

“God’s Promise of Hope is Gospel”

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Broad Text: Col 1.3-6

Specific Text: “... the hope ... whereof ye heard ... in the word of the truth of the gospel ...” (Col 1.5).

Theme: Hope

Question: What hope is offered in the gospel?

Proposition: The gospel offers hope of eternal life, victorious living, purposeful living, and ultimate resolution.

Introduction: The apostle Peter gave the following instruction: “... be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you ...” (1 Pet 3.15). He took for granted the fact that Christians have hope resident within them; he didn’t question that fact. Rather, he exhorted us to be prepared to defend our hope. Fellow Christians, we cannot defend our hope unless we know what it is. Our text, Colossians 1.5, makes reference to the hope that is found “in the word of the truth of the gospel.” Today we will examine four ways in which the gospel offers you and me hope.

I. The gospel offers hope of eternal life.

Man longs for a hope of immortality. This truth is evident in every area of human endeavor. Literary history reveals man’s fascination with the eternal. Men have sought fame in hopes that their names would live on beyond the span of their lifetimes.

But death is a chilling, unnerving enemy to the sons of Adam. E. J. Carnell has stated it thus: “The nature of soul-sorrow from the fear of death is plain. It is that spiritual uneasiness which is left in the heart of man when he lines up the ideals that he longs for with the reality of things as they are. Man longs for eternal life. That is the ideal. He will die soon. That is the real.”¹

The Bible’s promise of eternal life—which views physical death as a doorway to an enduring state of happiness—is certainly in line with the psyche of man. There is hope in the gospel. It is, first of all, a hope of eternal life. “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began” (Tit 1.2).

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn 3.16).

“For the wages of sin [is] death; but the gift of God [is] eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 6.23).

II. The gospel offers hope of victorious living.

All men know the curse of sin. Romans 5.19 tells us that “by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners.” The sinful condition with which we are born makes it reality known in the works we do, so that we can literally be called “the servants of sin” (Rom 6.17). Apart from Christ, man has no means of breaking the cycle of sin. The gospel, however, holds hope of practical, present-tense righteousness. It offers more than a just standing before God for eternity; it offers the hope of victorious living in time.

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members [as] instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members [as] instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace” (Rom 6.12-14).

III. The gospel offers hope of purposeful living.

There are many situations in life that appear to be random or out of control—twists of fate, veritable accidents. Those who subscribe to this view of life cannot but live as servants to circumstance—as subjects of blind chance. However, the Bible teaches that reality is very different. For the Christian, circumstances are the outworking of the purposes of God.

The gospel offers hope in that it introduces purpose to the equation of life. God is in control of everything that goes on in our lives. Romans 8.28 says that “all things work together for good.” It is not always the immediate, visible good; on the contrary, it is often delayed and invisible. It is described in the verses that follow: life’s circumstances serve to accomplish God’s present and future purpose of making us more like Jesus Christ.

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate (to be) conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Rom 8.28-30).

“In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will” (Eph 1.11).

IV. The gospel offers hope of ultimate resolution.

Human life is full of messes! Our physical environment is polluted, and we are not likely to restore it to purity. Our society is contaminated with sin. Our homes are broken by divorce, infidelity, and selfishness. Our political processes are hindered by greed. Our judicial system knows many injustices. Trying to “fix” all of these problems is more than we could ever do. Fortunately, we don’t have to, because the gospel offers us hope of ultimate resolution.

We can rest in confidence because God is one day going to sort out all things. Of course, he is more than a problem-solver: his real purpose is to gather all things in Christ. This will include restoring nature to its original condition. It will include the damnation of the unregenerate and the glorification of the redeemed. Ultimate resolution means that God will “work out all the kinks” in the universe, bringing everything into harmony with himself for all eternity.

“That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; (even] in him” (Eph 1.10).

“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, [I say], whether [they be] things in earth, or things in heaven” (Col 1.20).

¹ Carnell, Edward John. *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics: A Philosophic Defense of the Trinitarian-Theistic Faith*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, c1948, p. 24.