

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

April 14

2024

Biblical Hope

I have often pointed out that living the life of a Christian is not always an easy task. We are always endangered by the assaults of Satan. Peter said, "...the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). Furthermore, we are always under the pressure of giving in to the materialism and carnal ways of this world. We are also encompassed by enemies of the cross who dislike us simply because of who we are and for that which we stand (1 John 3:13). No wonder Jesus exhorted His disciples to count the cost of discipleship. He knew that the life of a Christian would sometimes be tough. He proclaimed to His followers "...In the world ye shall have tribulation..." (John 16:33). He understood very well that the lot of all Christians would be to suffer, at least to some extent (2 Timothy 3:12).

Still, as Christians, we do not have to lose heart. While things may not always be the way we want them to be here on earth, we have something that can help us through all of our struggles—hope. Let us observe some things about biblical hope.

The word hope has lost much of its original meaning and force. It is used now to indicate a desire that is still in the stage of doubt. Biblical hope, however, is completely void of doubt. It consists of two essential elements: Desire and Confident Expectation. Biblical hope, then, is having total and complete confidence in a desired thing. Now, what is the hope that we have as Christians? What is the hope that can carry us through our trials and tribulations?

1. Heaven: The where of our hope. As Christians, we do not have an earthly hope. Our hope is higher and greater than that. We look for a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, which figuratively describes our heavenly home. Consider the following passages that leave no doubt about the where of our hope: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:3-4).

Hebrews 6:18–20 (NKJV)

18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. 19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, 20 where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

John 14:1–3 (ESV)

1 "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

2. Glorified Body: The what of our hope. As Christians, we are hoping for a new and improved body. Our bodies will be new from the standpoint of characteristics. It will be the same body (Romans 8:23; Philippians 3:21), but it will be changed. And make no mistake about it, the change will be for the better. Our present bodies were suited for this temporal life; thus, they were made corruptible. But when our bodies are changed, they will be suited for heaven, and will therefore be glorious, incorruptible, and immortal. Listen to Paul:

1 Corinthians 15:42–49 (ESV)

42 So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. 43 It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a

natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. 47 The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

Our hope is one of our greatest possessions. In Romans 8:24 Paul affirms that we are saved by hope. It is not the only factor involved in salvation, but it does help us regarding salvation. This makes hope more valuable than the riches of this earth. It makes hope more valuable than power and prestige. It even raises hope above spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:28-31; 13:13). Notice what hope can do for us:

It sustains us. When we keep our eyes on the goal of heaven, the problems of life do not seem so devastating. Even though his life was constantly in danger, Paul was faithful to his Lord. He was able to overcome the difficulties he faced because he kept his eyes on the goal of heaven (2 Corinthians 4:8-18). Hope is an anchor for our soul (Hebrews 6:18-20).

It gives us the boldness to preach. When will truly believe the gospel message of salvation and eternal life through and by the blood of Christ, we will not be able to keep that message to ourselves. We will spread it at every opportunity we have (2 Corinthians 4:13; Philippians 1:20).

It helps us to prioritize our lives. Materialism is one of the great devices of the Devil. He knows that he cannot get too many of us to forsake God altogether, but he can ruin our chances of making it to heaven by captivating us with the carnal things of this world. Satan knows he can steal our attention and time by the riches of this world easier than he can get us to quit serving God. But we do not have to allow Satan to be successful in this area. If we keep our eyes on heaven, constantly filling our minds with the thoughts of our eternal reward, we can properly prioritize our lives (Matthew 6:19; Colossians 3:1, 2).

It motivates us to live pure lives. Finally, hope can help us live our lives the way our heavenly Father wants us to. When we think often of our hope of heaven and the everlasting bliss that will accompany it, we will do all we can to make that hope become a reality. John wrote, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (1 John 3:2-3).

There is but one hope. It is the hope that is grounded and rooted in Christ Jesus, the Who of our hope (Colossians 1:27). Yes, we shall suffer in this life. It is inescapable and inevitable. But as Paul said, “The suffering of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18).

✍ Don Wright

Gospel Meeting: April 14-19

Preacher: Don Wright

Monday-Friday: 7pm

Belleville church of Christ

5635 S County Rd 200E - Belleville, IN - (317) 539-5258

www.bellevillechurch.net

Schedule of Services

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| Sunday Bible Study | 9:30 a.m. |
| Sunday Morning Worship | 10:30 a.m. |
| Sunday Evening Worship | 4:00 p.m. |
| Wednesday Bible Study | 7:00 p.m. |

Evangelist

Brad Phillips (765) 720-2816