

JESUS – HOPE OF GLORY!

Colossians 1:19-27

There is no more precious commodity for the soul than hope. The prospects that one day things will be better. Human beings hope for an untold amount of different things. Children hope for their favorite toy at Christmas. They hope their mother will let them spend the night with their friend. Many children live with the hope that one day their mother and daddy will get back together. Adults hope that God will give them a job or a better job, or that God will give them a mate or a better mate, and occasionally that God would make them a better mate. And more importantly than this for some is the hope that their football team will make history by winning three in a row and four out of five. So at least a few have their priorities right in life.

And hope that is not realized can often be devastating. I remember reading the testimony of a man who had been out of school for years, describing the almost unbearable pain of not making the cut for his high school basketball team his senior year. And many look back on their lives with sadness because of lost promotions, lost love, or lost fortunes. They hoped, but their hope turned into heartbreak.

But friend, I want to tell you about a hope today that is the greatest hope in the entire world, for man, woman, boy or girl. Greater than Christmas toys, love, fortune, and championship trophies. It is the hope that you will live forever and ever in Heaven. And it is no uncertain hope. It is no maybe/maybe not hope. It is as certain as the sun rose this morning, as certain as your beating heart. It is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Please turn in your Bibles to Colossians 1:19-28 and let's read about that precious hope.

Christ in you, the hope of glory. The certain hope of glory. One person who had this certain hope of glory was one of our oldest members who went home to be with the Lord last Sunday morning, Lois Boswell. Some of you did not know Lois. She was not a member of our church for very long, only a few years, and had been homebound for the last three years or so. Oh, but Lois had a certain hope of Heaven! A few weeks ago Lois had one of her numerous “sinking spells” that she had for the last couple of years. She thought that the time of her death might be nearing and so she said to Margaret, her daughter with whom she lived, “Maybe we need to call Bro. Mike and talk about the funeral”. Well, Margaret wanted to be encouraging to her mother and said, “Mother, I don’t think it’s time for that yet”. To which Lola replied, “Well, I hope so”! Lola had the certain hope of glory in her heart.

Do you have a certain hope of glory, the hope of eternal life in Heaven? God’s hope for eternal life is only found in His Son, Jesus Christ. And in our text today God gives us some amazing truths about the hope that Jesus gives of eternal life. If you do not have this hope then God wants you to find it today. And if you do, God wants you to spread your hope far and wide for the glory of His name.

The first thing that I want us to see about our hope of glory is the **Commander of our hope**. verse 19 says that it pleased the Father that in Him, in Christ, all the fullness should dwell. And as we saw last week, the undeniable statement of verse 15-19 is that Jesus Christ was more than a good man, and He was more than a good angel, as the Gnostics would say. Jesus Christ was the God/man, eternal God in human flesh. Of all that God is, all is in Jesus. All of God’s righteousness is in Jesus, all of God’s wisdom is in Jesus, all of God’s power is in Jesus, all of God’s love is in Jesus, it is all in Jesus. Paul repeats this thought in 2:9 when he says that in Jesus dwells all of the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

This is how Jesus could say to Philip, “He Who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). In other words, “He who has seen Me has seen God”. What human being in their right mind would dare to make such a statement unless it was true?

Beloved, this is the bedrock of our hope of glory. That the Commander of our hope, the One Who will make our hope come to pass, is the Creator and Master of the universe. Here’s how important it is that we remember who Jesus is according to author Stewart Briscoe: “If you forget that in Christ is found all the fullness of deity in bodily form, you will have an impossibly shallow view of His reality” and Briscoe is dead right. You will never appreciate the sacrifice that Jesus made for you on the cross as you should, you will never run to Him when you need strength as you should and rest in Him when you need comfort as you should. You will never have the true joy of your salvation as you should. Because God says in 2:10 that you are **complete in Him**. You are complete in Jesus. He says the same thing to the Ephesians in Eph. 1:3 when He says that we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in Heavenly places in Christ. But we are not complete in a false Christ, a weak Savior with hand-me-down power. NO! The Commander of our hope of glory is the One in Whom all the fullness dwells. So take heed to Stewart Briscoe. Take heed to Paul. Never forget Who Jesus is, the God of all creation, the Lord of all glory.

