



THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE

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1 Timothy 1:1

“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, *who is* our hope...”

SERMONIC PRAYER

Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me. The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not declined from thy law. I remembered thy judgments of old, O LORD; and have comforted myself.

Psalm 119:49-52

INTRODUCTION

Today is not the first time I have preached this text. In 2016, I preached this text in an attempt to give hope to a hurting mother during the funeral service for her son. The young man was murdered during a drug deal that turned into a robbery. He was killed for eighty dollars of marijuana. As a new pastor at the church, I lamented this death because this nineteen-year-old young man grew up in our church. I also lamented over the ones who murdered him because their grandparents were members of our church too. So many people needed hope, and I believe the words of Paul were the words God wanted me to share with them.

The second time I preached this text was in October 2017, a couple of weeks after our Evangelical Homiletics Society Annual Conference was held at Gordon-Conwell. I preached the funeral of another young man that was murdered at a gas station. He was leaving the store and was ambushed gunfire. His mother called me and asked "why did God let this happen?" I did not have answer for her, but I tried to give her hope from God's word. So, what is hope?

WHAT IS HOPE?

In 1965 Paul Tillich preached at Harvard's Memorial Church. The message was entitled *The Right to Hope*. Tillich opened with these words:

A few years ago the humanist and Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch became famous through a two-volume work about hope, the hopes of men in their, personal lives and as members of social groups and movements. He recognized to what degree hope is a permanent force in every man, a driving power as long as he lives. We must agree when we look both into ourselves and at human history, and we may wonder why it is so seldom that philosophers and theologians speak about it, its root, and its justification. They don't ask what kind of force it is that creates and maintains hope, even if everything seems to contradict it. Instead, they devaluate hope by calling it wishful thinking or utopian fantasy. But nobody can live without hope, even if it were only for the smallest things which give some satisfaction even under the worst of conditions, even in poverty, sickness, and social failure. Without hope, the tension of our life toward the future would vanish, and with it, life itself. We would end in despair, a word that originally meant "without hope," or in deadly indifference.

What is hope? Hope is a unique word. It is a noun and a verb. As

a verb, hope means “to cherish with anticipation.” As a noun, hope means “someone or something on which hopes are centered our only hope for victory.” So, what is hope? For me hope is putting your trust or confidence in someone or something with the expectation they or it will fulfill your desires.

Hope is the foundation and inspiration of our dreams, goals, and future. Without hope-Dreams die! Without hope-Future fades! Without hope-Spirits shrivel! Without hope-Visions vanish!

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, “We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope” and “Everything done in the world is done by hope.”

President Barack Obama made the following statement during his first presidential campaign:

Hope is not blind optimism. It's not ignoring the enormity of the task ahead or the roadblocks that stand in our path. It's not sitting on the sidelines or shirking from a fight. Hope is that thing inside us that insists, despite all evidence to the contrary, that something better awaits us if we have the courage to reach for it, and to work for it, and to fight for it. Hope is the belief that destiny will not be written for us, but by us, by the men and women who are not content to settle for the world as it is, who have the courage to remake the world as it should be.

The Apostle Paul said: Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13).

With all of this hope, why do we experience lament? We are disappointed in life because we put our hope in the wrong places. We put our hope in people that are imperfect, places that are organized by people, churches that are led by people, conventions that are directed by people, a country founded by people and a constitution written by people. All of these are the wrong places to place our hope for lament. So, where should we find hope?

FINDING HOPE

That leads us to our Scripture. Paul is writing to his son in the faith, Timothy. Paul was Timothy's mentor for ministry. Paul had left Timothy with the responsibility of leading the churches in Ephesus while Paul continued his missionary work to the other churches surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. Paul was in Macedonia when he wrote this letter to Timothy. As a young man, Timothy was experiencing conflict as he led the church. Paul wrote this letter to give Timothy encouragement and instructions for leading the church.

Oftentimes when we study the letter of 1 Timothy, we relegate the book as a resource for ministerial ceremonies, like licensing, ordination, pastor's anniversaries, and thus limit our reading to the third chapter of this letter, which is a source of exegetical and ecclesiastical debate. I think we should read chapter one before we jump to chapter three. The first words Paul tells Timothy are so important...Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, *who is our hope*...

