

FBC POWELL, 9-29-19 AM NOTES
"Hope's Foundation and Building"
Ephesians 1-6
2 in Series, "Hope in a Hopeless World"

"Hope" in the Old Testament – A positive sense of expectation that is rooted in God.

Psalms 71:14 (NASB) "But as for me, I will hope continually, and will praise You yet more and more."

"Hope" in the New Testament - Hope is the joyful confidence and expectation that what God has promised, He will accomplish in His perfect timing.

Habakkuk 3:17-19 (NASB) ¹⁷ "Though the fig tree should not blossom and there be no fruit on the vines, *though* the yield of the olive should fail and the fields produce no food, though the flock should be cut off from the fold and there be no cattle in the stalls, ¹⁸ Yet I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. ¹⁹ The Lord God is my strength, and He has made my feet like hinds' feet, and makes me walk on my high places."

Romans 15:4 (NASB) "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."

I. Hope's Foundation Is Our Union with Christ (Ephesians 1-3)

Two Approaches to the Christian Life: "The Do to Be" approach or the "Be to Do" approach

Ephesians 1:3 (NASB) "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who has blessed us** with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ."

Ephesians 1:4-5 (NASB) ⁴ "Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love ⁵ He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will."

Ephesians 1:6 (NASB) "To the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved."

1 Corinthians 15:10b (NASB) "...I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me."

II. Hope's Building Is Our Labor for Christ (Ephesians 4-6)

1 Corinthians 15:10 (NASB) "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me."

Ephesians 4:1 (NASB) "Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called."

Ephesians 4:1b (NASB) "...walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called".

Ephesians 4:3 (NASB) "Being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Ephesians 4:17b (NASB) "...walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind."

Ephesians 4:24 (NASB) "And put on the new self, which in *the likeness of* God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."

Ephesians 4:30 (NASB) “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

Ephesians 5:2 (NASB) “And walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.”

Ephesians 5:8 (NASB) “For you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light.”

Ephesians 5:15 (NASB) “Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise.”

Ephesians 5:18 (NASB) “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.”

Ephesians 5:22 (NASB) “Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord.”

Ephesians 5:25 (NASB) “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.”

Ephesians 6:1 (NASB) “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.”

“Union with Christ is the central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation.” John Murray

“The subject of spiritual union is the most important, the most profound, and yet the most blessed of any that is set forth in the sacred Scriptures; and yet, sad to say, there is hardly any [doctrine] which is now more generally neglected.”

—Arthur Pink

Romans 15:13 (NASB) “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.”

Chapter 2: Hope’s Foundation and Building

Ephesians 1-6

“Hope”, as many use it in everyday conversation has a different meaning than “hope” in the Bible. In our everyday use of the word *hope*, it means to wish or desire. An example would be, “I hope that it rains soon.” That use of the word *hope* does not even resemble the meaning of *hope* in the Bible. The way we typically use the word hope reduces it to little more than a desire for a comfortable outcome. There are several Hebrew words translated “hope” in the Old Testament. An often-used Hebrew word that is translated “Hope” means “a positive sense of expectation that is rooted in God.” An example would be Psalms 71:14: “But as for me, I will hope continually, and will praise You yet more and more.” The Greek word most commonly translated “hope” in the New Testament has this meaning: “Hope is the joyful confidence and expectation that what God has promised, He will accomplish in His perfect timing.”

