

Saved in Hope

Romans 8.24-27

Hope is a central feature of life. Without hope, nobody would get out of bed in the morning.

We hope we will have a good day. We hope we will be successful. We hope things will go well in our pursuits, our lives. Hope feeds ambition. We hardly even think about it.

All people have some kind of hope in them.

But the Bible presents to us a hope that is different.

Human hope is based loosely on some mixture of me and the world working together for good. This is hope based on the Trinity of me, myself and I.

But biblical hope is set squarely in the Lord as our all in all. It is a hope built on Him, His character and His control, and especially His purpose toward the believer.

This divine hope, over mere human hope, is not a mere hope so. This is a hope described as something strong, immoveable, as steadfast and certain. The Bible calls it an anchor of hope!

The world hopes for the best and is much disappointed; but the Bible offers the best hope and cannot fail or disappoint.

Which hope have you?

This biblical hope then is something that calls for our thoughtful and heartfelt engagement, and earnestly and eagerly look forward to it.

Clearly, mere worldly hope does not so engage the soul.

We saw last week the second of three groans in Rom. 8.23. The children or heirs of God groan with the creation awaiting their coming freedom, the redemption of their bodies. You have the Holy Spirit as the first fruits of the sure, future eternal harvest.

This is where Paul adds in verse 24 these six words: “In hope we have been saved!”

Not that we are being saved, which is true; nor that we are going to be saved in the future, which also is true. But here it says, **WE HAVE BEEN SAVED** in a past and completed way!

But all of this tremendous salvation is emphatically “in hope”. You who have been saved are saved in hope of being fully saved too, redeemed from head to toe, your bodies changed and raised up to be with and like Christ’s risen human body!

This is something to greatly help us. We who groan and wait, who are weak in ourselves, have this strong support and prospect before us. We who often don’t even know how to pray, have a name, a house, a title, a crown in heaven!

The Lord is telling you that your salvation is set in this thing called hope. In your present condition, your salvation is largely future. So, you must exercise hope to walk here in this groaning world, this groaning soul, under this groaning Spirit, who we will see shortly in verse 26!

John Bunyan has Christian locked up for several days in the dreary and deadly dungeon of Doubting Castle, under the brute Giant Despair. But at last he discovers he had in his pocket all along a most wonderful key to let him out of his prison. It is the key of hope! Would you have this key? Would you rather be a captive of hope or of despair? This is a mighty key indeed!

Hope is used nearly 150 times in the Bible. Hope has greeted us with its smile already in Romans. In 4.18, Abraham's faith believed in hope against hope – in a divine hope over the hopes of flesh and blood.

And in chapter 5 – we exalt in hope of the glory of God; hope does not disappoint because the love of God is shed in our hearts.

This is not a once in a while thing, or just a heart thing, or a head thing. Hope is something produced for our feet! This hope is actually made and strengthened by tribulations working perseverance.

But perhaps the most important truth about hope is to understand the difference between our hope outside and inside of us; objective hope and subjective hope.

Hope is both a sure object we trust AND a hope is the trusting response within me.

When Paul writes to easily discouraged Timothy, he refers to Jesus Christ as “OUR HOPE!” Jesus is the embodiment of hope. As Geoff Wilson says, ‘Our risen and glorified Lord is HIMSELF our hope, because his triumph over sin and death provides the objective pledge of our final redemption.’”

In Hebrews 6 we hear of the anchor for our souls, that is, a hope set before us!

So this is the GROUND of hope, which in the Bible is called hope! It would be right for us to say, we hope in our hope. WE are using hope in two different ways. Your hoping, your sense of confident expectation, is only as good as it rests on this hope! Hope, hoping, in hope! That is not hoping in itself but hope in God!

“What an excellent ground of hope and confidence we have when we reflect upon these three things – the Father’s love, the Son’s merit, and the Spirit’s power!” Thomas Manton

So our subjective hoping – your having hope inside, being a hope-filled believer in Christ – is a fruit of faith in His grace and power to you!

Faith is the mother bird that brings from God’s promises and covenant, the food of hope back to the nest of hope.

If there is no Word, no promise, there is no hope. And if there is no acting on the gospel and God’s love, there is no food for hope, as well as for a lot of other things! Here are the waters of life, but we can only drown in them if we will not drink by faith!

John Calvin put it so well.

Hope is the expectation of those things faith has believed to be truly promised by God.

Faith believes the truthfulness of God, and hope expects the giving of it in due time.

Faith believes him to be our Father, and hope expects him always to act towards us in this character;

Faith believes eternal life is given to us, hope expects it one day to be revealed;

Faith is the foundation on which hope rests ~ hope nourishes and sustains faith. (J Calvin)

God has said of His people – let them know that I have a hope and a future for them! Let them live in the light of this coming reality. Let them know in the depths of their hearts of my love for them, my grace to them, my faithfulness which is beneath them, and what I have in store for them – a foretaste, a down payment. May it be enough to richly whet their appetite for things above while not giving them the fullness of it yet, until at last all my children are brought together as one, to My glory and My Son’s honor!

This is why there is no hope without waiting, and there is no waiting without patience!

Waiting is a big deal with hope. If I have hope the bus is coming, I will wait for it. But nobody waits for a bus they know is not coming!

How much more when the God of the universe has said, ‘wait for me!’ I am coming to bring you such splendor beyond compare! So not only do you wait for it, impatiently; you wait for him eagerly, gladly. That future hope is making a way into your heart to mold you into captives of hope!

