

The Hope of the Gospel

Sunday, November 20th, 1988

Colossians 1:19-23

“For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; 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. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.”

If you have a Bible, I would like you to open it to Colossians Chapter One. I am going to be speaking today on the subject: “THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL.” Our text will be taken from Colossians Chapter One verses 19 through 23. If you will, follow along while I read the Scripture.

Let’s read from Colossians 1:19, “THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL.” In verse 19 Paul declares that *“It pleased God, (it pleased the Father) that in Christ Jesus should all fullness dwell.”* In other words, all the fullness of Deity, is in Jesus Christ. He is equal with God. *“He thought it not robbery to be equal with God.”* He said, *“I and the Father are one.”* He is God manifest in the flesh.

Isaiah said, *“Call His name Immanuel,”* (God with us). So, in Christ dwelleth all the fullness of Deity, all the fullness of glory, the very glory of God, which is God’s alone. His glory is revealed in the face of Jesus Christ. The very glory of God is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. All the fullness of God’s glory is seen in Christ.

Then, there is the fullness of His grace. The law came through Moses. *“Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”* He is the grace of God. All the fullness of God’s grace, mercy, and love is in Jesus Christ.

Besides that, there is the fullness of His wisdom because He is called, *“The wisdom of God.”* Jesus Christ is the fullness of God’s righteousness, because He is the very righteousness of God.

He is the fullness of eternal life, and that is in Jesus Christ. *“He that hath the Son hath eternal life.”* In verse 19, Paul says *“It pleased God (It was according to the will of the*

Father) *that in Jesus Christ should all fullness dwell*". Christ is all, and in all. All fullness dwells in Him.

Look at the next verse, verse 20; "*And having made peace through the blood of His cross, He reconciled all things unto Himself, in heaven and earth.*" In other words, all believers who were then in heaven, when He died like Moses, Isaiah, and the disciples who were then on earth. You and I had not been born. When Jesus Christ died, He reconciled all believers to God by the blood of His cross, whether they were already in heaven, or whether they were on the earth.

He redeemed them; He forgave them of all their sins "*By the sacrifice of Himself.*" He put away all their transgressions.

Paul writing about this in Romans 3, said; "*Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*" Peter wrote, "*We are not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ as a lamb without spot and without blemish.*" So, by the sacrifice of Himself, "*He reconciled us to God by His blood.*" He was justifying us freely, and making us accepted in Himself.

Verse 21: Paul is writing here to the Gentiles. He says, "And you Gentiles, you pagans, you idolaters, you who were alienated from God." In other words, we (Gentiles) were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. We didn't have any promises of the fathers of Israel. We were "*alienated from God and we were enemies by our wicked works.*"

In Romans Chapter One, it describes us as pagans, idolaters, and will-worshippers. We were alienated from God and we were enemies of God. "*Yet, hath He now; (it is a present blessing), reconciled us in Christ.*" You are made sons of God. We were made an enemy to a very Son of God. Now in Christ, we are changed from a pagan, to an heir of righteousness. We are changed from an idolater, to one accepted in the Beloved.

Just think about that! How did He reconcile us? How did He redeem us? It says in verse 22, "*In the body of His flesh through death.*" Christ our representative, lived to give us a perfect righteousness and died to give us acceptance before the justice of Almighty God.

Isaiah said, "*He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are healed.*" Believers are already, right now, reconciled to God in Christ. "*In the body of His flesh through death,*" He has now reconciled us to God.

What are the results of this? What are the results of the entire fullness dwelling in Him? What are the results of His perfect life, and what are the results of His sacrificial death? Look at this in verse 22, *“And He will present us Holy, unblameable and unreprouable in God’s sight.”* And you Gentiles, pagans, enemies of God, alienated from God, enemies in your mind, idolaters, yet hath He now through the blood of His cross, through the death of His Son, reconciled you to God and given you peace. Not only that, but you, who were unholy, are now made holy in Christ.