But in addition the **Commander of our hope**, I want us to see the **cause of our hope**. Verse 20 says that by Jesus it pleased God to reconcile all things to Himself, and this is the cause of our certain hope of glory. Now, from our study in Colossians we’ve already learned the meaning of another good Bible word, the word redemption. We saw that redemption meant the release by the payment of a ransom. And of course, the spiritual meaning for us is that Jesus has released us from sin, death, and hell by the

ransom price of His own blood. One of my favorite verses in the entire Bible is Rev. 1:5, which says that Jesus “loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood”. That’s redemption, and the greatest blessing of redemption is forgiveness. Paul wrote in Eph. 1:7, “..in Whom (Christ) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sin”.

Well, the word “reconciled” in verse 20-21 gives us a fuller understanding of what redemption is. To reconcile means to restore a broken relationship. For the Christian it means that once we were alienated from God, God’s enemies, but now we are God’s friends through the blood of the cross.

Did you know that you were once God’s enemy? You surely were. verse 21 says that before we were saved we were His enemies in our minds, evidenced by our wicked works. And the meaning of the word “enemy” is one who is “actively hostile to God”. Romans 5:10 says, “For if, when we were enemies (when we were hostile toward God), we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life”. Before you came to Jesus you were as a sheep going astray, going your own way. You were living in rebellion to God’s claim upon your life, breaking His law with a high hand. And God is the one that said that, not me. But then the Holy Spirit accosted you, showed you your rebellion, your estrangement from Him and your condemnation, drew you to Christ, and when you trusted Him at once you were reconciled to Him. No longer were you His enemy, but a cherished friend. Verse 22 says that because you’ve been reconciled one day in the end times Jesus will present you holy, blameless, and above reproach to God. Not in your own holiness and blamelessness, for we are all unworthy sinners. But in the holiness and blamelessness that God gives us when we are reconciled. And beloved, that is great cause for the feet of your soul to start to dancing.

Years ago I literally saw that. I saw a soul that got happy because of her reconciliation and start to dancing. I was in seminary in Memphis at the time, and I was asked to lead the music in a revival in a small rural church in southeast Arkansas. And I remember sitting in the pastor's office before the service and him giving the evangelist and me a heads up on what might happen at any time during the service. He told us that there was a little old lady in the church that would sometimes just get up and walk down to the front of the church and start dancing. And he said that when she did for us to just suspend whatever was going on until she got through.

Well, we started the service as usual, and all was going just as the Holy Spirit directed, you know, just according to the bulletin. And then without warning it happened. Granny Gray steps out into the aisle and down she comes. She gets to the front and starts dancing. And we all just stood there silently and watched. The pastor, the evangelist, me, the whole congregation – we just watched Granny have a good ol' time dancing and being happy – all because she was reconciled to God through her Lord Jesus Christ. And then it was all over about as quickly as it started, and then we started worshipping again like the bulletin said we could.

Beloved, I doubt that you've ever danced in church like that little old lady in Arkansas. But do you have the joy of being reconciled to God in your soul this morning? Of being God's friend? It is the cause of our hope of glory!

But there is a third truth about our hope of glory we need to see, and that is **the confirmation of our hope**. Verse 23 says that we are reconciled "if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel...." The confirmation of our hope of eternal life is the perseverance to our commitment in following Christ.

Now, to many verse 23 is a clear indication that it is possible for the believer in Jesus to apostatize, to fall away from the faith. Friends, please listen carefully. That is not – I repeat – that is not what Paul is saying. Paul is simply stating the fact that those who have had a genuine saving experience with Christ will continue in their walk with Him.

