

Jesus Is the Better Anchor - Hebrews 6:13-20 **Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading**

Notes from the Sermon

The Christmas season is supposed to be a time of great hope. In some way we all feel it, and we reach for the promise of a better reality. Our lives are hard and we live in a sinful and broken world. Yet, we want to believe things will get better, and the dreams we have will one day come true. Yet, the reality is that hope often disappoints. Hope is deeply tied to faith, and the key finding assurance of a different and better reality lies not in the strength of our hope, but in the object of our hope. Most in our culture are looking within to find a reason for hope. The good news of self affirmation and self esteem is preached everywhere. The reality is that placing hope in the self will eventually disappoint us. Others put hope in their portfolio, work ethic, in relationships, religious performance, or a myriad of other things that can make promises to us but rarely deliver.

The author of Hebrews, though points us to the Biblical idea of hope and tells us that this hope is a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul. What a metaphor to consider, the hope found in the Gospel is a rock solid anchor that will keep us secure and from drifting in the strongest storms. Biblical authors rarely use maritime illustrations, mainly because the Hebrew people had a considerable fear of the sea. The sea pictures chaos, being out of control, a life at the mercy of the storm. Therefore, as Hebrews speaks of this hope as an anchor the image spoke volumes to people who were living in poverty, oppressed by a wicked foreign government, and now suffering for their faith in Jesus. This hope is not some kind of wishful thinking rooted in projecting a self-made reality into the future. Biblical hope is an assurance of faith for our now and future based on things that, while not yet fully experienced, are real and secure.

The previous passage in Hebrews spoke to the people about the assurance of their salvation, and ended with a call to pursue the promises of salvation by following the examples of Old Testament saints who had gone before them who “through faith and patience inherited the promises.” So the author then presents Abraham, the father of the Jewish faith as an example. Leaning into his story from Genesis 12-23, God reminds the people about the fountain of all the promises of God that begin in God’s covenant with Abraham. In Genesis 12 God promises to bless Abraham, make Him a great nation, and eventually bless all the nations through him. The problem, though, is that Abraham and his wife Sarah are old and childless. Yet, God speaks a word of hope to an infertile couple. How can Abraham and Sarah be the parents of a great nation without a child to be the heir. You would think chapter 13 would tell the story of Sarah’s pregnancy and the birth of a child to a 60+ year old woman, which would have been miraculous. But that is not what happens. The fulfillment of the promise is delayed by 25 years, years this couple has to wait. Those 25 years are filled with victories, seasons of faith and trust, yet also doubts and huge failures. God keeps showing up to remind Abraham that He made the promise and will be faithful, which is received with faith but followed with failures. Yet, the promises of God were real, and 25 years later this couple has a son when Abraham is 100 and Sarah is 90, which is really insane, yet so beautiful. But that is not all of the story, a few years later God asks Abraham to offer this son Isaac as a sacrifice, a burnt offering, which would end his life and kill the promises which were the basis for Abraham’s hope. Yet, a quarter century of God’s faithfulness has taught Abraham that he can trust God, so he obeys willingly, and just before he plunges a knife in his son’s chest as an act of obedience, God provides a substitute who dies in the place of Isaac therefore preserving his life and the covenant promise. Through faith and patience Abraham received the promise. In the story God reconfirms all the promises he made to Abraham, promises that were not just for him, they are the launch of all the promises for us. These promises include all the blessings (“I will

bless you”) of our salvation, the promise of a nation of redeemed people, and the promise of a glorious redemption story that will include God’s people in the redemption of people from every tribe and language. And God guarantees the promises with an oath, a swearing that the promises are true guaranteed by the holy and righteous character of God. In other words, if God does not keep His promises He will not be God any more.

So the author reminds us that Gospel hope is not wishful thinking. We too by faith and patience will inherit the promises, and these promises offer us an authentic hope in a now and future reality offering blessing in this life and ultimate redemption in the life to come. This is why the author of Hebrews and myriads of believers since have issued the invitation for the “strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us,” which is the sure and steady anchor for our souls.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Psalm 140	Psalm 141	Psalm 142	Psalms 143	Psalms 144	Psalms 145	Psalms 146

Reading from this past week: Hebrews 6:13-20

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Hebrews 7:1-10

Family Worship

Song - *Advent Hymn*

<https://youtu.be/wV4KaDjIHcl?si=1Cr5iNMjX2IIIYBG>

Gospel Project

Unit: God Delivers His People

Story: Moses Confronted Pharaoh

Big Picture Question: Why does sin separate us from God?

Answer: Because God is holy, sin has broken our relationship with God.

Scripture: Exodus 5-12

New City Catechism

Question 49: What does Christ’s resurrection mean for us?

Answer: Christ triumphed over sin and death so that all who trust in him are raised to new life in this world and to everlasting life in the world to come.

Verse: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

Hebrews 6:13-20

- How does Abraham’s story help us understand the true nature of the hope we have in the Gospel and how to obtain the promises of God?
- Why is Christian hope a different and better thing than the various hopes offered by the world?
- What does the image of a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul communicate to us about the nature of and our need for Gospel hope?
- He ends by connecting our hope to the priestly ministry of Jesus. How does Jesus’ coming and sacrifice further secure God’s promises for us?

Prayer

*In the second week of Advent, light your advent candle and praise God for God’s love for you and your family.

*Pray that you would know that Christ is the sure and steady anchor for your soul, and that we can share this hope this Christmas season.