You, who were so chargeable, He has made you unblameable, and unreprouable in His sight. Jude said, *“He will keep us from falling and He will present us faultless.”* That is, faultless before the presence of His glory.

Do you know what He is saying here? He is saying that every true believer in Jesus Christ is perfect. He is perfect in the sight of God, and perfect before God. He is saying, *“Every true believer in Jesus Christ is actually sanctified.”* He is sanctified completely.

Every true believer in Jesus Christ is right now truly accepted, having been reconciled by the death of His Son, having received peace from God, through the blood of His cross; every believer is truly accepted before God faultless and holy, without blame. They must be, or God could not accept them at all.

These are marvelous promises. *“In Christ, dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and we are complete in Him.”* He hath reconciled us to God in the body of His flesh on the cross. He has made peace with God through the blood of His cross, that He might present us holy, unblameable, unreprouable in Almighty God’s sight.

Now, then, look at the next verse. What are the evidences? What is the evidence, and what is the proof, that a man is truly in Christ, that he is truly a recipient of these mercies? What is the evidence that he is among those who are justified, sanctified, and accepted?

The answer is in verse 23: Here is my text, *“If,”* (there is the big word) He will present you holy, He will present you unblameable. He will present you unreprouable in God’s sight, *“If you continue in the faith of Jesus Christ, grounded and settled. Be not moved away for any reason from the hope of the gospel of His Son.”* There it is; there is the evidence and there is the proof, *“If you continue.”*

To continue in the faith you have to be in the faith. If you are truly in the faith, you will continue in the faith. John said, *“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if*

they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.”

So, those who are holy, unblameable, unprovable and faultless, reconciled, justified and accepted in Jesus Christ are those who by the grace of God, believe on Christ, trust in Christ, rest in Christ, continue in Christ, and die in the faith.

That is what this is saying. In the body of His flesh, He hath reconciled you and He will present you holy, perfectly holy, and perfectly righteous, unblameable, unprovable in God Almighty’s own sight, if you continue in the faith, grounded and settled, firmly established and rooted. Be not moved away for any reason of the hope of the Gospel.

In the light of that, you might have some questions for me. Go ahead and ask them. Well, preacher, do you believe that all of those people who are walking the aisles today in these huge meetings in these emotional services, are saved? They are making professions, going to the front, signing cards, and are going to the enquiry room; do you believe these people are saved? Do you really believe that these people know God?

No sir, I do not. Well, don’t you believe that the majority of church members across this country who have been sprinkled, baptized, brought into the church, pressured into membership, joined by proxy, moved their letters and they are on the church roll, are saved and they know God? No sir, I do not.

Why do you say that preacher? That is a serious charge. I know indeed that it is a serious charge. I’m here to tell you and I just got through reading it to you from the Scriptures. This thing of salvation, is not professing religion, and it is not in joining a church.

This thing of salvation and eternal life is in knowing God by faith in Jesus Christ and it is continuing in that knowledge of God, and in that faith of Christ Jesus. This thing of salvation is in that walk of faith and in that hope of the Gospel. It is a continuous walk.

Where do you see any perseverance today? Where do you see any continuing today? Most churches are just constant turnovers. It is almost like the average vacation-land. There are people coming and people going all the time.

True believers do not come and go; they come and stay. True believers don’t come, believe, and leave; they believe and stay. That is what He is saying here. *“He hath reconciled you. He will present you holy, unblameable, unprovable, if you continue in the faith, grounded and settled.”*

You have to be settled like a rock. We are built on a Rock, grounded, and settled. Be not moved away for any reason from the hope of the Gospel.

You see; this thing of salvation is not a new profession, it is a new creature. You are a new creature in Christ Jesus. This is a heart work. There is a new nature. It is a nature of God. God said, *“I’ll take away the stony heart and give you a heart of flesh.”*

It is a new life. Our Lord said, *“Those who know Him will have within them a well of living water, springing up into everlasting life.”* It is a new way; it is a new family.

