

1John 2:28 – 3:3

How can the elderly whose body hurts all the time still have joy  
How can a man or woman on their death bed still be smiling  
How can a memorial service be called a home-going celebration  
When I was much younger it was common to talk of the fatherhood of God  
And the brotherhood of man  
That phrase expresses the notion that all men are children of God  
And therefore we are all brothers within a divine family  
All we need to do is realize our mutual responsibility  
And take care of each other  
There was a popular song that perfectly expressed that sentiment  
Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me  
Let there be peace on earth; the peace that was meant to be – meant to be  
With God as our father, brothers all are we;  
Let me walk with my brother in perfect harmony  
Isn't that sweet - isn't it idealistic – only one problem - it just isn't true  
The concept of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men  
Is Biblical – it's right here in the Bible  
But it does not apply to all men  
The brotherhood of man with the Fatherhood of God  
Is reserved for Christians only  
I'm sure that most of us know this but just in case you didn't  
When you received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior  
You became part of the largest family in the world  
You were adopted by God  
And you became part of a forever family  
A family that will last throughout eternity  
Every believer is a child of God  
And as His children we all have at least three things in common  
1Cor 13 expresses three characteristics that are basic to Christianity  
Now abide faith, hope and love, these three  
Faith and love have been the subject of numerous books songs and messages

And, at least by comparison, hope has been relatively neglected  
Yet hope - like faith and love is fundamental to the Christian life  
So today I want us to think about hope  
Although we don't discuss it near as much  
Write songs or read books about it  
Hope is not an insignificant add-on to faith and love  
Actually hope is the ultimate reality to which the faith and love point  
Although it can be reinforced by God's past activity in your life  
And builds on God's every day kindness to us  
Hope doesn't have a present day orientation  
By its very nature hope always looks to the future  
And it is a virtue we need to understand  
If we are to keep a perspective  
On events in this life  
In relation to what will happen to us in the next  
Returning to hope is like turning on a light in a dark room  
For when we think about our great hope  
It brightens our outlook uplifts our soul and produces joy in our heart  
Hope raises us above the circumstances of our life  
How can we be joyful during the hard times of life  
Because we know that this world is not all there is  
This life isn't the best thing that will ever happen to us  
Aren't you glad of that  
It isn't just - life is hard and then you die  
Hope introduces the eternal into a sin-stained death-darkened world  
Because of that - Hope gives strength to endure life's trials  
And the endurance strengthens our hope  
Paul to the Romans – We exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;  
and perseverance, proven character, and proven character, hope  
Without hope all that is left is endurance  
And that is what the average person on earth has – endurance  
For they have no true hope  
All this world offers are superficial sources of security - things like  
Drugs alcohol sex entertainment materialism surface level relationships

And a man centered desire for a better future  
All of these are false hopes and spiritual counterfeits  
They immediately vanish when this life ends  
And quite often they vanish before this life is over  
For this world hope is but a wish – a dream  
But it is not based upon anything but imaginations and wishful thinking  
Actually non-Christian hope is merely an echo  
Of the human hearts deep longing to know and be with God  
It is spawned by the innate knowledge God has put into all men  
That this life isn't all there is and we were meant to be more than we are  
To overcome that innate knowledge - it has to be educated out of us  
In contrast to this - Biblical hope is not a dream  
But a future reality promised and guaranteed by God  
The hopelessness of this world stands in stark contrast  
To the genuine and lasting secure hope that God offers  
For Biblical hope is grounded in the character of God and  
Guaranteed by the Word of God  
And our faith gives us the assurance that our hope will be fulfilled  
Paul writing to the Romans – we groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what he already sees? But we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

Why do we wait eagerly  
When we attain to the hope God has promised us  
We will be without sin  
There will be no more battle between the flesh and the Spirit  
Guilt and remorse will be completely eradicated  
Along with heartbreak and sorrow  
All of those deeds of the flesh that now haunt us will be gone forever  
Our hearts will no longer break because we have dishonored God  
And we will be given perfect glorified bodies  
No more aches and pains – no more disease and injury  
No more growing old and tired and feeble - no more death  
We will have bodies that perfectly match our new sinless nature

