

## *“Anchored to Hope”*

*13 For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14 saying, “I will surely bless you and I will surely multiply you.” 15 And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise. 16 For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute. 17 In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, 18 so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. 19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, 20 where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. – Hebrews 6:13-20 NASB*

Hope is such a powerful, powerful weapon for the Christian. I heard of an experiment several years ago that really marked me. I have shared it here before a few years ago but the Lord led me to share it again. The experiment was with rats in a science lab. They weren't testing for medicine or anything like that. They were actually testing the limits of hope. This is not the nicest or prettiest experiment, but it really drives the point home. What these scientists did was put a few rats in a bucket of water and timed how long it took for the rats to drown. It was somewhere around thirty minutes or so. Then the scientists took a second group of rats and put them in the bucket. But this time they took the rats out at 29 minutes to dry them off and give them a rest. Then they took put the rats back in for another round. This time the rats survived in the water for over 24 hours. The only difference was hope. They knew they would get a relief if they just held on.

Now when we think about hope, we think that we need it during very difficult times or when it seems like things will never get better. But let me challenge you on something. Imagine you had a big creek behind your property. On that creek you had a little rowboat or canoe. Even though the creek is still, quiet, and gentle...if you don't tie that canoe down what will happen? It will *drift away*. Can I propose this morning that we need hope in both trouble waters and when things are still and quiet? It is hard to keep our focus on hope when the world is collapsing around us but it can be tempting to drift away to lukewarmness when everything is going great. We need an anchor of hope in both the good times and the bad.

I appreciate how the author of Hebrews uses Abraham as an example of having hope in the middle of the waiting. He waited a long time to see the promise of God fulfilled in his life. Romans 4:18-22 tell us that Abraham believe “in hope against hope.” Hope is a confident expectation. So, in positive expectation of the promise of God, *against* an expectation of the plan of the enemy...Abraham believed. Hebrews tells us that Abraham “patiently waited.” That's why he is the father of faith...if you can “patiently wait” for years without wavering in your faith, wow. Verse 18 tell us that there are two unchangeable things in God. Some translations say “immutable.” The two things that can't change are God's *promise* and God's *oath*. And not only does God want to give us His promise and oath it says here that *God* wants to give us strong encouragement. Did you catch that? God is not just offering encouragement, but *strong* encouragement.

Then we get to the main part of the text...hope as an anchor of the soul. I have a confession this morning church family. I don't believe the NASB did a good job translating this part of the Scripture. It uses "hope" here two times, but it is not the same word as "Hope" in Romans 4. The word hope in verse 19 just means "and." It can be more properly translated "This we have as an anchor of the soul." The "this" is referring to God's unchangeable ways. So yes, we can hope in God's unchangeable ways but the focus here...or the anchor of the soul is not really *hope* as much as it is God's unchangeable ways. It is because God encourages us and is unchanging that we can have hope and joy and peace.

Hope is logical or psychological. Hope is theological. It is supernatural. I found one definition of hope that I love. It says:

***"Hope is a confident, courageous, expectation of future good, firmly grounded in God's promises and faithfulness, rather than mere wishful thinking."***

Many see hope as simply wishing something happens. "I hope I get the job I applied for." Biblical hope is different. "I thank you God that you have promised me a good job and I confidently wait upon your provision." Faith and hope work closely together. Hebrews 11:1 says, "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for." Look at this breakdown really quick:

**Faith = *pistis* – conviction of truth.**

**Hope = *elpis* – Confident expectation.**

When we have faith (which is a conviction of truth/the Word of God) it helps us to rest on a confident expectation of God's promises coming to pass. When these two elements are strong in your life, it is easier to be patient in the waiting season of life. But like anything, we need to constantly put the image of God's promises before us. You better believe that the enemy is going to work really hard to put his agenda constantly before you. He will work really hard to speak lies to you relentlessly to get you to lose sight of the promise of God and instead meditate on your problem.

In my short life I have discovered three ways that I can walk in better hope. The first is supernaturally. There are times when I get a gift of hope that is stirred up in my soul that didn't come from me or my works. It wasn't anything I did but solely the supernatural grace of Jesus. Let me give you an example. In 2017 I planted a church in California right after I went through a horrible church experience. Somewhere deep down inside I knew I wasn't supposed to plant a church, I was supposed to wait on the Lord. Although the church plant did very well, my home life and my physical body were suffering. I knew God was calling us out of California. I also knew God had a promise for us that He was going to put us in a perfect church...which is this one. I can't tell you how many times when I was mopping at my day job, or working on a sermon on my day off that I was stirred with hope that this was only a season. God sustained me supernaturally so many times in that season. There are just moments when you can't physically do it and the Lord steps in with what our main Scripture says is "Strong encouragement" from the Lord. So, supernatural stirred up hope.

