in the end. But it's a false hope.

It's an empty hope. It's a destitute hope. Folks, it's a God-forsaken hope.

It is not going to hold them up in that day. Why? Why? Because they are without Christ. They have no hope.

Some of you, you sit here, yes, you have a Bible, but you don't have hope. Yes, you have a record of going to church for a long time, but you don't have any hope. Yes, you don't live like the prostitute.

You don't live like all the criminals being gathered in. You don't live like... A lot of the people you drive by, you see walking around in this neighborhood or come in here at lunch. But you're without Christ.

And you're just as hopeless. Your self-righteousness is just as hopeless as that Hindu's is. And if you don't believe that the prostitute hasn't constructed her own righteousness as well, you haven't talked to them.

They're always better than somebody else. But they're without hope. Folks, we've got to look past what's false.

The shadowy hopes of this world. Look past what men say. Look past all that.

You know what? We need to get a grip of what is real. What is true. The truth is most men are without hope.

I'm not talking about what men think. I'm talking about what they actually are. And brethren, do you see people like this? Do you go to the supermarket? Do you go out into this world? Do you go into school? Into the workplace? Do you see people like this? You're walking by them all the time without hope.

They don't have any hope. Men imagine they have hope, but it's only imagination. That's all it is.

It's not real. And his life ebbs on. You know, when I talked to John Wheeler before, he told me most of the Muslims in Turkey, they're nominal until they get on in life.

He says what he sees, the men get upwards, 50, 60 years old. They've sowed their wild oats. And here they are getting towards the end.

Folks, suddenly they become interested in trying to keep all the rituals of their Islamic faith. You know why? Brethren, as I thought about this, I pictured some of you are right here. I picture a hopeless man.

He's on a rock. Maybe it's just about this big. He's on a rock.

It's just a barren rock. And he's in the middle of an ocean. He can't see anything on any horizon.

A total ocean of hopelessness. Wrecked, destitute. His soul is thirsty.

You can't drink that water. That water can't satisfy. The more you drink that water, the more hopeless and thirsty you become.

That's all briny, pungent. It doesn't satisfy. There's no ability to quench thirst in it.

As the years pass by, you know what happens to that ocean? It gets deeper and deeper and deeper. You're all alone on that little rock. You've got your hammer.

And you're trying to clang, clang. You're trying to work it out. I'm going to be a good guy.

And you beat it out, but you look out and all that ocean does, it's just an ocean of despair and hopelessness. It gets deeper and it deepens deeper. And you keep your eyes peeled on those horizons.

And just when you might think you see it, but your hopes are always dashed. There's no help. You look up.

What do you find? The face of an angry God staring back at you. His wrath hovers over your head. Oh! It's hopeless! Clang, clang.

You just go on working. You work and you work and you beat on that rock and you beat on that rock and you only get thirstier and thirstier. Every fleeting hope in this world comes back screaming, hopeless! Hopeless! You ever been in a place? You set your hope on something in this world and it comes and the emptiness just deepens.

And you know it and you've felt it. And the ocean just goes deeper. And the hopelessness.

And you keep your eyes on the horizon, but there's no hope. There's no hope. And the sinner goes off.

I saw it firsthand in my stepdad. Three months to live. And I saw the look in his eyes and just the empty stares.

Yes, I told you before, he'd be reading the paper. He'd be doing strange things, but when you look at him and you look him in the eye, you can see it, folks. You can see it, that haunting look in the eyes.

It's hopeless. And I'll tell you what, some of you may be here, you may have hopes. I'm going to go to college.

You may have hope I'm going to get married. You may hope I'm going to have children. I'm going to make money.

I'm going to have a house. But I'll tell you what, everybody that's been down that road, whether it's the hope for fame, the hope for glitz and glory in this world, you get it? And suddenly that ocean around you, you're beating on that rock and it's ringing out and your conscience is ringing out and open gulfs just yawning over you because I'll tell you what's out there. Like a hellhound coming across that ocean of despair is death.

And it's coming at you swift as the wind and it's bearing down on you and none can get away from it. And you want to know why the 50-year-old, 60-year-old Muslim suddenly starts to get serious because he's out there and he's clanging on that rock and he's feeling it. The more every time he hits it, he just looks up and God's not getting happier with him.

