

Text: Heb. 6:9-20

Title: "The believer's hope – the better thing that accompanies salvation"

Time: 3/22/2015 pm

Place: NBBC

Introduction: We said last Lord's Day evening that verse 9 is a key to our understanding of this chapter. There are some things that do not accompany salvation, and there are some things that do. Those that do not are discussed in the first eight verses of the chapter. The things that do not accompany salvation include getting saved repeatedly and having to go over the initial doctrines repeatedly (vv. 1-3); the possibility of repentance renewal (vv. 3-4a, 6); and thorns and thistles in response to the enlightenment of the word of God (vv. 4b-6a, 7-8). None of these accompany salvation.

Now we shall see what does accompany true salvation (v. 9). The author's point is that if you are saved, you also have what he is going to talk about next. And what he talks about next can be summarized with one simple word – hope.

Hope accompanies salvation. A salvation that lacks hope is kind of like an airplane that can't fly because it has no wings. I might like to try to say that our minivan is an airplane, but the problem is that it lacks the things that accompany an airplane – wings and a host of other things – and so we still have to drive it from place to place. We cannot fly it.

Well, in the same way true salvation is always accompanied by hope. If you do not have biblical hope, you do not have biblical salvation. I have titled the message this even-

ing, “The believer’s hope – the better thing that accompanies salvation.” I want us to see three things about the believer’s hope from the passage.

I. The believer’s hope is our reason to serve (vv. 10-12).

Illustration: Have you ever asked yourself the question “Why am I doing this?” and not known the answer? Ordinarily, when that happens, it is time to stop doing what you are doing. If there is no point to what we are doing, it should not be done. I feel that way when it comes to raking leaves or shoveling snow sometimes. If I begin raking too soon in the fall season, I look up at all the leaves still on the trees, and I ask, “Why am I doing this?” and I have no answer. If it is in the middle of the snow storm, and I am out shoveling the steps, and I look up at the sky and see all the snow still falling and I ask myself, “Why am I doing this?” I have no answer.

Application: Well, serving the Lord in a local church ministry can feel like that kind of activity at times. Why serve? We need the answer to that question, and our passage gives it to us: very simply – the believer’s hope.

What kind of service are we talking about here exactly? Well, we know some things about it from verses 10-11. This service is work. It is an expression of love. It is for God’s name. It is focused on the saints. It is earnest and enduring, not lazy, and it takes both faith and patience to accomplish. In the case of these Hebrew believers, it involved all the faithfulness described in 10:32-34. Clearly, much of this was not easy.

Application2: So why serve in this way? The believer’s hope. Our hope is our reason to serve the Lord in this way,

and specifically our author tells us that we can have hope in the truth that this kind of service is remembered and rewarded by God (v. 10). He goes on to mention two rewards we can hope in for this kind of service:

(1) Full assurance or confidence is a reward for service (v. 11). This full assurance of hope is similar to the full assurance of understanding (Col. 2:2) and the full assurance of faith (Heb. 10:22). Let's take a look at the full assurance of faith (Heb. 10:22-25). This full assurance is a contagious confidence that can be greatly used of God in the local church. The wonderful thing about full assurance of faith and hope and understanding is that it enables us to encourage others to the same end. It is a blessing that reaches not only our own lives, but also the lives of others. The reward of that confidence for our faithful service is our hope.

(2) Inheriting what was promised is a reward for service (v. 12). The second reward that God remembers to give faithful servants is the promised inheritance. Wouldn't you like to get the phone call tonight from that long lost uncle? Well, when it comes to serving the Lord, the phone call has already come. The inheritance is promised, and many are currently enjoying that inheritance. We will read about many of these in chapter 11 who were faithful. We need to be imitators of them, and the reason why is hope – we who imitate their faithfulness will also imitate their inheriting.

So the believer's hope is our reason to serve. It answers for us that all important question – why keep on doing this? At times, it is hard to find an answer to that question in other things, though we often try to find it elsewhere. God rewards faithful service with confident assurance and with an future inheritance. Those are the reasons we serve.

II. The believer's hope is strengthened by Abraham's example (vv. 13-18).

Illustration: If I were to say to you, "I am the most trustworthy expert on this topic," and you were to say, "Prove it," and I were to respond, "Well, so-and-so agrees with me," you would then know that I am not the most trustworthy expert on that topic. The other guy must be. The testimony of someone more trustworthy was needed to validate my claim of superlative trustworthiness, meaning I am not the most trustworthy.