Listen to the Scriptures, would you? God’s Word says, *“My sheep hear My voice; they follow Me. Another shepherd they will not follow. A stranger they will not follow; they will follow Me.”* They follow in the path of Christ and in the way of Christ. He said, *“If any man come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.”*

He said, *“If any man would be My disciple, let him take up his cross and follow Me.”* The apostle Paul, (I believe that he was the writer of the Book of Hebrews), said; *“Christ Jesus is the Son over his house. He is the Lord and ruler over his house, whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end.”* This is until life is over. Until it can be said of us, as it was said of the prophets of old, *“They died in the faith.”*

No sir, I do not believe that this present day, join today, leave tomorrow, up today, down tomorrow, in today, out tomorrow, on the road today and never seen again, is salvation. It is not salvation in any shape, form, or fashion. I deny it.

Paul said, *“We are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence unto the end,”* unto the very end. It is *“He that endureth to the end; the same shall be saved.”* He said again (Heb. 10:38), *“The just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.”*

They do this for a thousand reasons. You just hurt someone’s feelings and they quit worshipping God. You sing the wrong song and half a row will leave. There are so many ways that people get their feelings hurt and depart from worshipping the living God. They never did worship Him.

“If any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him,” God said. But thank God, Paul said, *“We are not of them that draw back, but we are of them that continue to believe, to the saving of the soul.”* They continue and persevere in the faith. Our Lord

said, *“He that putteth his hand to the plow and looks back, is not fit for the Kingdom of God.”*

You see, Paul brought this lesson to us. Those folks who despised Moses’ Law, that Old Testament Covenant, that Old Testament Law that consisted of types, patterns and pictures; those that slighted that law and disregarded that law, died without mercy. *“Of how much sorer punishment shall he be counted worthy, who walks under His feet, the very blood of the Son of God”* (Heb. 10:28-29).

Yet, you say that you are a Christian. Yes, I’m a believer; yes, I love Christ; yes, I believe the Bible and then you walk away? You turn your back? Now, read that text again, *“In Christ; that is where all the fullness of God is.”*

There is glory, grace, and life. It is in Christ. *“He reconciled us to God by the blood of His cross, made peace by the blood of His cross, to present us holy, unblameable, unreprouvable in God’s sight, if you continue in the faith, grounded and settled.”*

Are you grounded? Are you settled? It doesn’t matter the purpose. You can’t justify departing from Christ. You can’t justify absence from the praise and worship of God. You can’t justify unbelief. If you be moved away from the hope of the Gospel, there is no hope.

You see; that faith that saves and that hope of the Gospel will continue throughout life. Salvation is not a response to an emotional appeal by an evangelist. That is not salvation. I don’t come to the end of this message and tell you to touch the television or reach out to me and to do all of these things.

I do come to the end of my message and I say to you, *“Look to Christ; call upon the name of the Lord; seek the Lord; search the Scriptures; and count the cost. If God be pleased to reveal Christ, embrace Him, look to Him, and believe on Him.”*

Salvation is not just making a public response or an emotional appeal by an evangelist. It is not just following religious tradition and ceremony. It is not in being a Protestant, a Catholic, a Jew, a Baptist, or a Presbyterian. I wish we didn’t have those names. A believer is a child of God.

This thing of salvation, this faith in Christ, this hope of the Gospel is not turning over a new leaf and reforming your life. It is not in being a member of some church, a supporter of some religious movement or a supporter of some preacher.

“God doesn’t dwell in temples made with hands.” God doesn’t dwell in these big, old Cathedrals, churches and ridiculous buildings. God is in Christ. We know God, as we know Christ.

In closing, I want to suggest four things to you. This is the hope of the Gospel. This is that faith that saves. I really believe that the hope of the Gospel is a true, genuine hope, which continues. First, that faith that saves and that faith that continues, arise from a right knowledge of Almighty God.