God's frown is only deepening because the measure of his sin is building up and there's no hope! Because he's without Christ. And some of you are right there and there is no hope. And I'll tell you, there is no more damnable word than hopelessness because all over and all around and in every place in hell.

That's what it is, folks. That's what it is. When people fall off into the pit, that's it.

Hopelessness is everywhere. Eternal hopelessness. There is no hope! And I'll tell you why there's no hope.

Because you're out there clanging on that rock. You've got your eyes peeled. Oh, if it could just be something.

If I could just find something satisfying. If I could just find something I could accomplish. Something I could do.

Some way I could be good enough. And you keep... Maybe you see a little dark spot on the horizon. You keep your eyes peeled, but it doesn't come to anything.

All it is is some distant storm of God's wrath. Some of you, you feel it. You're out there on that rock.

You have no hope. You have no fountain of blood to wash away sin. You have no high priest.

That's my hope. I have hope there's one at the right hand of God. He's interceding for me.

You don't have that hope. It's not there. You have no Lord of righteousness that earned it and worked it out to give you a perfect covering.

To make you totally acceptable with God. None of that. Without Christ and hopeless.

You're like a miserable orphan. No one to care for them. No one to love them.

No one to have their good constantly in mind. Nobody to come along and wipe away the tears. There's no paradise.

No hope! You're without Christ, wandering in a sea of hopelessness. And I tell you, when it really hits us, hopelessness. They have no hope.

You let those words echo in your ears. To be in a place where you look at your life and there is no hope. No hope.

But brethren, you know what Paul says? Rejoice in hope! And he's speaking to a people that he really believes have one. They have one in heaven. They have a God of hope.

Jesus Christ is their hope. By the power of the Spirit of God, they are kept continuing in hope. Now brethren, you know what Paul says? He says to the Corinthians, if in this life only, we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

I'll tell you this, if there is no Savior, and there is no salvation, and the atheists are right, and there is no God, and we all came from some primordial soup, we all just evolved from monkeys, in the end the Bible is just a bunch of made up stories by men, put together by men, written by men. There's no God, so there's no inspiration. Just a bunch of stories made for a bunch of people who are just too stupid to believe the truth.

If that's it folks, well you know what? Then we are most to be pitied. There's no question about it. But you know what? We're not the ones to be most pitied.

Because we know there is a hope in heaven. You know what? The atheists can come along, the world can come along, they can laugh at us. But we know that we are not the most to be pitied.

You know why? Because we've tasted the first fruits. Because that hope that is in heaven, we have been given a guarantee of that which is in heaven for us. The guarantee means we're certain to get it.

Our hope is built on something. What is it? The Holy Spirit was given to us. Folks, I'll tell you this.

I will tell you this. You say, how do you know that that hope is valid? How do you know that hope is real? Because you know what Jesus Christ said? My sheep hear My voice. The Spirit of God rushes in, gives a new man a new heart.

They're born again and they have ears now, spiritual ears where they can hear. And I'll tell you what, I've heard the voice and I believe lots of you sitting here have heard it as well. My sheep, they know My voice and they follow Me.

And we've heard it. You say, well, I haven't. That's all confusing.

You're hopeless. You're without hope. But if you will hear His voice, if you will hear it and not harden yourself and come to Him, not harden themselves like those Jews did back there.

Folks, you don't harden yourself. You hear His voice and you come and you follow Him. Folks, we do have a hope! We have a hope! Because I'll tell you this, I may not be what I one day will be, but I'll tell you this, I am not what I used to be.

And though I can't explain exactly how it's all happened, I know this for certain. Right from the very beginning I knew this and I know this 19 years later. Jesus Christ did it.

And so no matter whatever the world says, no matter whatever they want to mock, you know what I've found? I have found that for the first time in my life when I was saved, I had ears to hear this book. For the first time, it came alive. For the first time in my life, I saw, you know what? This book accurately describes who man is, what man needs, most of all, and a Christ who satisfies that need.

I found it describes this creation, this world, and mankind perfectly. And I found that when I began reading it and I began believing it and something suddenly began to happen in my life that I could not attribute to anything of this world. All of a sudden, transformation started coming.