Paul told Timothy Jesus is our hope. This simple statement was packed with power. This simple four word phrase revealed Paul's trust and confidence. Timothy knew Paul's hardships in life. And based on Paul's experiences, he should have been hopeless. Listen to what Paul endured.

But in whatever respect anyone *else* is bold—I speak in foolishness—I am just as bold myself. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. *I have been* on frequent

journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; *I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from *such* external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches (2 Corinthians 11:22-28).

And after all of that Paul was able to tell Timothy Jesus Christ was his hope. Christ is our hope. Jesus Christ is the Christian's hope. So why should we place our hope in Christ?

At this point, I am supposed to explain what Paul meant in this text? However, instead of looking at this text from an exegetical perspective, I want to layout this Scripture theologically. So why should we put our hope in Christ? We should put our hope in Christ because of who he is...the person of Christ, what he has done...the power of Christ, and what he will do...the promises of Christ.

Who is Jesus Christ? Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Mark 1:1 reads, The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. What does "Son of God" mean? First, "Son of God" means that there is a unique relationship between Jesus and God.

All Christians have a relationship with God. He is our Father and we are His children. However, we don't have the same unique relationship with God that Jesus has with God. The phrase "Son of God" refers to the unique relationship with God and Jesus.

The phrase "Son of God" also means that Jesus IS God. Jesus is more than an angel. He is more than a man. Jesus is fully God and fully man. The Bible affirms this several times. John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 10:30 reads, "I and the Father are one." And Colossians 2:9 says, "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form." Jesus is God; therefore, He has the same attributes as God. This means that Jesus can do what God do because he is God. So put your hope in Jesus Christ because

he is God.

We should also put our hope in Christ because of what he has done and can do. I am referring to the power of Jesus. The power of Jesus is demonstrated in the Gospel. The following texts underscore Jesus' power:

Philippians 3:10—that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;

Romans 1:16—For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

1 Corinthians 1:18—For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

We see his power in the gospels. Jesus turned water into wine. This miracle defied science and nature. He fed 5000 men with two fish and five loaves of bread. He had power in the strings of his clothing to heal a woman with a long-term blood disease. He gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the mute, and strength to the weak and paralyzed. He raised Lazarus from the dead. What has Jesus done and continues to do? He gives people hope!

We should also put our hope in Christ because of what he promised to do. He promised to make us fishers of men if we follow him. He promised to take care of us if we put his Kingdom first. He promised to give us rest if we come to him. He promised to build his church if we allow him. He promised to take us with him if we come after him. He promised to send help if we trust him. Jesus gives us promises.

I believe we should put our hope in Jesus because of the person of Christ, the power of Christ, and the promises of Christ. So where is your hope?

I put my hope in Jesus because of the person he is. I put

my hope in Christ because he is human and divine. According to John 1:1, he is the embodiment of God. He is the physical manifestation of our Eternal Heavenly Father.

I put my hope in Christ because of what he can do.

Jesus has the power to turn our affliction into affirmation.

Jesus has the power to turn our bitterness to blessings.

He has the power to make our confusion our comfort.

He can turn our defeat into dominance.

Jesus has the power to turn our exhaustion into exaltation.

He can turn our failure into faith.

He has the power to transform my guilt into glory.

He has the power to take my hurt and heal it.

He can take the insecurities about myself and make it into ideas for his glory.

He can turn my joyless spirit into jubilant praise.

He has the power to take those who try to kill me and make them kind.

Jesus turns my lament to laughter.

My misery into majesty.

And my naysayers become my nominators.

Jesus can make my oppression and opportunity.

He can turn my pain into praise.

My quitting can become quintessential.

He can make my rejection my redemption.

I was a sinner but now I am a saint.

My trials become my triumph.

People's undermining becomes my uplift.

I was a victim but now I am victorious. Victim to victor

He has the power to turn my worry to worship.

My anxieties become my axioms.

My yearnings turn into my yields.

My zilch becomes zeal because of the power of Jesus Christ!!

I put my hope in Jesus Christ because of his person, his power, and promise.

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus Christ, my
righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand.



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