

† The Heart of Christ – the message of the Upper Room Discourse (John 13-17)

“...having loved His own who were in the world, He love them to the end”(John 13:1.)

The Praying Savior – John 17

The Lessons from Jesus’ Prayer – John 17:1-26

Seven Characteristics of the Church: Hope (John 17:24)

Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

What is it that gets you up every morning? I mean, besides an alarm, what motivates you to face the day? Is it to see the face of your spouse; or the sweet smile of a child, or the cheerful countenance of a friend? Is it solely because of some responsibilities or obligations that must be met? Is it because you love your work or job? And then, once you are up, what keeps you going through the day? And on those difficult days, what is it that keeps your head up?

I imagine that many different thoughts are running through your mind right now. But let me try to focus you upon one of the key motivators in the Christian life; that characteristic that is to cause the believer to open his eyes every morning not to say, “O God, another day [with sarcasm]...” but rather, “Thank You, God for another day!” The motivator that I wish to present to you is also the next marker or key characteristic for which Jesus prays for His followers in John 17:24. And while the word itself is not used in our text, the very idea is grounded in what Jesus prays here. The sixth characteristic of the church we find from John 17:24 is the attribute of hope. Jesus prays that His followers would be known for being a people of hope. He says here, **“Father, I desire...”** – the word “desire” implies a willful determination. Jesus is determined that His people experience that for which He is about to ask and what He asks for in short is hope.

Hope is something that is needful and longed for by every human being. The problem is that most people misplace their hope into things that can’t fulfill and cannot satisfy. Even believers sometimes forget to live every day and every moment in hope, even as the prophet Jeremiah cried out to the Lord, **“You are my hope in the day of doom” (Jeremiah 17:17 – NKJV)**. And even when times are not so bad, our testimony is to be like that of the Psalmist who wrote, **“How blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, Whose hope is in the Lord his God...” (Psalm 146:5)**. What ought to be motivating and encouraging you every morning as you wake up and every day as you face whatever it brings your way is a true, Biblical and, as we see here, a prayed for hope.

So then, let us consider this subject of hope, learning what we can from both what Jesus says as well as what the Bible as a whole teaches us about hope. To that end, consider with me the following three questions we will seek to answer regarding hope:

- I. Do you know what hope is?
- II. Do you know who hope is for?
- III. Do you know what hope does?

As we are able to answer these three questions, we will be better prepared to practice being a people of hope, a people who are known by one another as well as by an unbelieving world as hopeful. So let us begin and answer the question...

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I. Do you know what hope is?

If we are to be a people of hope, we must first make certain we know what we mean when we say “hope.” Before we look at what Jesus tells us about hope, let us make certain we have a right understanding of what is hope. Do you know what hope is?

Hope is one of those words that has been hijacked by the world and essentially robbed of its Biblical meaning. Hope, in the world’s view, has come to be a kind of glorified “wishful thinking.” Hope has become a longing for something upon which a person has no real right or claim to expect. Hope, to the world, is essentially nothing more than a wish that has no basis upon which to be realized, but which is claimed anyway. Let me give you an example. We might hope that it does not rain today? That is not hope, that is a wish because there is no basis, no promise to us that it will not rain. Rather, this is nothing more than my own personal desire. We need to be more careful with the word hope.

So then, what is hope? Let us remember that as we read the words of Jesus here in John 17:24, that His words are part of a prayer for His people. He is praying for something to be realized in hearts and lives of His people. He is asking the Father to do something for His people and let me remind you, that what Jesus asks for His people will come to pass. The prayer of Jesus is assured, it is a promise. Hope then is focused upon the Lord, what He says, and what He promises. Anything that you say you “hope” for that does not have its focus on the Lord and its foundation in His promises is not real hope. Let me give you a definition of hope. *Hope is the sure confidence that what God has promised will certainly come to pass.* Hope is always focused on the Lord and always connected to a promise of God.

Let me quickly apply this by contrasting the world’s, as well as some Christians’ expectation of hope, with what the Bible tells us about hope. If we say, “I hope it is a good day” meaning a day without hassles or struggles, we have misunderstood hope. For where in the Bible are we promised days without hassles or struggles. In fact, Jesus says that in this world we will have troubles. If we hope that it does not rain on a given day, we have misunderstood hope for where is it promised that it won’t rain simply because we don’t want it to? In fact the Bible tells us that God brings the rain; why would we refuse it? And sadly, there are many who “hope” they will go to heaven when they die; but they have no confidence of this because they do not really know or live for the one who alone can promise the assurance of heaven, that is Jesus Christ. Such people will speak of the power of positive thinking, convincing themselves that because there are no “major sins” in their lives, because there are others that are worse than themselves, that they are “pretty good” or “good enough” that they will get into heaven. But notice that their confidence is where? Their confidence is in themselves, not in the Lord. It is not based upon any Word or Promise of God and therefore will lead them into a Christless eternity rather than a Christ-filled glory. Genuine hope is the sure confidence that what God has promised will certainly come to pass. We had better know His promises then. And God has promised that all who have their confidence in the saving and life-transforming power of a right relationship to Jesus will have eternal life. This is what hope is.