There's no mistaking it. Something was happening. Christ was doing it.

Christ was responsible for it. And you know what? I'll tell you what else. I am certain this is no myth because you know what Scripture says? When you're saved, God pours His love into your heart.

I'll tell you this. I never was able to sing songs like we sang today and have joy in my heart, have expressions of God's love communicated to me. That happened when God saved me.

You know what? The Spirit of God has been put within me. The Spirit of God has given me, helped me, led me on to follow after Christ. And I'll tell you this.

There's no making this up. Jesus Christ has become precious to me. That was never true before.

That was not true. I'll tell you what. The atheist, he can be all confident while he's in his youth, while he's in his strength.

But I'll tell you what. Go look at that atheist when he's on his deathbed and hopelessness has grabbed him by the neck. Then see if he's laughing at you.

Then see if he's mocking. He begins to sense himself on that dreaded rock of despair that I've been talking about in the middle of that ocean of hopelessness. His lone soul looking around for help and there is no help.

And you see if he mocks then. You see if he's talking about monkeys in primordial soup then. I'll tell you he's not.

And you go back in history, you look at some of them like the atheist Beethoven on his deathbed. You know what he could say? You know what came from his lips? He conceded victory to the Nazarene. You know what he really admitted? He fought him his whole life.

You can say he's not there, but I'll tell you this, those that have set their hope on him, we know we have hope because we have the firstfruits. We have it already. We have the guarantee of this thing.

The Spirit of God bears witness with our spirits that we're children of God. We know His voice. We've heard it.

We have a love for Him we never had before. The world can tell us we're fools, but you know what? When you drink of the living waters, you know what Christ said when you drink the living waters? He said you're not going to thirst anymore. You know what I found? Let the world mock all at once.

I've tried this. I've tried that. I've tried that sin, that sin, that sin, that sin, that sin.

I've tried Christ and I say, nope, I don't need anything else. And every true Christian knows that's true. And the world can laugh and the world can mock, but we have found something satisfying in Him that we're not trading Him for for anything else.

Let them say what they will. Let them do what they want. He satisfied us.

God's laws are no longer grievous to us. The thing is, we don't just believe that Jesus Christ is a real person. We do believe that, but that's not all we believe.

We find our hearts burn with love for Him. We find Him altogether lovely. We find Him precious above all things.

We've come to believe that Jesus Christ died for our sins, rose from the dead, gone up to His Father's side, and we believe and we have a hope. He is one day coming for us. We have a supernatural confidence that we never had before.

And God says He gives faith. This is a Spirit-wrought grace. We have confidence.

We have assurance. And He gives us that assurance and He testifies to us. Brethren, you're here, you're a professing Christian.

Do you have that hope? Do you have a hope built on the confidence of the guarantee of a Spirit of the living God given to you? And where that Spirit is, I'll tell you what, He makes His presence known. He makes it known in a number of ways. Do you have a confidence, folks? Are you able to rejoice in hope? Jesus Christ said, look, if you'll let this grab you, Jesus Christ said, your hope is so big, there is such a wealth of glory and treasure and reward to be had.

He says two things I find just incredible. Matthew 5.12, Rejoice and be exceedingly glad. Now, if you've got your ESV, you won't find exceedingly.

The new King James, the old King James have it. I like it. I'm not leaving it out.

In fact, if you've got your ESV, write it in there. Exceedingly! Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven. And He said again in Luke 6.23, Rejoice in that day and leap! Leap for joy! What He is saying is listen, if you realize what weight of glory is awaiting you, what hope there is in heaven for you, you would leap, you would come out of your shoes jumping exceedingly gladly, bouncing around.

Brethren, I don't think we really get it. What's waiting for us? There is a hope here that is phenomenal. And you know what? What is it about this? What is it about this hope that ought to make us exceedingly glad? Make us leap for joy? Listen, Paul uses almost the same expression in Romans 5 too that he uses in Romans 12.12. He says we rejoice in hope.

We rejoice in hope. Here he says rejoice in hope. Over in Romans 5 too, he says we rejoice in hope.

But he adds something. Something that goes to the deepest expectations and longings and hopes of every true Christian's heart. What is it? Oh, beloved, it's the hope of all hopes.