Application: When God makes a claim, He is the most trustworthy expert on that topic, and He never bothers trying to find a more trustworthy testimony to prove that claim. This is our author's point in v. 13. God always swears by Himself because there is none greater by whom to swear. He says, "I am God," and when man says, "Prove it," He responds, "I just did." When God says, "I am God," that is the best proof available.

With the force of that divine authority and trustworthiness, God made a promise to Abraham (v. 14). Notice two ways in which God's dealings with Abraham strengthen the believer's hope:

1. The nature of God's promise to Abraham strengthens our hope. It cannot change, and it cannot lie (vv. 16-18). It was impossible for Abraham to be anything but blessed and multiplied because God's promises are changeless and true. This strengthens us because that same kind of promise gives our salvation its hope (v. 17). When God says, "Whosoever believeth on Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life," that cannot change, nor can it be untrue. When He says, "Whom I foreknow, them I predestinate, and whom I predestinate, them I call, and whom I call,

them I justify, and whom I justify, them I glorify," that promise is an unchangeable and true hope.

2. The nature of Abraham's response to God's promise strengthens our hope – (v. 15, 18). Two responses are mentioned here:

(1) "we . . . who have fled for refuge." Do you ever remember fleeing to the Savior for refuge, for salvation from your sin? What is demanded for our salvation is not that we face the enemy and fight, only that there was a time when we fled for refuge to hide in Him.

(2) The second response of Abraham to God's promise is mentioned in v. 15 – he patiently endured. Abraham first heard the promise of God in Ur of the Chaldees. He moved to Haran and stayed there until he was 75 years of age. He winds up in Egypt settling in Canaan only after an extended famine there.

At 86 years of age, he decided to take matters into his own hands with the Hagar episode. At 99 years of age he is given the sign of circumcision, and Isaac finally comes at 100 years of age.

Abraham patiently endured, but he did not perfectly excel, did he? His finest hour comes at Moriah where he offers Isaac, believing God would raise him again. But Abraham knew that God's promise to him was unchangeably true long before Moriah. He offered Isaac not because he was afraid that God would rescind His promise, but because he knew He would not (Heb. 11:17-19).

You see, God's promise does not depend on the immutability of our faithfulness, but our faithfulness depends on the immutability of God's promise. We have hope in spite of

our faithlessness, because God's promise is unchangeably true. That hope is strengthened by Abraham's example; it tells us why we serve; and now finally:

III. The believer's hope is the anchor of his soul (vv. 19-20).

Illustration: Last week the Ohio River Launch Club, which prides itself on being the oldest marina west of the Allegheny Mountains, almost floated down river when its two anchor lines gave way due to the flooding they have experienced. Six boats were tied to the marina docks when they were washed away, and a single cable line anchored to shore managed to hold keeping the whole operation from floating down the river as a complete loss.

Well, the believer's hope is a single anchor line that does not let go when everything else fails. We enjoy often that wonderful hymn by Pricilla J. Owens, "We Have an Anchor." This passage in Hebrews served as her inspiration for that hymn. She was a public school teacher in Baltimore for 49 years and very active in the Sunday school of her Union Square Methodist Episcopal Church. She wrote more than 200 hymns, most of which were intended for her children in her Sunday school class. In addition to the verses we have in our hymnbook (#516), there was one more that went this way:

It will firmly hold
in the Floods of Death--
When the waters cold
chill our latest breath,
On the rising tide
it can never fail,
While our hopes abide
within the Veil.

Application: In the early church, the fish was a symbol for Jesus Christ the Son of God, and the anchor was the symbol of hope. Our hope is an anchor to our soul because it is firmly planted in the holy of holies. It is firmly planted in the holy of holies because it is tethered to Jesus, who has become the eternal high priest after the order of Melchizedek, where He ever lives to make intercession for us.

Conclusion: So how will we answer that probing question, "Will your anchor hold?" Is the anchor of your soul tethered to Jesus who has entered the holy of holies behind the veil? When you sin, do you have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous?

These are the things that accompany salvation – a reason to serve, the same unchanging and true promise Abraham had, and an anchor tied securely to Christ – the believer's hope.

Do you have this hope? Do you have a good reason to faithfully serve? Do you have what Abraham had? Do you have an anchor for your soul? If not, you can by becoming a believer and accepting Christ as your Savior. May God give us all the hope that accompanies salvation as we place our faith in His death on the cross for our sins.

“A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction – the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

Preachers and Preaching