

Blessed with Hope – Hope for Today and for Eternity

Hope for Today

Wednesday 12 May 2021

6:30 PM-8:00 PM

Opening Prayer

Background

Paul states famously in 1 Corinthians Chapter 13, *“Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.”* Over the ages there has been much discussion, exhortation, writing, and prayer about love, and faith, but not a great deal about hope. Yet, the three are tightly linked.

We have discussed over the past four weeks various understandings and aspects of hope, and as we bring those discussions to an end over the final two sessions, we will attempt to bring our hope for today and for the future into clearer focus. As we noted at the beginning, there is an amazing diversity of opinion on what hope means for Christians. For some it is a dream of a better world. For others is the anticipation of our wishes being fulfilled. For yet others it is the wish for good or bad things for other people. And for some it is waiting for God to do something to or for them. But none of this or any of the other ideas about hope represents the Christian hope. We have become confused about what Christian hope is.

Christian hope is the confident expectation that God’s plan will be accomplished. It is the unwavering knowledge that the promises of God are true. The writer of Hebrews in Chapter 11 links it to faith in telling us, *“Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see.”* Christian hope does not promise us things. It does not offer a carefree life, freedom from pain and suffering, freedom from hardships and fears, a large income. What it does offer is the

assurance that God's plan for redeeming the world is alive and at work and that we are a part of that plan. That is the hope for today. God's plan is alive and at work, and we can be a part of that work of restoring creation to oneness with God. Working for the Kingdom of God. How wonderful is that?

God is the chief architect and builder of the Kingdom of God. We are called to be some of his workers on earth. What does that mean? Jesus said, Matthew 16:24, *"If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me."* Following Jesus involves expressing Christian Hope for today. And that means, doing our part in building God's Kingdom here on earth. Restoring our planet to the beauty that God created. Expressing that love that is rooted in hope...at home and in the broader world. Sharing our abundance...at home and in the broader world. Sharing our time...at home and in the broader world, and the countless other ways that we turn from our selfish ways.

These things may seem common and of little matter. We may ask how in the world do they help build the Kingdom of God? What does this have to do with heaven or the Kingdom of God on earth or even a better earth? But remember Paul's advice in 1 Corinthians 15. *"Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless."*

In our final week we will explore the Ultimate Hope and link between it and Hope for Today.

Questions to Consider

1. What do you think is the relationship between faith, hope, and love?
2. What does it mean to be a person of hope?
3. What is the hope expressed in the Lord's Prayer?
4. If someone asked you today, "What do Christians hope for," what would you say?
5. Why does Christian hope seem so weak today?
6. What can you do to model and encourage "Hope for Today?"

Closing Prayer