Just listen. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Brethren, this is the heart of the matter.

Our hope is in the glory of God. The fullness of the glory of God shines in the face of Jesus Christ. Brethren, our hope above all other hopes is to have the central glory.

It is to have Christ. That's what it is to have. To have the very hope above all other hopes.

The very glory of the glories of God. To go to the heart of glory. Brethren, isn't that what our hope is? Just to be bathed in glory.

To be overwhelmed with glory. To soak in the beauties of Christ, the glories of Christ forever and forever and forever. Brethren, the believer has a hope because their hope is in Christ.

We have a hope to be saved by Christ, to be with Christ, to enjoy Christ forever, forever, forever. You know what our hope is built on? We look at Christ and we see Him as just the greatest foundation of hope imaginable. You know why? We look at Christ and we see Him just as the most suitable.

He's just the most perfectly fit Savior for me. I mean, you think about it. Can you not put your hope there? You come to Him all desperate, all wicked.

He has a righteousness to offer. You come to Him empty. You come to Him hopeless.

He gives you a hope. He fills all that emptiness. And you come to Him guilty.

He's got shed blood that washes away sin. Brethren, you know what? You go to the Bible. You want to build a hope on something? Look at Christ.

I talked about this a while back. Look at Him reach out and touch the leper. Is that not just the perfect Savior for some of you? A Savior who would reach out and touch a leper? When a sinner sees themselves for what they really are, they look at Christ.

Boy, there's a hope there. If I can only get to Him. He is one who will reach out and touch the most unclean.

I come to Him guilty. There's a perfection of gentleness in Him. Let me tell you something.

You can pretty much weigh in the balances true and false Christianity. I can simply ask you this. And if you're truly going to be honest with me, if you tell me you have a hope of heaven, I want to know what your hope is about heaven.

You tell me, well, Grandma's there. I'd say that's a bad answer. Now, Grandma might be there.

And going to be with those who have passed before us is not a bad thing. I look forward to talking to a number of people. I was just talking to somebody the other day.

I want to talk to that widow who threw in her two mites. So I'm going to ask her, you didn't go without any meal that day, did you? I'm certain she didn't. That's another message.

But you know what? If somebody says, why do you want to go to heaven? I want to go to heaven to see the widow. If that's your greatest reason, that's not a good reason. Because you know what, if your greatest reason is you want to get to heaven to see the widow, well, then you're really magnifying and exalting the widow.

If you want to get there to see Grandma, you're magnifying and exalting Grandma. If you say, I don't like hell. No, I don't like it either.

But if that's your main reason, you see what Paul's saying is, for the child of God, it's the hope of glory. A glory literally as we saw, what is it, in about Romans 8? 18? A glory that we become immersed in. A glory that comes to us.

A glory that wraps us. A glory that comes towards us, that consumes us, that pulls it in. We become... I mean, think of it.

We see Christ. We see that face. Our eyes charmed by His beauty and such explosive glory.

We become just pulled into it. We become like Him. This rag of a body gets cast off.

We get a glorious body like unto His. You know what? When your chief desire for heaven is because your chief desire in heaven is because Jesus Christ is all the glory of Emmanuel's land, then you do justice to Christ. Then you honor Christ.

Then you glorify God. You glorify God when you say, I want heaven because, Lord, I want Your Son above all things. God is pleased with that.

If you don't honor the Son, you don't honor the Father. Now listen to me. We have hope.

But maybe you don't remember this. Maybe some of you are new and you really haven't taken this into context. Let me give you a little Greek lesson, which is an important one.

Why in the world is Paul even saying this? Why in the world does he say, rejoice in hope? Let me tell you this. That comes at us in verse 12. But if you go back up to verse 9 in Romans 12, you know how that verse starts? At least in the ESV it reads this way.

Let your love be genuine. The word genuine is unhypocritical. You know what? In the original, there's no verb.

In fact, let's just keep it at that. There's no verb. You know how verse 9 starts? It basically just starts this way.

Unhypocritical love. In fact, you know what it seems like it is? A title. It's almost like what Paul is doing is he writes a title.