It is not just in an emotional appeal, or psychological appeal, or a death in the family, or sickness in the family that sets you off. This thing of saving faith, this hope of the Gospel, the very basis of it is a right knowledge of Almighty God. Our Lord, in John 17 prayed, *“Father; Thou hast given Me power over all flesh that I should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Me, and this is life eternal to know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.”* Now, would you know God? Would you know God?

In First John 5:20, the Scripture says; *“The Son of God has come and has given us an understanding.”* This is not an emotional appeal and this is not an emotional response to an emotional feeling; this is an understanding. *“The Son of God hath given us an understanding that we may know God that is true. That we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and this is eternal life.”*

God is not who we suppose He is, or who we think He is, or who somebody says He is. God is who He is. God is who He is in Christ. He is revealed in Christ and is declared in His Word. He is Eternal. He is Holy. He is Just and Righteous. He is merciful, He is love. *“He that cometh to God must believe that He is.”*

I ask you to sit down and count the cost. I say to you, take the Word, and find out who God is. Don’t trust your feelings, emotions, or experiences. Who is God? God is Eternal. God is Holy, Just, and Righteous.

Thank God, He is merciful. When a person finds out who God is; that doesn’t change. Throughout his whole life, that is who God still is. He grows in the knowledge of the Greatness, Glory, and Majesty of God.

You’ll make a profession of religion and quit tomorrow. If you ever find out who God is, you will never quit. *“He is still the same, yesterday, today and forever.”* Find out who God is. The fear of the Lord will be in your heart, and the glory of God will be revealed to you.

Second, the hope of the Gospel arises not only out of knowledge of who God is, but it arises out of knowledge of us. The man who truly knows God will know himself. He will discover it himself. Job did. He said, *“Lord I have heard of you, now I see you and I hate myself. I repent in sackcloth and ashes. I have seen the Lord.”*

Isaiah said, *“I saw the Lord and I cried; Woe is me, unto God I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. I have seen the Lord.”* That is what happens. The man, who truly sees God, sees himself. That never changes.

I could take you to the Scripture today and show you how sin entered the world through Adam. I could show you how sin passed upon all men, and how God punishes sin. The way to discover sin is to discover the Holiness, Majesty, and Glory of Almighty God. That doesn't change.

This is not something that I leave tomorrow. You might say, “Well, I've got religion and left it.” You will, if you get religion. You will finally leave it, or you ought to. If you ever find out who God is, then that will never change. Then, you find out who you are. You find out that you are a sinner. *“I've sinned and come short of the glory of God.”* I need mercy; I need help.

Then, this faith and hope of the Gospel arises out of a knowledge of who Christ is, the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. When I find out who God is, *“Dwelling in a light to which no man can approach,”* when I find out who I am and how far I am from God and I realize that *“My sins have separated me and that Holy God;”* I have to have somebody to bring me to God.

In Adam, I lost the way, the truth and I lost my life. I need a Mediator. Who shall it be? *“There is only one Mediator between God and men and that is the man Christ Jesus. He came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief. When the fullness of time was come, God sent His Son into the world, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.”*

“God set Him forth as propitiation.” Can I discover that? That never changes. That does not change. There is no way that you can make me mad enough to forget who Christ is. There is no way that you can hurt my feelings and make me leave Him who is my only hope. Not if He is my Propitiation, my High Priest, and my Mediator, and Mercy Seat. You quit; I'm not; I need Jesus Christ. Do you see what I am saying?

You sit down and count the cost. You ask God to reveal to you who He is and you will find out who you are. Then, you will find out who Christ is. Do you know what will happen? You will come to Christ. You will cast yourself on Him. You will say with Paul, *“I know whom I have believed and I’m persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day”* (until the Day of Judgment). It is in His hands and that is real.