



# HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

We Live in Hope

May 1, 2022

Hebrews 6:13-20

Clint Pressley

*<sup>13</sup> For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, <sup>14</sup> saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." <sup>15</sup> And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise. <sup>16</sup> For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. <sup>17</sup> So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, <sup>18</sup> so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. <sup>19</sup> We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, <sup>20</sup> where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.*

*(Pastor prays)*

In Dante' Alighieri's 14<sup>th</sup> Century poem "Inferno," there is a line that says, "Written above the gates of Hell is the phrase 'Abandon all hope ye who enter here' " because he understood losing hope is Satan's greatest wish and tool for mankind's downfall. For your downfall. When hope is gone, energy is lost, motivation is robbed and the future seems black as night and as cold as ice. You've felt it. You know what despair is like. It's irrecoverable hurt, Unreconcilable frustration or just plain wanting to give up. Evidently the people getting this letter knew it too. So after a warning and then encouragement, the preacher pauses in his discourse and pulls out an example from the Old Testament, a man named Abraham, to convince his people that you can trust God. He will come through. You can never give up hope.

Now, I sometimes feel like we live in a hopeless world until I come to church and hear the songs of Zion, feel the love of the congregation, preach the truth of the Bible, and see the promises of God that are fulfilled in Christ. And then I'm reminded that this is where my hope lies, In Jesus. My hope lies in His life, death and resurrection. The Gospel reminds me that all of God's promises find their "yes and amen" in Jesus.

Now this passage is a little knotty and hard to follow. But if you will do the mental work and hang in there, I think your heart and soul will be strengthened to face another week of this hard world and to do so with rock-solid hope.

### **Real Hope Gives Strength to Our Weary Souls**

#### **Christ is our trustworthy hope**

These first five verses are the hardest to untangle. Let's go through them slowly like a commentary might and then come back and make some application. <sup>13</sup> *For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself,* <sup>14</sup> *saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you."* This preacher likes Abraham. He mentions him 10 times in the letter. In verses 13-14 he takes us back to Genesis 22. It's the sacrifice of Isaac. The ram that was caught in the thicket became the substitute sacrifice and points to Christ as our sacrifice. Verse 14 quotes God's promise to Abraham from Genesis 22:17. God's promises are immutable, invisible and unchangeable because he swore on his own character and there is none greater than God. The point being, we cling to the truth of God in the face of cultural pressure and family pain. We trust the veracity and truth of what God said more than we trust our emotions, affections and the changing morality because the truths of God are based on his character and not our opinions or judgments. So, by grace we endure. And in verse 15 the preacher once again points to Abraham as our example. <sup>15</sup> *And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise.* He waited years and years and really never actually saw the complete fulfillment of all God would do. And verses 16-17 tells us why God didn't just tell Abraham He was going to give him generations, He promised and swore and guaranteed it. <sup>16</sup> *For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation.* <sup>17</sup> *So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath,* In verse 17 He wants to convince the heirs of the promise. He does that to help our faith,

to gain our trust, and to strengthen our resolve, because everything about this fallen world makes us doubt. Everything about it makes us doubt. You go to work and you don't get a fair shake, or you have so-called friends that talk behind your back and you wonder, is there any justice? You have a family and it feels like there is nothing but turmoil or pain, it makes you doubt. You come to church where all the "nice" people are supposed to be and you find out that they are *not* all nice. You have kids and you raise them up and then you just wonder what is God doing in their lives. You enter into a marriage and make a vow to God and to that person and that vow has been absolutely broken. You wonder. Or you are living in singleness. Goodness! The things people say to single people! It makes you doubt. God knows that and He puts it before us. Now dial into verse 17 with me. <sup>17</sup> *So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath*, When God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise, that's you and me, we are heirs of God's promise to Abraham, He guaranteed it with an oath. This is exactly what Paul was saying in Galatians 3:13-14. <sup>13</sup> *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"—* <sup>14</sup> *so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith*. At the cross of Jesus, all the sworn promises given to Abraham have now been given to us. Look, what you can trust is Christ. Not your righteousness, but His perfect life, lived on your behalf. Not you fearing the judgment of God but the judgment of God being taken by Jesus at the cross on your behalf. Not your fear of death, no, but Jesus being raised from the dead. Raised so that you can have hope. All your disappointments, frustrations, hurt, letdowns and breakups are handmaidens leading you to the cross of Jesus that you might see that Christ is our trustworthy hope. In Christ we are loved, forgiven, restored and strengthened. Christ is our trustworthy hope.