This truth is taught in numerous passages in the NT, that genuine saving faith is lasting faith. Jesus said in John 8:31, "...If you continue in My Word, then you are my disciples indeed". You are truly my disciples if you continue in My Word. And to continue means "to remain". Hebrews 3:14 says, "For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end". This is the same idea. Perseverance indicates genuine faith. But the clearest word on this matter of falling away from the faith is in 1 John 2:19: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us". Do you see what John is saying? There were those in the church at one time who were professing Christians, but they did not continue in their faith and they dropped out of the church. And John says that this is an indication that they never had true faith to begin with. Because true faith comes in the package of salvation, and when God gives salvation He never takes it back. And true faith lasts for a lifetime.

Look at the word "grounded" in verse 23. It means that when the Colossians were saved a foundation of faith in Jesus was laid, and it was real. But the verb tense that Paul uses for "grounded" speaks volumes. It is the perfect tense. Now, the perfect tense in the Greek is the tense of completed action in the past with continued results, and it is distinctly different from the past tense. For instance, if I said to you, "I cranked my car at 7:00 this morning" with the normal past tense meaning you would know that

I cranked my car at 7:00 a.m., but that is all you would know. You would not know if I kept it running until it warmed up, or if it ran for 30 minutes, or if I shut it off immediately. You'd just know that I cranked my car. But if I said to you "I cranked my car at 7:00 this morning" in the perfect tense you would know that my car is still running right now and would keep on running as long as it didn't run out of gas. So teenagers, what you never want to provoke your dad or mom to say to you is, "You've been grounded in the perfect tense"!

Well, Paul said to the Colossian Christians, "You were grounded" in the perfect tense. Your foundation of faith was laid, and it is still laid, and nothing will cause it to crumble. And because it is a permanent foundation, one day Jesus will present you perfect and spotless to the Father.

Beloved, that's the way it is with saving faith. Paul said in Eph. 2:5, "...for by grace you have been saved". And it is the same perfect tense that he uses. You've been saved in the past with permanent results. And our faithfulness to continue in our faith is simply the proof that our faith is the real deal.

My father-in-law never attended on class at Alabama, but for years he had season tickets for the Tide football games on about the 40 yard line. He had tickets when Alabama alumni were foaming at the mouth for tickets and couldn't get them except at scalper's prices. So how did James Albert Graham do it? Because he was a true Alabama fan.

You see, over a half century ago football fortunes at Alabama were not what they are now. I'm too young to remember the J.B. Whitworth years at Alabama, but some of you do even though you'd like to forget them. But in the three years before Paul Bryant came to Alabama, Ears Whitworth coached the Crimson Tide to a total of four wins in thirty games. That was bad for every Tide fan, including James Albert, but for him what the devil meant

for bad turned out good, because he was a true Alabama fan. Because sometime during those years James Albert had enough foresight to buy season tickets. He said that during those years you couldn't give your tickets away to an Alabama game, because nobody wanted them. Why? Because very few people were true fans. But True Fan James Albert and his buddy Bill Alexander wanted tickets, and they got them, season tickets, and they got to keep on getting them during all of the glory years, because once you get an order blank you get to keep it as long as you want it. And James Albert and Bill kept on going to all the games until they got too old to go. But they didn't go to all those games **in order to be** true fans, they went **because** they were true fans. And beloved, it is the same way with your faith in Christ. You don't persevere in your faith to be a Christian, you persevere **because you are a Christian.**

We see another truth about our hope of glory from our text. Not only the **Commander** of our hope, the **cause** of our hope, and the **confirmation** of our hope, but also the **confidence** of our hope. What is it? Look at the last part of verse 27: "...which is Christ in you, the hope of glory". That's what gives us total confidence that our hope of glory, our hope of Heaven is secure. It is the presence of Jesus in our lives.