In the midst of pain, disappointment and loss, hope brings joy because biblical hope is focused on God’s promises, God’s sovereignty, and God’s ability. In the midst of confusion, uncertainty, and pain, hope says, “You can be confident that God is sovereign, and HE WILL bring His Word, His promises to pass.” The timing of those promises may not be what we desire, but we must stand on the truth that God is never early, and He is never late. In the midst of what looks like failure, hope brings positive expectation – expectation that God is in control and He can turn

what looks like failure into success from Heaven's viewpoint (and that is the only viewpoint that counts). That is the truth we saw in the last message from the book of Habakkuk. Though Habakkuk faced a painful present and a painful future, he did so with peace and confidence because He knew the promises of God. I never tire of hearing Habakkuk's confession of faith in Habakkuk 3:17-19. Even though the word "hope" isn't used, he gives us a perfect picture of what hope looks like. Habakkuk 3:17-19: "

Though the fig tree should not blossom and there be no fruit on the vines, *though* the yield of the olive should fail and the fields produce no food, though the flock should be cut off from the fold and there be no cattle in the stalls, Yet I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and He has made my feet like hinds' *feet*, and makes me walk on my high places.

In my opinion, that passage is *the greatest* example of genuine hope in the Bible.

The reason that hopelessness prevails among so many, even in the church, is because most do not know (or know but refuse to believe) the promises of Scripture about the future. We read in Romans 15:4: "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*."

In this message, we will see hope's foundation and hope's building on that foundation.

I. Hope's Foundation Is Our Union with Christ (Ephesians 1-3)

The doctrine of *The Christian's union with Christ* is considered by many theologians to be the most important doctrine in Scripture related to salvation. Many, if not most Christians have never heard of the doctrine of *The Christian's Union with Christ*! At least parts of what is included in this vitally important doctrine goes at times by different names. Sometimes it is called "The Doctrine of the Christian's Identity in Christ"; Pioneer missionary to inland China, Hudson Taylor, called these truths "The Exchanged Life".

Though this doctrine is found throughout the New Testament, it is the focus of Ephesians 1-3. These truths turned my whole concept of the Christian life upside down or more accurately, "right side up" in the early 1980's. The human instruments through which I discovered these truths were Dr. Charles Solomon, and Bob Culbertson, whom he had disciplined. I will always be grateful to them.

What I want to do in this message is to make this truth as simple as possible without distorting the doctrine. In a sense, there are two ways that professing Christians seek to live out the Christian life. One is biblical and brings joy and Christlikeness in everyday life. The other is not biblical and leads to frustration and defeat in everyday life. These two approaches to the Christian life are the "do to be" approach and the "be to do" approach.

The Devil has been very successful in steering many if not most professing Christians into the "do to be" approach. Let me explain. When we are genuinely saved, we become a new creation in Christ and there is a strong desire to please and obey God. I am *not* dealing at this point with those who have been deceived into thinking that they are Christians when they in reality are not. I am talking about a person who has come to the Lord in repentance for their sin and in

complete trust in Jesus Christ. I am talking about a person who deeply desires to please this One who has saved them for all eternity. As this believer begins to understand that all of their sins are forgiven and heaven is their destination, they are filled with gratitude and so many come before the Lord with a commitment that sounds something like this: “My dear Lord, You have done so much for me. You have forgiven my sins and prepared a place for me in Heaven. My response to that is that I will *work* for You, *sacrifice* for you, *go to the mission field* for you – whatever you want me to do. This is the least I can do for You after all You have done for me.” Though most would never admit it, it is almost as though we want to pay God back for what He has done.

What I have just described is what I would call the “do to be” approach to the Christian life. I will *do* all sorts of things for You Lord in order that I might *be* acceptable to You. Though I had never articulated it, my approach to the Christian life was that “Do to Be” approach. I understood that salvation was not my doing; I knew salvation was by grace through faith – a gift of God, not of works (Ephesians 2:8-9). But even while going through seminary, I learned Greek and Hebrew, but I never fully understood that not only is salvation by grace alone through faith alone, living out the Christian life is also by grace alone (enabling grace) through faith alone. My unstated but actual approach to the Christian life was “*Do* what the Bible commands and I will *be* pleasing to God”. I suspect that many I am speaking to have that “do to be” approach to life.