This kind of hope is essential and vital to the Christian life. While we may sometimes forget this, remember that hope is one of the highest virtues of the believer along with faith and love according to 1 Corinthians 13:13. In Romans 5:2, after speaking of being made right with God by faith and just before expressing the love of God in saving us, the Scriptures says, “**we exult in hope of the glory of God.**” That is, because we are saved by faith in Jesus Christ, one of the characteristics is that we rejoice in the sure confidence that the promise of God to bring us into His glory will come to pass. Our hope, our confidence is in the Lord. We have the solid

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assurance that what God has done for us in Jesus Christ will be fulfilled completely. Some of you have as a favorite verse Philippians 1:6. This is a verse of hope, a verse of confidence as we read, **“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”**

So then, the prayer of Jesus to the Father here in verse 24 is to be seen as a prayer for hope for His people, a prayer that His people will be marked by the sure confidence that all that is promised to them will come to pass. The promise of joy, the promise of holiness, the promise of truth and purpose; the promise on unity; and most especially the promise of eternal life are to be our sure confidence. Is this how you know hope? Is this your sure confidence? Do you wake up rejoicing in this hope?

II. Do you know who hope is for?

So then, what is hope? Hope is that sure confidence that what God promises will come to pass. Let us next then seek to answer the question, for whom is hope for? Who is supposed to have this sure confidence? Who has the right to wake up every day knowing that God will work all things together for the good? Who has the assurance that he can face life and death with hope? Is it for those who by religion and morals seek to live good life? Is it for those who are the strongest or the wealthiest? None of these provide a true hope. Let us look carefully at what Jesus says in our text. He prays, **“Father, I desire that they also....”** Let us not miss this **“they also...”** Who are the **“they”** that Jesus is praying for? If we look back at verse 20 we find out that the “they” are those who believe in Jesus because of the teaching of the original apostles. But we can go back even further than that. Starting back in verse 3, we find Jesus praying for all those who have eternal life, those who know the Father and the Son. And, as Jesus prepares to leave the earth for heaven, He prays that His disciples would be “kept” by the Father in verses 11 and 13. Finally, Jesus prays that these seven characteristics of joy, holiness, truth mission, unity, hope and love be the defining markers of the church. Jesus is praying for believers of every age, for those who have come to Jesus in faith, trusting Him alone as Lord and Savior. For such as these – there is hope.

In short, the only ones who can have any hope of truly experiencing this hope are those who believe in Jesus; those who are trusting in Jesus; those who are depending upon Jesus for salvation both in the present and the future. False hope is the result of a false confidence. Many people say they believe in Jesus, but what evidence do these see in their own lives of surrender to Jesus; of transformation by Jesus into His likeness. Do you see this in your life? Are you seeing your life changed more and more to resemble and exemplify the life Jesus? Jesus prayed not only for the disciples but for each one of us who believe.

But there is more that Jesus identifies. This hope is not only said to be for those who believe, but also, as a further description of what it means to believe, Jesus says that hope is for those who have been given to Him by the Father. Let us look at this text again beginning at verse 24; **“Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me...”** Hope belongs to those who believe in Jesus and those who believe in Jesus were first given to Jesus by the Father; given to Him to redeem; given to Him to transform. Beloved, hope is for the chosen of God. Hope is for those that the Father, in eternity past, gave to the Son. We do not believe and we are not saved because we chose Him first; rather we are saved because God chose us to be saved by giving us to His Son to redeem. We love Him because He first loved us and we can say that we hope because He first chose us and gave us to His Son.

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Jesus has emphasized this in this prayer. Consider with me the following verses of this prayer that show that our salvation was determined beforehand, before we existed, before we could do good or bad.

John 17:2

...even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.

John 17:6

I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.

John 17:9

I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours;

John 17:24

Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me...

My hope is built upon the fact that God has determined and promised to save all who believe in His Son Jesus and all these had been given to Jesus to be saved. And now, in our text we find Jesus praying sovereignly, stating beforehand exactly what it is that He desires to be worked in us. Jesus prays for us some 2000 years ago that the makers of hope would be made evident in us. Just as the Father chose us beforehand for salvation, Jesus here prays beforehand for our confidence to be founded in Him and in His promises.

But how can a person know if he or she is a believer and one who has been given to Jesus Christ? How can we have the assurance of this hope? I believe Peter captures it so vividly in 2 Peter 1:3-11. Please turn there and then follow allow as we consider what Peter wrote by the Holy Spirit,

3 ...seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. 5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, 6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; 11 [our hope] for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

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In other words, as you see moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love being worked into and flowing out of your life, then you can be certain of two things, that you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and that you have been called and chosen by God. And such knowledge is the basis of our hope; our sure confidence that what God has promised will certainly come to pass.

