

## **A Good Hope Through Grace**

Sunday, NOVEMBER 29<sup>th</sup>, 1987

### **2 Thessalonians 2:16**

*“Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace.”*

I'm speaking to you today on the subject: "A GOOD HOPE THROUGH GRACE." "*A good hope through grace*" is what the Word of God says. Listen to 2 Thessalonians Chapter 2:16, "*Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God, even our Father, which hath loved us and hath given us an everlasting consolation, (comfort) and a good hope through grace.*"

Now, the word (hope) is a word that you use frequently and I do too. You would be surprised how many times you use that word in a day. Somebody may ask the question, "Will your business do well this year?" The man says, "I hope so." Someone else may say, "Was the surgery on your brother a success?" He will say, "I hope so." Will your son graduate from school this year? "Yes, we hope so." We use the word hope frequently.

The word hope expresses a wish or a strong desire. Is this not right? A person wants or desires something very much. Did you know that the Bible uses the word hope frequently? Quite often it is used in reference to our relationship with God and our prospects for eternal happiness and eternal glory. That's right!

I'm going to show you that today. The word hope is used frequently in the Word of God in regard to our relationship with God and the believer's prospects of eternal happiness and eternal glory.

But, a spiritual hope is more than a wish. When I said a while ago, "Will it rain tomorrow, well, I hope so?" That is just a wish and is expressing a desire. A spiritual hope according to the Scriptures is a whole lot more than simply a wish or desire.

Our hope of eternal life and of eternal glory is a strong desire, but is a hope based upon expectation. This hope is based upon expectation and confidence, not only in the mercy of God, in the promise of God and in the Word of God, but is a confidence in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, our spiritual hope is much greater and different than a simple wish or a simple desire.

Let me show you several passages of Scripture in the Word of God in which the word “hope” is used in reference to the believer and his relationship with God, and his expectation of eternal life.

First of all, I am going to read from Romans 8:24. We see in this passage of Scripture that our prospects of eternal happiness and glory (in Christ Jesus) are really an unseen hope. It says in Romans 8:24; *“We are saved by hope, but hope that is seen is not hope: For what a man seeth, what doth he yet hope for?”* If you see something, you are not hoping for it, you already see it. *“If we hope for that which we see not, then we with patience wait for it.”*

When you are interpreting a verse of Scripture, always read what is written before in the preceding verses. This is in Romans Chapter 8:24. If you will read the preceding verses in Romans 8, you will find that the apostle Paul is talking about the whole creation. It says that the creation, the trees, the vegetables, the plants, the flowers and all of the things in creation including the animals were made subject to vanity and decayed because of Adam’s sin.

When Adam fell, death came into the world. By one man sin and death came into the world. By one man’s disobedience sin and death came into the world and death passed upon not only the human population but was passed upon the whole world.

The whole world is suffering because of Adam’s fall. We see death all about us in the trees, the plants, the gardens and everything. *“This creation groaneth and travaileth until the day when Christ shall return. There will be a new heaven and a new earth in which there will be no death.”*

In that same Scripture it says, we too, are waiting and looking and hoping for the resurrection and redemption of our bodies which will never die. Once they are raised and Christ comes and makes us like Himself, we will never die.

There will be a new heaven and a new earth in which there will be no death, no decay, no rotting or anything like that. There will be nothing but life. The same thing is true of our bodies. That is what He is saying here and it is unseen. It is something that God has promised, it is something that will take place, it is something that we are certain of but it is an unseen hope. We hope to be like Christ.

Second, in Romans 5 (listen to this); this hope that we have of being like our Lord it is also a maturing hope. Romans 5: verse 3 and 5 says, *“We glory in tribulation; (we glory*

in troubles and trials) *knowing that tribulation or trials worketh patience and patience worketh experience.*” That word “*experience*” means maturity or growth.

Maturity produces hope. There is that word again. All through life, this is what Paul is saying, all through life, believers have trials, “*In this world you will have tribulation.*” That is what our Lord said. You will have trouble and trials. “*All that would live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*”

These trials teach us patience, patience with the providence of God, and patience with those around us. We learn patience through trials and troubles. You see, trials and troubles do not produce faith, they reveal faith. Trials, troubles and heartaches, sorrows, sickness and death don’t produce faith. It doesn’t make a man believe in God.