What I began to see as I looked into the Scripture (especially Ephesians and Romans) is that I had it backward! The Christian’s walk of obedience and victory is not “do to be”, it is “*Be to Do*”! If that sounds like a bunch of “double talk”, hang in there with me. The Scriptures that deal in depth with the details of what the Christian life looks like, start with who we are in Christ, who God has made us to be, and then moves on to tell us what we should do.

I am going to use Ephesians as the example. In Ephesians 1-3, we are seldom if ever told to *do* anything. We are told over and over who we are because we are in union with Christ – “in Christ”. That little phrase “in Christ” or “in Him” or the equivalent is used over 160 times in the Pauline epistles. Here are a few examples of who we are and what is true of us because we are in union with Christ. Ephesians 1:3: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places in Christ*.” Do you understand what he is saying? In union with Christ, we already have received, have access to every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places that we need. Ephesians 1:4-5: “just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will.”

It is not what we *do* that makes us holy and without blame and earns our being adopted into His forever family, He took the initiative to choose us and make us holy and without blame because we were put in union with Christ. It is out of that uninfluenced love that He chose us and adopted us. What did we *do* to deserve that? Nothing! Let’s look just a couple of other examples. When we were placed in union with Christ, we received the blessings that many people are trying to earn. Ephesians 1:6 (NKJV): “to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us *accepted in the Beloved*.” What did we do or what can we do to be accepted by God? We can’t do anything to earn it; it is ours only because of our union with Christ!

We could spend hours just in the book of Ephesians looking at and rejoicing over all that is ours in Christ. But does that mean that there is no work, no labor in the Christian life? That is certainly not what I am saying. The Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:10b: “...I labored even more than all of them...” Paul speaks often of his hard labors, his deprivation of so many of the

comforts of life, and the hard trials he went through for the sake of the Gospel. However, there is a difference when we are laboring in our own strength to gain God's acceptance and when we are laboring as one who is filled with joy because he or she is already accepted. We are to labor because we love the One we labor for, but we also labor because we are so grateful that we are in union with Christ and accepted in Christ. As we labor in the work, it is not in our strength, but in the enabling grace of God!

Oh, how important it is that we understand our union with Christ. Hope's foundation is our union with Christ.

II. Hope's Building Is Our Labor for Christ (Chapter 4-6)

The Christian life is not a lazy, "do nothing" life. It involves work, hard work! But when that work is done, not to earn acceptance from God, but in gratitude for what He has done and in the power He supplies, the labor is joy filled because we are not doing it out of obligation but out of love for this One who has saved us and united us with Christ. The Apostle Paul said it perfectly in 1 Corinthians 15:10: "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me."

It is interesting that while we are not told to "do" anything (work-wise) in chapter 1-3, when we get to Ephesians chapters 4-6, Paul begins it this way: Ephesians 4:1: "Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to *walk* in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called." In chapters 4-6 we are told to "do, do, do". Here are some "do" passages in Ephesians 4-6:

Ephesians 4:1b: "... walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.

Ephesians 4:3: "being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Ephesians 4:17b: "... walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind."

Ephesians 4:24: "and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of* God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."

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Ephesians 5:25: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.”

Ephesians 6:1: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.”

Conclusion

I am not sure why the typical church of the 21st century has so neglected this truth of our union with Christ. When we go back to the earlier centuries, we find that union with Christ was clearly proclaimed. Let me give you two examples from theologians who are now with the Lord. John Murray said, “Union with Christ is the central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation.” Arthur Pink said, “The subject of spiritual union is the most important, the most profound, and yet the most blessed of any that is set forth in the sacred Scriptures; and yet, sad to say, there is hardly any [doctrine] which is now more generally neglected.”

Let’s make this personal. Have you ever come in humility to the Lord and confessed that you are a sinner and asked Him to save you? There is not a formula that must be quoted, but you must “call upon the Lord” to save you.

Are you living in defeat, trying to work for the Lord and yet dry and weary? Come to Jesus and repent for trying to serve Him in your own strength. My prayer for you is Romans 15:13: “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.”

NASB (New American Standard Bible)

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