### **Christ is our saving refuge**

Let's look at the first part of verse 18. <sup>18</sup> *so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge*. Pause right there. Based on the unassailable truthfulness of God, we who have fled for refuge. I like that the preacher included himself. You need to appropriate this for your heart. "Fled for refuge" was one word, it's a verb. To run away *from* something that is dangerous and run *to* something that is safe. Here is an illustration. Last week I went outside one night and it was pitch black. I didn't know that my dog

Spurgeon was out there. He likes to play and he comes running at me. He's so fat that it was like a charging rhinoceros. I turned and I ran, fleeing to the inside. I fled for refuge. Now come back with me to verse 18. , <sup>18</sup> *so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge.* Refuge from your guilt, sin and hurt. Refuge from the future, from people, from your past that you've been dragging guilt around from, from the present that you don't know how to escape and from family pain. You run in your soul, you run to Christ. You need to run to the goodness of God, to forgiveness, strength, hope, you run to the love of God. Go to the wounds of Jesus and receive the healing. It's safe there. Don't run away from our refuge. Look, as fast as you can, run to prayer and confession. Run to the church; preach the Gospel to yourself.

Let's read the whole verse. <sup>18</sup> *so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.* Not just encouragement but *strong* encouragement. It's being built up, holding fast to this great hope that is set out in a display as a beautiful offer for a better day. I love that verse. Real hope gives strength to our weary souls. Christ is our trustworthy hope. Christ is our saving refuge.

### **Christ is our steady anchor**

This is the only time in the whole Bible that Christ is referred to as an anchor. It is right here in verse 19 and the early church took hold of the symbol and put it everywhere. Even before they were using the cross, they used an anchor. It was on catacombs and gate stones. It was on rings, an anchor. Let's read the whole verse to get the fullness of Christ as our anchor. <sup>19</sup> *We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain,* An anchor is only as good as what it's anchored to. If the gripping chain that is on our hearts is connected to Christ, let's look to see where the anchor is embedded. Let's read verse 19 again. <sup>19</sup> *We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain,* A ship's anchor descends deep into the seabed; our anchor has ascended deep into Heaven, past the holy place and into the holy of holies, into the presence of a holy God. This is what Christ has done by His life and death. In His death He took the chain of our hearts that were anchored in sin and Hell. He broke the chain and attached it to us so that we are in Christ and Christ is in us. At the resurrection He didn't just

break your chain. He attached your chains to Himself as an anchor, and at His ascension He has gone into the very presence of God so that all your hopes and all your future and all your tomorrows are anchored in the goodness of God. It is a stupendous victory!

An anchor does three things. It keeps you firm in the storm. It keeps you from drifting in the calm. It keeps you steady in uncertainty. Christ is our anchor.

### **Christ is our forerunner**

I couldn't think of a better word than the one the preacher uses here. Let's read verses 19-20.

*<sup>19</sup> We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, <sup>20</sup> where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.* Jesus is our forerunner. He's like a soldier or a small unit of soldiers that go ahead of the entire army to recon before he comes back to get the entire brigade. Jesus's entrance into the chamber behind the veil shows He is a forerunner on our behalf and conveys two confidence-building truths. He represents us in the presence of God, His father. He intercedes for our forgiveness on the basis of His sacrificial death. Jesus as the forerunner implies that believers will follow Him into their privileged place of close communion with God.

John Owens and A.W. Pink say He is a forerunner in three ways. The first is by way of declaration. He declares victory, ascending on high, disarming rulers and authorities and putting them to open shame. By way of preparation. John 14 says, I go to prepare a place for you so I can receive you to myself. And by way of occupation. First Peter 1:3-4 says, *<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,*

What great hope we have in Christ. Real hope gives strength to our weary souls. Christ is our trustworthy hope. Christ is our saving refuge. Christ is our steady anchor. Christ is our forerunner. Today you can find your hope in Him.

*(Pastor prays)*