When a man goes through a certain trial it reveals whether or not he does believe on God and the promises of God. So, tribulation and troubles produce patience.

Patience produces experience or maturity or growth in grace. Maturity and growth gives us a better hope. In other words, if I live on this earth and walk with the living God and God visits my life with blessings and troubles, happiness and heartaches then I learn patience. If God gives me successes and failures and I go through all of these trials and troubles, then I learn patience.

I learn to wait on God. I learn to depend on God. I grow in grace and I grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. The more I grow, the stronger my hope becomes. Do you see that? I mature not only in grace but in hope.

I have a better hope now than I had five years ago. I have a much stronger hope because all of us who love Christ make some progress in maturity and Christian growth. We believe more strongly than we have ever believed. God’s Word means more to us. His promises mean more to us.

Third: Hope is not only called an, “*Unseen hope and a maturing hope*” but is also called a, “*Living hope.*” Our hope is a living hope. Listen to 1 Peter 1:3; “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope.*” Watch what follows, “*By the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*”

You see; our hope is not a creed. A creed is so cold and dead. Our hope is not just a catechism; that is so cold and dry. Our hope is not just a church membership or having our name on a church roll somewhere. Is that your hope?

Our hope is not just a profession of faith. Our hope is in and is of, by and through a living Lord. That is what He is saying here, "*Christ hath begotten us unto a living hope.*" I'm not talking about an old profession of faith that we made 20 some years ago. I'm not talking about an old experience that we have told over and over and over again. It will get dryer every time we tell it.

Our hope is in and through and by a living Lord. This Lord is one who was raised from the dead and came forth from the tomb. "*He hath begotten us unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*" He died and He was buried. He arose and "*He ascended to the right hand of God.*"

That is what Paul said, "*Who can condemn me; it is Christ that died, yea rather is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God who also maketh intercession for me?*" Christ lives and Christ lives in us. We live in God by Him.

Our hope is a living hope. Do you see what I am saying? Oh yes, this spiritual hope according to the Word of God is an unseen hope. This hope is a growing, maturing, and better hope. This hope is a living hope.

I will tell you something else; look at this in 1 John 3:2, "*It is a purifying hope.*" That's right! Look what it says and you listen to the Word; "*Beloved, now are we the sons of God. It doth not yet appear what we shall be.*" No, I don't know and you don't either. It does not appear, "*But when He shall appear, (when Christ returns), we shall be like Him.*" We know that much don't we? We will be like Him, "*For we shall see Him as He is.*"

What hope is He talking about when He says, "We will have this hope?" "*Now are we the sons of God.*" That is what He says, "*Brethren, beloved, now are we the sons of God.*" This is not something that is going to take place later. It is by faith in Christ, by the blood of Christ, by the death of Christ and being accepted in the beloved. It is being adopted into the family of God. "*We are sons of God.*"

We are going to be like Christ. We have a hope that someday we will be raised from the grave incorruptible, immortal, eternal and perfectly conformed to the image of the Son of God. The Scripture says "He that hath this hope is going to be like Christ."

This hope influences his life and causes him to walk in holiness and truth and integrity and honesty. This hope causes him to want to be like his Lord and to bring honor and glory to His Master. He doesn't want to embarrass his Father in heaven.

I had a man say to me not long ago, “You know; when I was just a boy, around the house and out in public, I tried to live so that I wouldn’t bring reproach on my mother and father. I wanted to be a boy that they would be proud of.”

I think that this is what they are saying here, he that has this hope and is going to be like Christ, this influences his action, influences his conduct, influences his walk and influences everything about him. He wants to be a child that brings glory to the Heavenly Father.

