

The Anchor of Our Souls

Some folks believe that we live in dark times especially when they see the financial markets are off significantly, terrorism increasing in our world, political corruption exploding, the indebtedness of our country growing, and sin is increasing. For some a dark time is a death in the family. For others a dark time could be a divorce, especially when it is someone who loved you, and then walk away saying they do not love you anymore. Dark times come when there are rifts in families between brothers and sisters, or parents and children. Dark times come when we feel lonely, the future seems uncertain, or one's reputation has been destroyed. But spiritual emptiness brings the deepest and darkest of times.

Our study is about dark times. It is about discouragement. I have found in my own life that the darkest of times seems to come when my circumstances are bad and there is no hope. The same was true of those to whom the book of Hebrews was written. The people claimed to be Christians. They went through some dark times. We know that they had experienced persecution. Therefore, they started doubting God. They started doubting Christ. So, the book of Hebrews was a call to them to hold on and to stay with Jesus.

We saw in our last study, "Can I Lose My Salvation If I Fall Away?" that these people were warned to not fall away from Christ. Then

in verse 9, the author said this,

But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way. Hebrew 6:9 (NASB)

The author of Hebrews had just rebuked them for being spiritually immature before he said this. In verses 4-8 he warned them that if they pulled away, they could not ever come back in verses 4-8. Now in verse 9 he says that even though I gave you such a warning, I actually believe that you are probably Christians. You probably are real, but you are very spiritually immature.

Continue Ministering to Others. Then in verse 10 he said,

For God is not unjust so as to forget our work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints. Hebrews 6:10 (NASB)



Anchor of a Ship Symbolizes Christ As the Anchor of Our Soul

This verse is very interesting because when the author says "for God is not unjust so as to forget your work," he seems to suggest these folks were wondering if God had forgotten

what they had done and if He really cared. They were

probably struggling with the fact they had come to Jesus and then difficult times occurred. They had been ministering to one another, and then were thinking it is all a big waste. So, the author said, "Wait, God is not unjust so as to forget what you have done." God has not forgotten your ministry. Now that is encouragement, and these people needed encouragement.

Continue Clinging to the Hope. Then verse 11 says,

And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end. Hebrews 6:11a (NASB)

You may wonder what he meant by "same diligence." The Greek word has the sense of "eagerness" and "speed." They had been very faithful to take care of others. Then he added that in the same way he wanted them "to realize the full assurance of hope until the end." With the same diligence we are to minister to others, and we are to pursue the hope of salvation that is set before us.

Verse 12 adds,

So that you will not be sluggish . . . Hebrews 6:12a (NASB)

We learned earlier that the word "sluggish" has the idea of lazy. Now he urged them to stop holding back. He urged them to not be lazy in spiritual things, but to be . . .

. . . imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Hebrews 6:12b (NASB)

The Greek word for "imitate," *mimetes*, is the word we use for "mime." We have all watched mimes trying to mimic or be like somebody. So the people to whom Hebrews is written were encouraged to mimic those who are spiritually strong—those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

In verse 11, he is talking about the fact we are supposed to pursue hope. Do you know what hope is? Hope is faith

plus patience. Faith is the grounding. Faith is the reason for the hope. Now watch carefully; this is important. If faith is the reason for hope, why does he say patience? How does patience get into this equation? If there is no patience, then soon there is not hope at all. Discouragement occurs. If you have faith but no patience, you will eventually become disappointed and discouraged. Hope is faith plus patience. You believe and then you continue believing. We need both.

So the author of Hebrews encourages them to realize the full assurance of their hope. He says the way you do it is by imitating those who have faith and patience. They inherit the promises. The promises were given and are the reason for the hope. They were given a promise. They were hoping. They were looking forward to the promise. They were assured of the promise.

Illustration of Hope and Patience. Then in verses 13-14, the author of Hebrews gives us an illustration. He said:

For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, "I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU." Hebrews 6:13-14 (NASB)

Now we will stop and think for a minute about Abraham. We need to go to Act 7:1 where Stephen is before the Sanhedrin. Here is what we are told,

The high priest said, "Are these things so?" And he said, "Hear me, brethren and fathers! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, 'LEAVE YOUR COUNTRY AND YOUR RELATIVES, AND COME INTO THE LAND THAT I WILL SHOW YOU.' Then he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. From there, after his father died, God had him move to this country in which you are now living." Acts 7:1-4 (NASB)

Verse 2 tells us that Abraham originally lived in

Mesopotamia, which would be Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan today. It would have spanned those three major countries. Then he moved from Mesopotamia to Haran. Haran today would be in the southern part of Turkey. So he moved there and he waited for God to give him further direction. Then Abraham was told to leave and go down to Palestine.

Next, go to Genesis 12 where we pick up the rest of the story.