Paul writes in Gal. 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me...." Jesus prayed to His Father in John 17:22-23, "And the glory which You gave Me I have given to them, that they may be one just as We are one; I in them, and You in Me...." We spoke last week about the Trinity being a mystery, and it is. But here Jesus says that both the Father and the Son reside in the life of the believer. And Jesus said in Romans 8 that nothing would ever separate us from His love. God said in Hebrews 13: 5, "I will never leave you nor forsake you". John writes in 1 John 4:4, "You are of God, little

children, and have overcome them, for greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world". Greater is Jesus and greater is the Father Who lives in us than he who is in the world, who is the devil. And guess what? Those words "have overcome" in v. 4 are also in the perfect tense in the Greek. John says, "You have overcome and you continue to live in an overcoming state day by day, because Jesus is greater than he who is in the world".

Beloved, you may feel oh, so weak, and you may be weak. But did Paul say, "Your strength, the hope of glory?" No. You may feel oh, so sinful, and beloved, you are sinful. But did Paul say, "Your goodness, the hope of glory?" No! Because your hope of glory does not depend on you anymore. It is Christ in you, the hope of glory. And when you gave your soul to Him at that point He entered your life, washed you in His blood, and took full responsibility for your safekeeping until this life is over and you cross over into eternity. And Paul writes in Phil. 1:6, "He that began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ". I ask you, what greater confidence of Heaven can you have than that?

So you are not talking about eternal security here are you, Bro. Mike? Well, just maybe so! But let me tell you something, friends. Don't ever think that eternal security gives you a license to sin. If that is your attitude toward the sacrifice of Christ for you, to trample on it day by day by your loose and sinful behavior, you have never truly known the grace of God. But beloved, your eternal security does not give you a license to sin, but it should give you a longing to serve. Listen! You've been freed from the penalty of sin by the shedding of the blood of God's Son. You've been made friends with God forever. Jesus has come to live inside of you to be your constant, all-powerful Protector and Provider until the day He ushers you into glory. How in the world

can you want to do anything but expend your life for such a Savior? For He is the perfect hope of glory.

And that brings us to the last truth about our hope of glory that I want you to see. Because of all of the great blessings we have in this blessed hope, we see in verse 28 the **calling** of our hope. "Him we preach....." Paul says that he has a calling on his life that has a high and holy purpose. It is to present every man perfect in Christ. He did not want a single soul to die and miss the hope of glory, to miss Heaven. And to fulfill his purpose he said that he went about warning every man and teaching every man. First of all, he warned them. He warned them of the judgment to come if they rejected Jesus Christ, which was eternity in hell. Then he said that he taught them. He taught them the way to escape eternal punishment. He taught them about the certain hope of glory, and about how Jesus would give them the hope of glory if they would receive Him into their lives. And he longed that they would hear his warnings and his teachings so that one day in eternity he could present them as perfect trophies of grace to God, reconciled by Jesus.

Several of our men have faithfully served in the Fosters/Ralph Volunteer Fire Department for years. They do a great service to all of us. They are on call 24/7. They are called upon in all hours of the night, in all kinds of inclement weather, and they go. And they go for one reason, to help others. And at times they go when people's lives could be in jeopardy. Now, imagine a call coming in one night about 1:00 a.m. reporting a house fire in Fosters, with a family of six inside. No one knows if they are awake or asleep. The dispatcher relays the call to all of the firemen's radios. A house is on fire and six people are inside. Can you imagine every fireman just shutting off his radio and going back to sleep? What if that house fire was your next door neighbor's? Would you try to arouse them or just go back to sleep yourself? No. If they lived

two or three miles down the road and they were perfect strangers, but you knew they might be in their house sleeping, would you say it was too far to get up and go and try to warn them? No! Would it matter to you if they were white or black? No!

Beloved, Paul said that he had a calling to warn every man, and to teach every man, and to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. And that was not Paul the apostle speaking, it was Paul the Christian. For you see, that's my calling, that's your calling, that's our calling together as Grant's Creek Baptist Church. Will we be faithful to our calling? And if nobody else is faithful, will you?