So let us consider now the strengthening for hope – of building up this proper object of our faith so hope will grow and fly. You have seen how hope works; consider now how hope grows.

Rom. 12.6 says we are to rejoice in hope. This tells us that hope in us can rise and fall. Somedays we are filled with joy, and somedays, well, not so much – we are filled with lesser things!

This is where Romans 8 comes into play, for there are three things as fuel to your hope to be grasped here.

And the first is how hope is built firmly, squarely on God's purpose and will toward us.

The river of this passage is rushing forward to this glorious will and purpose of God toward His children. He who called you has done so according to his will and purpose; his foreknowledge and predestination.

In other words, your hope is taken out of your hands; they are placed fully in the hands of the triune God.

That will, that purpose, is to bring many sons to glory; to call many from four corners of the world, and to be conformed fully to Jesus Christ. These will, these must enter the kingdom prepared for them from before the foundation of the earth!

God's purpose cannot be thwarted; your hope needs to live there at the foot of that mountain – God is calling you according to his good purpose; He has sent His Son, God in the flesh; He has poured out His love lavishly by His Holy Spirit.

I am not saved by my purpose, by my hopefulness, but by God being my hope, Jesus my hope, the Spirit who holds me and brings me at last to that sure end.

Now, right next to the purpose of God is the presence of the Spirit of adoption. Hope is built upon the presence of God the Spirit in us, with us, through Christ. Elsewhere, Paul shouts: “Christ in you, the hope of glory!”

We are weak in ourselves, not perfected, groaning – these are all good signs, by the way. When a Christian struggles, it shows the presence of life; it is when there is no struggle that death is evident.

But here is the mysterious Spirit at work who helps us to pray as we ought, and what is more – He is interceding for us!

Christian, you have two intercessors – Jesus, in heaven, at the right hand of the Father, and here in you, the Spirit, the seal of your Redemption, He is interceding for you.

We groan in our body by the Spirit and He groans in our bodies for us!

Here is a news flash! You do not yet have heavenly bodies! But you have within you the One who will make it so! And He cannot fail!

There is your increase in hope! He who has begun a good work in you will complete it!

God is for you in His purpose – which cannot change; God is with you in His presence – He will, He cannot ever leave you or forsake you until His work is done; now one more.

His promise is to you.

Paul goes to some trouble to remind us that hope’s fulfillment is not now. He points out the obvious. Hope that is seen is not hope. In other

words, the fulfillment is not yet, otherwise, we would not need to look forward to them.

We do not see the promise fulfilled, but we hear the promise of God made to us. We do not see but we hear. We do not yet have but we believe. And the Lord who has saved us, will save us to the full!

Two texts are of great importance:

Romans 15.4 says: *For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*

And Hebrews 6.17-20: turn there and read:

What do these teach you?

1. God's commitment to you. He hasn't just befriended you. He is in family, in bond with you. You are one with Him!
2. Second, the two immutable things are God's word (and he cannot lie), and his oath! Remarkable, God swears by Himself, His own name! We swear by God; God swears by God! This God did for Abraham and all his children in Gen. 15 and 22.
3. The believer has God for his refuge. He said to believing Abraham: 'I am your shield and exceedingly great reward.'
4. You have an anchor into the heights of heaven itself! The most intimate and special! This is so by one who is God Himself, has stooped to you in becoming bone of your bone, flesh of your flesh, and ordained to this very service – to bring you to heaven. If you don't come to heaven, he has failed and not just you. And He never fails!

Dear Christian, your hope must feed upon the Word of God; your hope cannot be fed with bread alone but with every word that proceeds from his mouth!

O how trustworthy is his word! That word that created the universe! That Word that upholds all things! That Word that will speak with awful finality on the last day!

We want to walk by sight and not faith. We want to find our hope fulfilled now and see it now. We are children of God! Why does not our world respond to who we are in Christ in a positive way? No! You have it backwards! It responds to you in a negative way because you are children of God!

A couple of loose ends then as we wrap up –

1. Do not look for your fulfilled hope here – this is a fool’s errand, to try to find heaven here and now. This is the Romans 7 in Romans 8 – we do not get past ‘O wretched man that I am’ and the two laws going at it. But let this present struggle minister to your longing for things above, with an outstretched neck. Does this not help to put this life in perspective? “The nearer to heaven in hopes, the farther from earth in desires.” William Gurnall
2. Second, focus on making your calling and election sure. Have you been called? Then have you been saved in hope, you have been converted! Be sure of that great change which the Bible so much insists upon is the making of a Christian. Assurance of faith and hope go hand in hand. If you are not in Christ, if you are rejecting him, God is not for you but your enemy; an enemy who graciously calls you now to come to him! The wages of sin is death, but the

gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. This calling is a holy calling and you are called to be saints. You belong to a holy Father, whose name is to be hallowed. So dare not claim a title to heaven until you can show your pedigree with a holy life.

3. Third, grow in love through Jesus. All things work together for good to those who love God. The God of love spared nothing for you; wait on Him. The Holy Spirit produces the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control. Draw closer to Jesus in His love, in his cross, in his joy in receiving you. Paul wrote to the troubled Corinthians: these three abide – faith, hope and love; and the greatest of these is love. So if love increases, faith and hope increase; faith and hope feed love, and in turn, love encourages greater faith, and higher hopes. Growing in love by knowing God and drawing near to God in prayer – two qualities mentioned in our next two verses, 8:26-27.