

Live With Faith and Hope

29 September 2010

By Rev. Lonny R. Bower

Scripture Reference – 1 Peter 1:1-21

Unit Theme: Counsel for Christlike Living

Central Truth: Faith in Christ redeems and keeps us, giving us enduring hope.

Focus: Realize the certainty of hope in Christ and affirm faith in Him.

Key Verse: 1 Peter 1:21 - *who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.*

Introduction:

It is my belief that Christianity today is a far cry from what it was in the first century. Mainly I believe this because when aligned with the New Testament body there are few congregations that measure up. Contributing to this is the lack of genuine Christ likeness among the residents of the church. For too long the church has focused on the wrong things and as a result has become in many cases an empty shell of formality only. One example of this is with the great commission, the Lord says “go preach” and the church says “no, you send them to us.” Yet if we were truly Christlike (Christian) then we would do as Jesus did and we would go. Another area where the church has gravely missed the mark is in her judgmental spirit. For instance when was the last time you heard of a well known preacher hanging out and fellowshiping with sinners? Jesus did and was wrongfully judged by the religious of His day. Yet I would submit to you that we don’t see more of it today because many are more fearful of the judgment of the church than the judgment of God. One thing has not changed since Jesus’ day and that’s the overwhelming need for salvation – people need Jesus! Simply put, many will die and go to hell because the church was not Christlike enough to go to them and meet them where they are. Jude 23 speaks of this when he says that we are to save some by pulling them from the fire, hating even the garments defiled by the flesh. What does this mean? Simply that we need to be Christlike and it has little to do with our outward appearance, behavior or even our speech which oftentimes is the target of the church. It is time for those who would presume to be Christian to return to the living word of God and with the help of the Holy Spirit be transformed by the word. Today we will begin that venture by looking at our faith – is it faith at all? We will also examine our hope and determine if it’s a hope that does not disappoint.

I. Kept by Genuine Faith – 1 Peter 1:1-9

I believe that most of the time the first century Christians are misunderstood by many today. That is, there seems to be an overwhelming propensity to view them solely based on our trials. When in fact, our trials are not trials at all compared to what they faced on a daily basis. It is to these people Peter is writing and the Lord is speaking. He speaks of peace being multiplied to

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them. Let me ask you to recall a time in your life when you were faced with such adversity, such tribulation, such unrest that you would have done anything for a little peace. Perhaps it was a sickness and you longed for the peace of healing; perhaps it was an enemy who was relentless in their pursuit and you longed for God to intervene; perhaps it was a tribulation of the flesh that constantly defeated you and you longed for the peace of victory. Peter speaks of a peace he knows, not something he heard a preacher speak about, but a peace he has personally experienced. Do you desire this peace, do you need this peace? I cannot speak for another, but the peace that I have, knowing that God is able to keep me through faith for salvation is incomparable to anything else I have experienced. How can God's grace be sufficient for me? I don't know, but I know that it is because of the faith he has given me. This is exactly what Peter is trying to communicate to these genuine followers of Christ. God is keeping them, preserving them for salvation, even when it seems like they have no hope of deliverance from the trials of life. Peter seems to be saying in these first nine verses that our faith is in fact a compilation of trials tribulations and uncertainties, but we can rest assure that the end of our faith will not bring disappointment, but will bring salvation! How we need salvation!

Further Study and Thought – 2 Chronicles 15:5, 6 Not all adversity (trials) is from the enemy...

➤ **Note Taker:**

"Hope is to hear the melody of the future. Faith is to dance to it now." – **Ruben Alves**

II. Inspired by Enduring Hope – 1 Peter 1:10-16

How many times have we said "I'm saved" when in reality we are all in the process of being saved? Just as the prophets had a hope of seeing the Messiah with their own eyes, likewise we have a hope of one day receiving our salvation in full. Now as you might have guessed I'm Armenian in my doctrine which basically means that I don't believe one, anyone is predestined to hell (another topic) and two, that eternal security applies to any who live in the flesh (that is,

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our earthly bodies). I am more than willing to share more about these thoughts, but let us press on for now. If the end of our faith is the salvation of our souls as verse one states and we are all still pressing on in our faith then it is pretty safe to say we have not yet received our salvation. Yet Peter makes clear that we have an enduring hope of one day seeing our salvation. Consider Simeon if you will, from Luke 2:25-32. The Spirit revealed to him that he would not see death until he seen with his own eyes The Christ. Then as he took the child in his arms, he said, “mine eyes have seen Your salvation”. His hope is our hope; we too shall see our salvation. If we currently have salvation where is our hope, is it simply for eternal life? On the contrary, my hope isn’t on eternal life, but on eternal salvation which I shall receive at the end of my faith either when I die or when the Lord returns to catch me away! Finally, we think we know grace now, but far be it from the truth. Peter reveals that our hope should rest fully on the grace that will be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Paul says, by grace you are saved, and Peter by the Spirit says there is more grace than you ever dreamed possible! It is only through this abundant grace that we can be counted as holy. Think about it; is holiness (God holiness) really possible without God’s grace?

Further Study and Thought – Hebrews 11:6 God’s greatest pleasure is to reward our faith by giving us salvation. Perhaps this is why it’s impossible to please Him without faith.

➤ **Note Taker:**

“Those with no hope are bankrupt of character, ignorant of perseverance, lost without tribulations and left with no testimony – is it any wonder then that they are defeated?” – Lonny R. Bower

III. Redeemed by Precious Blood – 1 Peter 1:17-21

We could have never redeemed ourselves, even if we labored a billion years if it were possible we could never, ever be able to purchase our salvation. Only the blood of Jesus could remove our many sins, past, present and future. It is His righteousness we assume when we repent and confess Him as our Lord and savior. This is the only way to receive God’s abundant grace. It’s not by giving, it’s not by penance, but by faith in Christ and His redemptive work on Calvary.

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Oh by the way, if He's dead his work is useless, but He is not dead as many presuppose. Though He was dead, He rose from the grave defeating death so that we too shall live and He is the reason that we now can cry Abba Father. That is, we can have a personal relationship with the Father that beforehand was impossible because of our sin. He is the only reason we can have faith and hope in God.

➤ **Note Taker:**

“MY CHILD, my grace is precious. It does not allow itself to be mixed with external things or with earthly consolations.” – **Thomas A Kempis**

Conclusion:

Where is your hope or what is your hope in? I was talking earlier this week to a young man that stated he did not believe in Jesus though he believes the “core of Christianity is good”. When I asked him to expound he said, “I believe we should do unto others as we would have them do unto us.” Basically he was saying it's good to live as Jesus lived, but I'm telling you it's not enough! This young man had no hope and hell is filled with “good” people, people who had “good” morals and intentions just like him, but altogether lacked faith and hope! We cannot go through the motions of Christianity and simply appear to be good in man eyes. 1 Samuel 16:7 says that man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart. Christianity is more than behavior, in fact I would say that our behavior has a lot less to do with it then most presume. Where it is truly defined is in the heart and God sees the heart, not man. So are you living with the false hope of pleasing men by your behavior, or are you living with a genuine hope that comes from giving your heart over to God?

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Except where I have paraphrased all scripture is taken from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

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