We will have a new perfect nature  
We will have new perfect bodies  
And we will live in heaven with Jesus forever  
New nature – new bodies  
In heaven our new home with Jesus – it can't get any better than that  
In this life it's a blessing to experience - the joy of salvation  
The fellowship of the saints – the peace that comes from faith  
The purifying power of confession  
And the leading and the power of the Holy Spirit  
All that is wonderful  
But earthly satisfaction doesn't even compare  
To the ultimate joy we will experience  
When God fulfills the promises that make up our hope

PS 43 – Why are you in despair, O my soul? Hope in God for I shall again praise Him

Hope has an amazing quality in that  
Hope can change despair into gladness – fear into expectation  
As you read the Bible you will find that  
Scripture sets forth a complete theology of hope  
I have 12 points regarding hope that I want us to consider today  
First - our Hope is grounded on an unchanging God who always speaks truth  
We aren't dreaming about a future – we've been promised one  
Paul writing to Titus – to those chosen of God... in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ago  
All of Christian hope rests upon the Word and the faithfulness of God  
We can confidently look forward to our future  
Because our hope is founded on promises given  
By God it is certain  
You don't have to wonder what will happen  
It has already been declared  
God's love of you and God's plans for you go back into eternity  
Your name was recorded in the Book of Life long before God set the foundation of the earth  
Jesus suffered the cross because you were on God's mind  
Hebrews 6 – This hope we have as an anchor of the soul; a hope both sure and steadfast

Sure means that it will happen – steadfast means that it won't change

God has declared it – it cannot change

As the old saying goes – you can take it to the bank

Second – Christian hope is a gift of divine grace

Paul to the Thessalonians – The Lord, and God our Father, has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope - by grace

You cannot start to hope – you can't even earn the right to hope

Just like your salvation hope is a free gift

This sounds trite – but it comes as part of the salvation package

When you are saved you receive hope

Got Jesus – then you have hope – no Jesus – no hope

Third - genuine hope is revealed in the Bible and only in the Bible

Rom 15 – 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

If you want your hope encouraged and strengthened – read your Bible

The Bible is full of God's promises to believers

They are divinely given guarantees which we can trust and rest in

These promises give us courage to face all that life has

Fourth – Hope is reasonable and defensible

Our hope that someday we will be eternally with Jesus

Be like Him and live forever is not pie in the sky

It is not wishful thinking

Hope is based upon God's faithful Word

Grounded in God's love and will be fulfilled by God's power

That is why Peter could command – Always be ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account of the hope that is in you

Fifth – the bodily resurrection of Jesus secures our hope

1 Peter - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, who according to His great mercy, has caused us to be born again to a living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead

We can trust all that the Bible says

And all that has been done for us because Jesus is alive

He said that He would rise from the grave and He did

Jesus is not the dead founder of a religion

You can't find His grave

For death couldn't hold Him – the grave couldn't keep Him

He said – I am the resurrection and the life, he who believes in Me will never die

Jesus statements about Himself and about us

Are trustworthy because He lives

Sixth our hope is confirmed and energized by the Holy Spirit

Paul to the Romans – 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

The Holy Spirit supernaturally places in every believer

Hope in regards their righteousness & heavenly future

The Holy Spirit is a divine Seal and a pledge of our hope

Guaranteeing that what God has begun in us in the present

He will bring to completion in the future

Abounding in hope

Means that our hope will overflow out of us affecting others

Seventh – our hope helps defend us against Satan's attacks

If we only consider what is happening in this world

If we focus on our circumstances

We become susceptible to doubt and discouragement

So Paul included hope as an important piece of our spiritual armor

1 Thess - Let us put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation

Satan is a mortal enemy who is always on the prowl waiting to attack you

He cannot take away your salvation

So he wants to crush you with doubt and discouragement

But the helmet of salvation and hope protects you from such attacks

When you have your mind fixed upon the hope that awaits you

You can look at the trials of this world through eyes that see the future

Eighth – our hope is confirmed through trials

Rom 8 – In all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither life nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord

