

Bainbridge

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Sermon "Our Only Hope"

According to the American Heritage Dictionary the definition of "Hope" is to wish for something with expectation of its fulfillment, to have confidence and trust in. People put a lot of "hope" if you will in the word hope. I have often heard people say and I have even said it myself-I hope the weather is nice this weekend because of a wedding, parade, baseball game etc., whatever the case may be. Or I hope that everything goes well for you when you have your surgery or see the lawyer or go to the bank about the loan etc. In these examples and even in the definition of the word hope in the dictionary there is nothing to hold the word up, no meat to it, nothing that anyone can count on to bring whatever the expectation is to fulfillment.

Basically a person can hope all he or she wants to but that doesn't mean it's going to happen. If I hope for nice weather because I am going on vacation, that is all it is just a word and just something to say because hoping will not change the weather one way or another.

However, our one and only hope comes from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Bible is filled with verses not only directly with the word hope in them but indirectly as well. In Psalm 65, vs. 5, "You answer us with awesome deeds of righteousness, O God, our Savior, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas." In Paul's 2nd letter to Timothy, chapter 4:6-8 and 16-18, Paul doesn't mention the word hope but you can almost hear it in what he says. He is saying to Timothy, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing." To paraphrase this-Paul put his hope in the Lord, he did what he had to do while on earth to serve the Lord and all that time he was looking forward to the crown of righteousness.

In Job 13:15, Job says, "Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him." There are several places in the Psalms that mention hope. Psalm 42:5, "Why are you

downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him my Savior and my God.” Again in Psalm 62:5, “Find rest, O my soul, in God alone, my hope comes from him.”

Isaiah 40:31 “But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.” Romans 8:24-25, “For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not have, we wait patiently for it.”

All these verses and more are all telling us the same thing. In order to hope and expect fulfillment of our expectations, we need to put our hope in Jesus Christ, the author and Perfector of our faith. In Colossians 1:27, “To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” According to Hebrews 6:19, “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.” 1st Corinthians, 13:13, now these three remain, faith, hope and love.

So this little four-letter word carries a lot of weight behind it. It is backed by God! He knows that if we truly put our hope in Him and not something that is man-made or as unpredictable as the weather that it will be as good as gold. In “These Days” for 10/11/16, the title for the daily reading is Hope for Creation. Part of the reading says, “This too is our resurrection hope: the restoration of creation.” At times we may feel that there is no hope any more. Violence and death are all around us, however if we really think about the resurrection there is hope because we know that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was resurrected from the grave. We should never give up but put our hope and trust in the one and only triune God.

Some might say but are there any guarantees that if we put our hope in God that he will come through for us? You better believe there are! The Bible is filled with promises that God followed through on. He not only keeps his promises to us but he continues to answer prayers. So why would anyone put their hope in anything else? To say that you hope for something good to happens means nothing; but to say that you put your hope in Jesus Christ is surely putting it in the solid Rock on which we stand.

Let us pray: “Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us the gifts of faith, hope and charity; and that we may obtain what you promise, make us love what you

command; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen”