

**2020 Fall College Conference
NY, NJ & E. Canada**

FAITH, LOVE AND HOPE FOR THE LORD'S COMING

Message 4

Hope for the Lord's Coming

Scripture Reading: Eph. 2:12; 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:3; Col. 1:27; 1 Thes. 1:3

- I. To have faith is to receive the divine things (John 1:12) and to substantiate the spiritual, unseen things (Heb. 11:1), to love is to experience and enjoy what we have received of Christ (1 Cor. 13:13), and to hope (Col. 1:5) is to partake, reap, expect, and wait for the glorification in Christ—Col. 1:4-5, 23, 27; 1 Thes. 1:3; Rom. 8:24-25, 30.**
- II. The unbelievers, being without Christ, have no hope (Eph. 2:12; 1 Thes. 4:13); but we, the believers in Christ, are a people of hope—Heb. 11:1 note 3; 3:6; 6:11, 18; 7:19; 10:23; 1 Pet. 1:3; Psalms 39:7; 71:5:**
- A. The hope of calling – the calling that we receive from God – brings us hope (Eph. 1:18; 4:4; Rom. 8:24, 25; Col. 1:27); this includes:
1. Christ Himself and the complete and full salvation in the stages of regeneration, transformation and glorification—Col. 1:27; 1 Pet. 1:5, v. 9, note 5.
 2. The rapturous transfer from the earthly and physical realm to the heavenly and spiritual sphere, plus glorification—Rom. 8:23-25, 30; Phil. 3:21.
 3. The kingly enjoyment with Christ in the millennium—Rev. 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:18.
 4. The consummate enjoyment of Christ in the New Jerusalem, with the universal and eternal blessings in the new heaven and new earth—Rev. 21:1-7; 22:1-5.
- B. The hope of life, the living hope—1 Pet. 1:3:
1. Regeneration enlivens us with God's life, bringing us into a relationship of life with God, and hence issues and results in a living hope; "the resurrection of Christ, bringing in life and the gift of the life-giving Spirit, is that which potentiates the new birth unto a living hope" (Alford)—v. 3, note 4.
 2. The living hope, the hope of life, brought to the regenerated believers, enables us to have a hope with numerous aspects—v. 3, note 6:
 - a. In this age we have the hope of growing in life, of maturing, of manifesting our gifts, of exercising our functions, of being transformed, of overcoming, of being redeemed in our body, and of entering into glory—v.3; 2:2.
 - b. In the coming age we have the hope of entering into the kingdom, of reigning with the Lord, and of enjoying the blessings of the eternal life in the manifestation of the kingdom of the heavens.
 - c. In eternity we have the hope of being in the New Jerusalem, where we will participate fully in the consummated blessings of the eternal life in its ultimate manifestation in eternity.
- C. Christ, the hope of glory—Col. 1:27; 1 Tim. 1:14; Titus 1:2; 2:13; 3:7:
1. Our Christ, who is in us, is the hope of glory (Col. 1:27; 1 Tim. 1:1), which will issue in the redemption, the transfiguration, of our body (Phil. 3:21) in glory (Rom. 8:23-25), and the manifestation of the sons of God (Rom. 8:19, 23-25).
 2. The hope of eternal life revealed in Titus 1:2 and the blessed hope revealed in Titus 2:13, which we are awaiting as the appearing of the glory of the great God and our Savior, are intimately related to the person of God's Messiah, our Savior.
 3. Christ is the mystery that is full of glory now. This glory will be manifested to its fullest extent when Christ returns to glorify His saints (Rom. 8:30). Hence, it is a hope, the hope of glory. Christ Himself is also this hope of glory—Col. 1:27; 3:4.

- D. Hope is the source of endurance—1 Thes. 1:3; Heb. 6:11-12:
1. The Christian life is a battle—1 Pet. 4:1-2; Eph. 6:11, 13, 17.
 2. The Christian life is a race—Heb. 12:1:
 - a. All the saved Christians must run the race to win the prize, not salvation in the common sense but a reward in a special sense—1 Cor. 3:14; 9:24; Heb. 10:35; Matt. 10:22; 24:13.
 - b. The apostle Paul ran the race and won the prize—1 Cor. 9:26-27; Phil. 3:13-14; 2 Tim. 4:7-8.
 3. The hope set before us is an anchor of the soul; *anchor* signifies that we are on a stormy sea and that without the anchor of hope, we may shipwreck—Heb. 6:18-19; cf. 1 Tim. 1:19.
 4. Through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope; we should follow Abraham, who, beyond hope, believed in hope—Rom. 15:4; cf. Psa. 119:114; Rom. 4:18.
 5. “Having hope toward God....Because of this I also exercise myself to always have a conscience without offense toward God and men”—Acts. 24:15-16; 1 John 3:2-3.
 6. The helmet in 1 Thessalonians 5:8, which covers and protects our mentality, our mind, is the hope of salvation:
 - a. We are not of those who shrink back to ruin but of those who have faith to the gaining of the soul—Heb. 10:35-39; Psa. 31:24.
 - b. “Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help”—Heb. 4:16.
 7. Rejoice in hope—Rom. 12:12; 15:12-13.

III. Conclusion:

- A. The structure of the genuine Christian life is a life constructed with faith, love, and hope (see note 1 in 1 Cor. 13:1). Such a life originates not from the ability of the believers’ natural being but from the infusion of what God, in whom they believe, is. It is carried out by their sacrificial love toward their loving Lord, who loved them and gave Himself for them, and toward His members, whom He has redeemed through His death in love. This life lasts and stands unchanging by the sustaining power of the hope in which the believers look for their beloved Lord, who promised that He would come to take them to Himself—Col. 1:4-5; 1 Thes. 1:3, 8; 3:2, 5, 6, 7, 10; 5:8; 2 Thes. 1:3, 4, 11; 3:2; 1 Cor. 13:13; Gal. 5:6; Col. 1:4; 1 Tim. 1:14; Eph. 6:23; James 2:22.
- B. The genuine Christian life for the proper church life is revealed in a simple and brief way. It is a life of three dimensions in the light of the Lord’s coming back, having faith as the beginning, the foundation, love as the process, the construction, and hope as the consummation, the completion. Faith is toward God (1 Thes. 1:8), love is toward the saints (3:12; 4:9-10), and hope is in the Lord’s coming (2:19).
- C. This is the apostle John’s prayer and his response to the Lord’s warning. It is also the last prayer in the Bible. After hearing this book, we should all pray such a prayer and have such a response— “Come, Lord Jesus!” The entire Bible concludes with the desire for the Lord’s coming expressed as a prayer—Rev. 22:20, 17.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the difference between the hope of a believer versus the hope of an unbeliever?
2. What do the pandemic and ongoing turmoil in the world show you about the world and its hope?
3. What has been your hope? Speak from personal experience.
4. How do we gain more hope?
5. How do we prepare for the Lord's coming?

Ministry Excerpt:

ENJOYING A LIVING HOPE

In 1 Peter 1:1 and 2, we have the operation of the Triune God: the selection of God the Father, the sanctification of the Spirit, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Then in the remainder of the first chapter we have the full salvation of the Triune God. This full salvation is composed of the Father's regeneration, the Spirit's application, and the Son's redemption. The Father's regeneration has brought His eternal life into us and has also brought us into the enjoyment of this eternal life. Now this enjoyment is a living hope for us today.

When some hear that we may enjoy the living hope today, they may argue and say, "How can you claim that the living hope is a present matter? Something present can never be a hope. Romans 8 gives us a description of hope. That chapter tells us that hope refers to things that we have not seen. Those who would try to argue in this way need to realize that the living hope, the inheritance, is ours today, tomorrow, and for eternity. With our present enjoyment we have a hope. This means that our enjoyment of the divine life is a hope. For example, perhaps early in the day you may have a failure in your Christian life. Nevertheless, even though you have failed, you still have a hope. You may say to yourself, "I'm very weak, yet I still have hope. My experience may be poor, but I have hope. Perhaps even later today my experience will be uplifted." Do you not have such a hope within you? We all have this living hope. Day by day we live a life of living hope.

The reason we have a life of hope is that we have a heavenly inheritance. This hope, this inheritance, is the result of the Father's regeneration. In verses 3 through 9 we see various aspects of the inheritance of eternal life. Our enjoyment and experience of eternal life are due to the Father's regeneration.

A recent experience I had with a stomach ulcer may be used to illustrate what Peter means by living hope. When I discovered that I had a problem, I was hospitalized briefly for examination and tests. After the examination and the tests were completed, I began to have a living hope every day. I realized that within my body there is a life that could solve the problem of my ulcer. This life caused me to have a living hope. Eventually, I was fully healed and recovered. I was recovered according to the living hope I had.

A living hope depends on life. If there were no life in our body, we would not have the hope to be healed of any illness or injury. But because we have life in our body, we have the hope for it to be healed of injury or illness. We would not have such a hope for something that is not living. For example, suppose a wooden chair is broken. The chair does not have any hope of repairing itself. If no one comes to work on the chair to repair it, it will remain indefinitely broken without any hope of being fixed. But when I was in the hospital, I could have a living hope because of the life in my body. I had the confidence that my physical life would heal the problem in my body. Therefore, I had a living hope.

What is a living hope? A living hope is a hope that comes from life. This hope results from the living, organic element within us.

In addition to physical life, we also have the divine life in us through the Father's regeneration. This life is the strongest, richest, and highest life. To be sure, this life will take care of us. We may have problems and troubles, but we have a living hope because of the divine life within us. We are not dead—we are living. Thus, we have a living hope, the hope that our situation will be better in the future. We have eternal life, and this life gives us a living hope. This hope is the inheritance of all the blessings of eternal life.

(Life-Study of 1 Peter, Chapter 6)