The next way I see hope rising in us is through the renewed mind. As we all know, renewing the mind means to change the mind. Change is not always easy. I say that as a pastor who has served in church for 25 years. Change is not always easy. But we must daily renew our minds in God's truth. The greatest way to renew our minds is to replace a worry or a lie with Biblical truth. We purposely take a thought captive and submit it to Christ and in prayer ask for a revelation of a truth that stands above the lie. There have been several pastors who have written books and sermons about a topic known as "practical atheism." It basically describes a person who has given their lives to the Lord and received salvation but live no differently than their unsaved neighbor. They react to problems the same way, get easily angered the same way, never speak about the Lord the same way, etc. In your heart you have accepted Jesus but, in your actions, act as if there is no God. When you renew your mind, your behaviors, and reactions line up to truth. We can all agree that the devil does not want you to walk in hope. Therefore, everything he tells you is going to be against hope. When you renew your mind to apprehend the enemy from stealing your hope.

The final way I see hope rising in us is through our history with God. It is important for us to keep a spiritual record of God's love and power. I would encourage you to keep a record in three areas. The first is revelation the Lord gives to you. I have a Word doc on my computer with all my favorite revelations over the last two decades that the Lord has given me. I review them often. The second area is in a Word from the Lord that someone else gives you. I have several prophetic words, many dating back to 2008 that I keep on file. You will be amazed how a word given to you years, even decades ago, can still be pregnant and give birth to fresh revelation. The final thing to record is testimonies. How many times does the Lord have to give you a victory in a certain area until you finally stop worrying and being afraid? No condemnation because it has taken me years to not fear the church doors closing. God has shown me His provision over the years too many times for me to worry now.

Let me sum up what I said with this phrase, "hope is the natural byproduct of consistent devotion and confident expectation." So, hope is given to us supernaturally, through a renewed minds, and through remember our history with the Lord. This requires a response from us and I want to break that down with some encouragement this morning. If you are taking notes please fill out point 1:

**POINT #1 – Walking in hope supernaturally means I must Believe.**

In Matthew 5 when Jesus told the man "Do not fear, only believe" the Greek word there means, "to trust." If we are going to believe the promises of God in our lives, we must learn to trust God. Even Jesus' own disciples struggle to fully trust God. After Jesus walked on the water and His disciples reacted in fear Jesus said:

***40 And He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?" 41 They became very much afraid and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" – Mark 4:40-41 NASB***

Heard this Baptist preacher share this story: “There is no situation I can get into that God cannot get me out. Some years ago, when I was learning to fly, my instructor told me to put the plane into a steep and extended dive. I was totally unprepared for what was about to happen. After a brief time, the engine stalled, and the plane began to plunge out-of-control. It soon became evident that the instructor was not going to help me at all. After a few seconds, which seemed like eternity, my mind began to function again. I quickly corrected the situation. Immediately I turned to the instructor and began to vent my fearful frustrations on him. He very calmly said to me, "There is no position you can get this airplane into that I cannot get you out of. If you want to learn to fly, go up there and do it again." At that moment God seemed to be saying to me, "Remember this. As you serve Me, there is no situation you can get yourself into that I cannot get you out of. If you trust me, you will be all right." That lesson has been proven true in my ministry many times over the years.”

It takes courage to believe God for something big and supernatural. It takes nothing to have unbelief. One preacher said, “unbelief is safe because it takes no risks and always gets what it expects.”

**POINT #2 – Walking in hope with a renewed mind means I must Fight.**

Understand that sometimes the Lord doesn't give us an answer to the problem. Sometimes He gives us a promise so that we can exercise our faith and partner with Him. If the enemy succeed at consistently distracting you, it will develop a stronghold in your life. Look at the instruction Paul gives the Corinthians:

*3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, 4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. 5 We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, 6 and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.  
– 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 NASB1995*

You know your mind is renewed when the impossible looks logical.

**POINT #3 – Walking in hope through my history means I must Rest.**

Another passage in Hebrews tells us to “work hard to enter God's rest.” Look what Jesus says about entering His rest in Matthew 11:

*“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” – Matthew 11:28-29 NASB1995*

Jesus says three things = 1. Go to Him first. 2. Take His yoke (burden for the world – never lose sight) 3. Learn from Him. So, in your time of worry or stress you need to say “Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, I come to You. Help me to remember that my citizenship is in heaven not in this world.

Help me to remember that the Holy Spirit is my help. Teach me what You would have me do in this situation Lord.”

CONCLUSION – When I served in the church in California, I had a couple that flipped multi-million-dollar homes. I prayed over them one time that they would be the Magnolia of the west. We had dinner with them one day when they were first starting out their business. I remember being in this big old house and the whole place was under remodel. There was no flooring only concrete, walls were knocked out, and there was plastic everywhere. They actually lived in the homes they were flipping at first until the business took off. I remember sitting in their kitchen and the kitchen was completely remodeled. It looked a little weird seeing this elegant kitchen in the middle of a construction zone. I said to them, “It must be hard living in the house while it is being remodeled. I can’t imagine the whole family only using one bathroom.” The wife told me, “Well, that’s why the first thing we remodel before anything else is the kitchen. The house can be a disaster and under construction, but we will always have home cooked meals and a place to connect and fellowship.” Their kitchen was their anchor in the mess.