Beloved, the person of hope is one who realizes that he belongs to Jesus – you have been given, if you believe, to Jesus. He owns you. Jesus says, **“that they also, whom You have given Me...”** “They belong to Me!” We have been given to Jesus. We belong to Him. We are not our own. And just as it would be a disgrace for a woman who had been given to a man as a wife to forsake and neglect her husband, let us remember that it would be even more disgraceful to forsake or neglect the One who purchased you with His blood so that you might no longer live for yourselves but for Him. Beloved He redeemed you so that you might actually live; live the full, abundant life God intended for you; a life modeled after Jesus. Hope then is for those who believe in Jesus, those who are given to Jesus and those who know they belong to Jesus.

III. Do you know what hope does?

So finally let us answer this question; do we know what hope accomplishes? What is it that having this sure confidence that what God promises will certainly come to pass, will afford us? Let me close by pointing out for benefit of having this true hope.

First, hope **places** us in right relationship with God the Father and God the Son. Notice again the text as we read, **“Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me...”** There should be no sweeter words to the believer than these, that because we are confident in the promise of Jesus and the promise of God to save us, we also have the promise of being some day “with” Him. Such a statement implies a real, living, vital relationship with Jesus in the present. But this is just the first fruits of a deeper and even more intimate relationship with Jesus in the future. Jesus desires to be with us; not just in and by His Spirit, but in face to face fellowship. Is this your hope? This is what hope does, it makes you long for His presence in your life.

Second, hope **promises** us a place in heaven. Looking again at our text we read, **“Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am...”** And where is Jesus right now? We know Him to be at the right hand of God the Father, in heaven, in the seat of authority and also interceding on our behalf. Jesus wants us to be with Him where He is. Jesus has already taught the disciples about heaven in John 14:1-6, that place He is preparing for the redeemed to enter; that place described as being with no more sin, no more death, no more crying, no more unholiness, and no more sorrow. That place where we will be with Him. Such a thought is our hope and such a hope ought to encourage us and drive us to press on through anything in this life.

Third, hope **prompts** us to deeply worship Jesus. Reading even further in our text, **“Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me...”** Our hope allows us to see now glimpses of the glory that awaits us as we read His Word, as we pray and as we worship in praise and adoration. But our hope is that one day we will see, or behold Jesus Christ in all His glory. We shall see Him just as He is and beloved that seems to be to be both spectacular and overwhelming. In heaven we will behold the Lamb and see things about Him we have never seen before. We will come to know things we have never known before. God will be exalted in ways we have never experienced before and our response will be continual joy and worship. How can

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we dare be casual in our walk with Jesus knowing that we shall behold Him? Again, remember that John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was present during this prayer of Jesus. And listen to the words he penned when considering the future reality of our being in the presence of Jesus. He wrote in 1 John 3:3, **“And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”** And so, one of the things that true, living, Biblical hope does is drive us toward a greater and deeper purity or holiness of life. Is this the hope you know?

And finally then, let me say that hope is the product of the love of God. We reading our entire text again; **“Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.”** Next week I intend to talk about love, but notice here that one of the things that hope does is remind us of the love of God. And the love of God is most vividly expressed in the love of the Father for the Son. How does this cause us to hope? Consider the greatness of the love of the Father for the Son. No greater or deeper love relationship exists like that found in the Godhead. And yet, as much as He love His Son, God demonstrates His own love for us in this, that while we were yet sinners, lost and rebellious, Christ was sent to this earth and died for us. The redeeming love of God that motivated the Father to willingly pour out His eternal wrath upon His Son in our place on that cross so that we might be made right with God; so that we might have eternal life; so that we might have hope, the sure confidence that what God promises will certainly come to pass. Is this the hope you know? Is this the hope you have?

It would be my prayer and my desire that each of us in here would know and experience the gracious gift of hope. This hope cannot be manufactured by positive thinking. It must be based upon what is true about God and His promises. May those of you who trust in Jesus be renewed and refreshed in your understanding of hope. Dare not to live casually in this life. Because of your hope, live intensely for the Lord. He has promised to bring you through.

And if there are any today who have not ever experienced this kind of hope, let me tell you of the promise of God upon which you can begin a proper hope. The promise of God is this, that whoever call upon the name of the Lord will be saved (Romans 10:13). The whoever is qualified as those who by God’s grace come to see their need of Jesus to be his Savior and Lord. For a few verses earlier, in Romans 10:9-10 we read, **“that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses resulting in salvation.”** Call upon the name of the Lord and being your journey of hope. And then may this church, this congregation live up to its namesake, “Hope Community Bible Church” – a people of hope, who reveal to one another and to the community our sure confidence that what God has promised will most certainly come to pass.

Soli Deo Gloria

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