Now the LORD said to Abram,
“Go forth from your country,
And from your relatives
And from your father’s house,
To the land which I will show you;
And I will make you a great nation,
And I will bless you,
And make your name great;
And so you shall be a blessing;
And I will bless those who bless you,
And the one who curses you I will curse.
And in you all the families of the earth will be
blessed.”

So Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. Genesis 12:1-4 (NASB)

So Abram left Mesopotamia, and went to Haran. Then he waited for God to tell him to move on. God gave him a promise and asked him to move at the age of seventy-five years. But did you notice what Abram was told to do? He was told to leave his relatives, leave his family, and leave his friends. I do not know about you, but think about loneliness—leaving your friends, family, relatives, and everyone you knew! That translates to loneliness. That translates to starting over. It could have been a discouraging time for Abram to have left, but God gave him some really great promises. God gave him hope.

Then we see later in Genesis 22:17,

Indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly

multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.” Genesis 22:17-18 (NASB)

That was the end result. That was the end of the hope. That was the end of what Abraham was looking for.

Now back to verse 14 in Hebrews where we are told that God gave an oath to Abraham and said,

I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU.

But earlier God said in Genesis 22:17,

“I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed”

So God made the covenant with Abraham. He made the oath. Then in Hebrews 6:15 we read,

And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise. Hebrews 6:15 (NASB)

Who obtained the promise? Abraham. Abraham obtained the promise. But I find that verse 15 leaves out many details. There is no mention of the fact that when Abraham was seventy-five years old God promised to bless him. He was to become a great nation, and all the peoples of the earth would be blessed.

We find in Genesis 15:2 that Abraham in said, “I am childless.” God gave him a promise, but he was wondering, “Lord, what about the promise? What about my offspring? How am I going to become a great nation? How are the peoples of the earth going to be blessed if I do not have offspring? How is this going to happen, God?” And God said, “It is coming.” God encourages him in chapter 15 of Genesis, “Do not worry, it is coming.”

Then we find in Genesis 16:3 that Abraham was eighty-five years old. Sarai approached Abram and said that God

had not yet provided them with a child. She suggested having a child by her handmaid, Hagar, an Egyptian woman. Maybe God would bless them with offspring that way. We know what happened. Abram had sexual relations with Hagar and Ishmael was born. But that was not the promise that God had planned. They had tried to fulfill the promise on their own. That ended up in pain and grief in the years, the decades, and the centuries that followed. They were not—watch it—patient. They were not willing to patiently wait. Ten years had elapsed. The promise had been given, but Sarai was already trying to determine how to fulfill God’s promise.

We see that the promise was repeated in Genesis 17. Then in Genesis 21 after fifteen years since Ishmael was born, Isaac is finally born. Abraham is now one hundred years old. I think to myself, “Wait a minute. Isaac was born twenty-five years after the promise was given.” I wonder what was going through Abram and Sarai’s minds? They must have experienced a period of discouragement.

In Genesis 18 we are told that the Lord and two angels visited Abraham, and he was told that he would have a child. Do you remember what Sarah did? Verse 12 says,

Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?” And the LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, when I am so old?’”
Genesis 18:12-13 (NASB)

That tells me they had experienced real discouragement. Sarah just could not believe that God was really going to fulfill His promise. It had been twenty-five years since God had given the promise. For most of us that is a long time to be waiting, to be holding out.

Yet, Scripture tells us that Abraham had faith and it was counted to him as righteousness. Romans 4:18-22 says that was not like Sarah. He hoped against hope. He believed God would keep His promise.

What was missing in Sarah’s heart? She had faith, but patience was missing, the willingness to wait for the promise to be fulfilled. That has been true in my own life. I suspect

it may be true in your life. All too often we are not willing to patiently wait on God to do what He has promised. We want things now. Verse 15 is really great,

And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise. Hebrews 6:15 (NASB)

Do you know what the message is for us? The times may seem dark. The times may seem difficult, but we need to have faith and be patient. That reminds me of the song, “It’s Always Darkest Before the Dawn.” Here are some of the lyrics.

It’s always darkest before the dawn.
Don’t be discouraged, but carry on.
He’ll not forsake you, the sun will break through.
It’s always darkest before the dawn.

Are you discouraged and are you blue
Are clouds obscuring the sun from view?
Keep trusting Jesus, though storms assail.
You have His promise He will not fail.

He knows your heartache, He understands,
Just put your problems in His great hands,
No trouble meets you but in His will,
He’s not forgotten, He loves you still.

We need to remember these lyrics, especially in times like these. We need hope with patience. Hope in the Greek language is not like our hope. It is not a wish. Hope is a confidence that something will occur. So, we need to confidently hope for the promised eternal life.

God's Unchangeable Promise. Verse 16 continues with a commentary on the illustration. The author of Hebrews says,

For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute. Hebrews 6:16 (NASB)

He says what men make a commitment, and then swear by someone greater than himself. That was the custom of the day. So God accommodated Himself to the custom. Verse 17:

In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath. Hebrews 6:17 (NASB)

The actual Greek word for interposed actually has the idea of “making a legal agreement.” So God gave His promise and then confirmed it in a legal manner. You ask, “What was the oath?” Verse 14 quotes the oath for us,

I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU.