Because we know that life is much more than what is happening to us now

Not even the most severe suffering and adversity can stop our hope

As a pastor I know the best way to not draw a crowd is to advertise

That I am going to speak on the trials of the Christian life

Nobody wants to hear it

But the truth of life is – we all go through trials  
And God uses the trials we go through to build our hope  
For trials cause us to have an eternal mindset  
To eagerly look forward to His coming  
The more the number and severity of the trials  
The more we look forward to what awaits us on the other side of this life  
Trials keep our hearts focused on heavenly expectations  
Instead of what pleasures we can attain in this life  
Ninth – hope is the source of the believers’ greatest joy and blessing  
Ps 146 – How blessed is he whose hope is in the Lord his God  
Because of who God is and what He does for His own  
Nothing can replace hope in Him as a source of everlasting joy  
As I just mentioned  
Those who are sure of their hope in God are able endure great trials  
Without losing their joy  
No matter how uncertain this life is – and it is  
We know for certain that on the last day  
The Son will raise all those the Father has given to Him to eternal glory  
It’s going to happen – count on it – look forward to it – that’s our hope  
Tenth – hope removes the fear of death  
1Cor 15 - When the perishable shall put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on  
immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “O, death, where is your victory? O, death,  
where is your sting?”  
There are those who dread death – you don’t have to  
As believers we know that we have violated God’s Law  
And we know the severity of the penalty for doing it  
But our debt has been paid – for us the curse of the Law has been broken  
Certainly death is an enemy  
Paul calls it the last enemy  
But we know that Jesus conquered the grave and so will we  
Paul writes – we do not grieve as those who have no hope  
We don’t grieve like the world for we know that it isn’t good-bye  
It is – until we meet again  
Death doesn’t scare me – I don’t look forward to the process – I admit that  
But I have no fear of what will happen on the other side of this life

I'm actually kind of looking forward to that day  
I truly believe that what Paul says is true - To die is gain  
You see my Redeemer has suffered the death penalty on my behalf  
So as a believer my death is not the end  
Death for God's children is a pathway unto eternal life  
A pathway unto eternal joy and eternal bliss  
For to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord  
Eleventh – every aspect of our hope will be fulfilled when Christ returns  
His return – meaning both the rapture and His second coming  
Will finalize and fulfill all of our earthly hopes  
We will have gloriously resurrected bodies  
We will be co-heirs and co-reign with Him in His earthly kingdom  
Our new person and our new status will continue on into eternity  
And we will receive our eternal reward  
For the work we have done in this life  
2Cor 4 - We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.  
There are two judgments –  
The Great White Throne judgment where the saints are separated from those who aren't  
And the Judgment Seat of Christ where those who are saved  
Have their works reviewed  
That doesn't mean punishment – it means rewards  
We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them  
The final accounting – the final summing up – those final rewards  
Will be accomplished when Christ returns to reign  
That is why Paul writes that believers - are continually looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of the great God and Savior, Jesus Christ

Hope is not only foundational to Christian doctrine  
And the confidence we have as believers  
It also has immense ethical implications  
Which brings me to my last point  
Point # 12 - Genuine hope causes us to purify our lives  
Verse 3 of our text – everyone who has his hope fixed upon Him – Jesus - purifies himself, just as He

is pure.

Living right before God is one of John's primary themes

The reformers said that we live our lives – Coram Deo

We live our lives before the Face of God

Living before the Face of God implies that God is always watching us

There is no place on earth that we can be that He is not there

There is never any situation that can come into our lives of which He is not aware

We live our lives under the watchful care of our loving Heavenly Father

That means when we are living for Him He is there

And when we are living for ourselves – He is there

Today let's commit to knowingly live Coram Deo

Let's commit to live knowing that God is there

And that means we live for Him in all circumstances

At work – at school – at home

Wherever we are whatever we are doing God is there

Let's live like it