And now he tells us what unhypocritical love is like. Now what in the world do you believe would be the connection between unhypocritical love, loving one another, loving the way Christ told us to love, and rejoicing in hope? Do you guys see a connection? Does anything jump out at you that might lend itself to a connection here? Brethren, I take it to mean this. Your ground of hope does not lie in this world.

So you know what? When a Trevor Johnson says, I'm going to go spend my next 40 years over in the jungles of Papua New Guinea where it's 100 degrees, 100% humidity, I'm dripping with sweat all the time, I'm miserable, I'm getting bitten by bugs, I'm around the heathen and cannibals and these guys don't let me even go to the bathroom in private and my house has no breeze going through it. We just sweat like pigs all the time. Everything gets bowled on.

It doesn't matter if you wash it or not. My family tells me I'm crazy. My in-laws want me to come back.

They fear for the lives of their grandkids and their daughter. And the world looks at him and says, you're an idiot. Of all people, you're most to be pitied.

And I'll tell you this, if none of this is true, then he is most to be pitied. Because he's absolutely foolish. It's stupid to throw it all away if this is all there is.

It's stupid to throw away the pleasures of sin for a season if this is it. It's stupid to lay it all aside if, indeed, when we get to the end, it's all over. But Paul knows it's not.

And he knows that there is not a hope here. This is not the place of our hopes. Our hope is in heaven.

And he says, get your mind off the things here and get them already on there. And lay your treasure there. And get your heart there.

Why? Because that's where the hope is. That's where the treasure is. That's where the glory is.

And if you will think that way, and if you will live that way, then brethren, the really true, the really deep reasons for hope, they're not here. Everything here, it's fleeting. We look for glory there.

It doesn't get revealed in this life, in this world. Our hopes are not set on the here and the now. We hope for something that's yet future.

The best is yet to come. And I think what Paul is saying is that because the Christian's future is so hopeful, so absolutely secure, so absolutely glorious, we are free! From what? From doing what the world thinks Trevor Johnson ought to do. Don't go waste your gifts over there on a bunch of cannibals.

Don't go over there and do that. And you'd be better off here if you were in an air-conditioned house. You'd be better off here if you worked a job and you basically saved up for retirement.

You know what we're freed from? When we rejoice in glory? When we rejoice in that hope? I'll tell you what we're freed from. We're freed from being slaves to here! Because there's no hope here! Well, no! Shouldn't he come back and come to San Antonio and put all his hopes in another Spurs championship? Shouldn't he put his hopes there? There's no hope in that, folks. There's no hope in the stuff here.

There's no hope in money. You know what? This frees us from having to just scratch out a living in this life where we're scratching after money and fame and all the stuff and cars and houses. We're just freed.

This is liberating. When your joy is set on a future hope of glory, you're free! Not free to run around and be all licentious. You're free to sacrifice.

You're free to love. You're free to let go. And like I started this out, hope doesn't put us to shame.

And so even when the world says, Ha ha, Trevor, you're just an idiot! Look at you, you're giving up everything in this life. He can look back and he can just smile. He says, my hope's not going to put me to shame.

I'm going to come stand before the living Christ one day and I guarantee he's not going to be ashamed, folks. And you see, that's what the hope of glory. You know what? If we have a church that is full of joy in the hope of that glory, you will be radical.

You will be free to be radical. You'll be free to let go of the things that your family... We've got a bunch of young people. It's amazing.

It's amazing as I watch the different parents of the young people and they don't like them to go in that direction. Just like Trevor's in-laws. They did not like the fact he went to Papua.

And we have these young people coming to our church and the parents, ultimately, do not like the direction that their children are going in. Why? Because the parents want them secure in this life. The parents want them all hunkered down and safe and wealthy and having nice houses and nice cars and good jobs and everything that the world goes after.

And Paul says, you need to love. You need to love genuinely and if you're going to do it, you've got to have your hope set somewhere else. Don't set that hope here.

Brethren, you have been liberated to love, to sacrifice, to give yourself. Why? Because no matter what happens, even if the cannibals run out of the jungle, cut your head off, throw you in the pot and eat you, you're home free with an expectation of pure glory. Come on! That doesn't encourage somebody to do something for Christ.

I don't know what can. Well, you're dismissed.

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