We saw that already in Genesis 22:17. God cannot swear by anybody greater than Himself. So, He swore by Himself. So God made His promise, and then swore by Himself. The promise is echoed in the New Testament.

Now notice Acts 13:23 which says,

From the descendants of this man, according to promise, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus. Acts 13:23 (NASB)

You ask, “How do I know that is the promise?” In verse 33 we see another statement about the promise. It says that ...

“That God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, ‘YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU.’ As for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: ‘ I WILL GIVE YOU THE HOLY and SURE blessings OF DAVID.’” Acts 13:33-34 (NASB)

Next, Galatians 3 echoes the promise that was given to

Abraham. If we were to go back to Genesis 22:17, we would see that there was a promise of a seed.

Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but rather to one, “ And to your seed, ”that is, Christ.” Galatians 3:16 (NASB)

Notice that it does not say, “‘And to seeds,’ as referring to many, but rather to one, and to your seed.” What does seed refer to? Christ! Christ was the promised seed. The promise to bless Abraham, to multiply Abraham, to bless his seed, to bless all the nations of the earth was all through Jesus. Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham. Jesus is the hope that God gave to Abraham. So Hebrews tells the readers of Hebrews that the promised hope given to Abraham is Jesus Christ.

Now verse 18 of Hebrews,

So that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie . . . Hebrews 6:18a (NASB)

We are told there are two unchangeable things that make it impossible for God to lie. What are the two unchangeable things? Verse 17 tells us that there is God’s promise and God’s oath. Those are the two unchangeable things, the two immutable things. “So that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie.” God made a promise and He made an oath. Both of them will not change. When God makes a promise, He does not change; and He does not lie. What does that translate to? It translates to a promise and to hope!

Verse 18 continues with so that,

. . . we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us . . . Hebrews 6:18b (NASB)

The middle of this verse is very important. He says, “we who have taken refuge.” The word for “refuge” reminds us of the cities of refuge in the Old Testament. The cities of refuge

were places to which someone who had committed a crime or was accused of committing a crime could flee. By going there they were protected until somebody could determine whether or not they were truly guilty. So the author of Hebrews says, “And we who have taken refuge....”

We as sinners, who deserve death, have fled for refuge to a place where we have protection, and that protection is in Jesus. Jesus is our refuge. He is our Savior. So, we are told that “we have strong encouragement to hold onto the hope that is set before us.” He almost describes a race. Hope is set before us like the ribbon at the finish line. We are running a race to that ribbon. The ribbon is our hope.

This reminds me of Abraham, at seventy-five years of age. He was given a promise, and hope was set before him. It is down the road. It is in the future. It is coming. It took him twenty-five years to realize the hope. So, what is our hope?

Verse 19:

[This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil . . . Hebrews 6:19 \(NASB\)](#)

The word for “anchor” reminds us of the anchor of a boat. We are all familiar with the anchor of a boat. In the middle of a storm, it is supposed to hold the ship in place and keep it from danger. Our hope! Our hope is like an anchor of the soul. It both secures and is steadfast. It is unmovable and will not move. The promise is unchangeable. What is the anchor? He tells us. He says that it enters within the veil. This refers to the high priest entering the holy of holies. He has been telling us that Jesus Christ is our great high priest. So, he is telling us that the anchor of the soul and our high priest is Jesus! He is Jesus!

1 Timothy 1:1 says,

[Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior . . . 1 Timothy 1:1a \(NASB\)](#)

Now listen.

[. . . and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope. 1 Timothy 1:1b \(NASB\)](#)

Jesus is our hope. Jesus is the anchor of our soul. And then we are told,

[. . . where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. Hebrews 6:20 \(NASB\)](#)

Jesus is eternal. He is in Heaven. He is our high priest. He is one who cares for us. He is our hope. Faith and patience are needed to obtain the hope. Faith is the reason for the hope. Patience is needed to keep us running toward our hope. Otherwise, we become discouraged and disappointed. Some people will reject Christ. These people needed to hear that. We need to hear that. We must be patient and not lose our hope.

But the best part in this verse is that Jesus is our forerunner. A forerunner goes before and paves the way for others to follow. John the Baptist was the forerunner for Jesus. He paved the way before Jesus. Jesus is the forerunner for us. He is already in heaven. He has paved the way for us! With hope and patience we will some day join Him. Maybe we will arrive in twenty-five years? It may be sooner or longer. So, let us run to Jesus. He is secure and steadfast. He is our promise. He is our hope! He is the finish line!

The future hope for our soul is Jesus. If you have never, ever committed your life to Christ, ask Jesus to forgive your sins. Then you will have hope for the future. Jesus is the anchor of the soul!