That is what our Lord said. He has told us that, “*Men might observe our works and glorify our Father. Let your light so shine before men (that they might observe your lives) and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*”

All right, in the next place, this is also the believer’s hope and is a good hope. Look at 2 Thessalonians 2:16; the Scripture says; “*Now, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father which hath loved us hath given us an everlasting consolation and a good hope.*”

Now, I told you that this hope is an unseen hope. It is as sure as the promise of God. It is as sure as the Word of God, but it is unseen. It is a maturing hope. As the years go by and as you grow in grace and you go through trials and God deals with you in His providence and purpose, your hope is strengthened and matures.

It is a living hope. It is not a dead hope or something that takes place in an isolated past. It is a living hope because Christ lives. It is a purifying hope. It influences and affects man’s conduct and character and conversation.

It is a good hope! Do you know why it is a good hope? Do you know why the believer’s hope is a good hope? I will tell you why; first of all, God gave it to us. That is what the text says, “*Our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father who hath loved us hath given us a good hope.*”

This hope is the gift of God. My Lord doesn’t give anything but good gifts. “*He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus; every good gift and perfect gift cometh from God.*” Every spiritual gift is a good gift. “*For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.*”

John said this, *“This is the record; God hath given to us eternal life.”* So, I will tell you why it is a good hope; it is because God gave it to us. He is the one that loved us; we didn’t love Him. *“We love Him because He first loved us.”*

He not only loved us but He chose us. Christ said, *“You didn’t choose Me; I have chosen you.”* He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. He chose us from the beginning unto salvation. It says that in 2 Thessalonians 2:13, *“But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”*

He not only loved us and chose us but He called us. Paul said, *“It pleased God who separated me from my mother’s womb to call me by His grace.”* We are the called of Christ Jesus. Oh, we call on God, sure we do. We call on Him because He called us.

He not only loved us and chose us and called us and keeps us, but He keeps us by His power. Ecclesiastes says, *“What God doeth, it shall be forever.”*

Do you know why our hope is a good hope? It is because God gave it to us. *“God Himself, God our Father hath given us a good hope.”* I will give you another reason why it is a good hope; it is a good hope because it is through grace. That is what that verse says, *“Now, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God even our Father hath given us a good hope through grace.”*

If my hope and your hope are in us, it is not a good hope. We fail and we fall. His grace can never fail. If our hope is in our works, it is not a good hope. How much works? How long shall we work? Grace never fails because grace is a gift. *“For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves; (that faith and grace) is the gift of God.”*

*“For whom He foreknew He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son and whom He predestinated He called and whom He called He justified; whom He justified He will glorify.”* It is sure because God’s grace guarantees it.

Third: It is a good hope because God gave it. It is a good hope because it is through grace. It is a gift and grace cannot fail. It is a good hope because it is based on the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That is what it says. Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, our Lord Himself came to this earth. Our Lord Himself took upon Himself our redemption and accomplished it. Paul said this

in Hebrews, *“When He had by Himself purged our sins; He sat down on the right hand of God.”* Do you see that? That is the reason it is a good hope. It is accomplished by Christ Himself.

He didn't give it to an angel to accomplish or give it to a man to accomplish. He took upon Himself the responsibility of redeeming our soul. *“When He by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of God.”*

I will tell you this, the strength and certainty of a man's hope depends on the strength and the power of the one who gave it and the one who accomplishes it and the one in whose hands it has been placed. Our hope is in the hands of Jesus Christ. Those are strong hands!

Our hope is an expectation that arises from the promised mercy of God in Christ. Our hope is a confidence that is based on His substitutionary work. Our hope is in a Mediator who is *“seated at the right hand of God.”*

Now then, here is my final question and I know that this has to be on your mind. This is on my mind. I have been talking about this hope, and unseen hope, a maturing and better hope. I've been talking about this hope being a living hope and a purifying hope. God says here, *“A good hope.”*

Here is the question (and it must arise in your heart as it does in mine); is my hope a good hope? I'm going to die. *“It is appointed unto men once to die and after that the judgment. What is your life? It is but a vapor; it appeareth for a little while and then it vanisheth away.”* What is your hope of eternal life? Is my hope a good hope?

Let me ask you some questions briefly. I will try to answer one each minute. My hope is a good hope if I can give a good reason for that hope. Listen to the Word of God and let everything be established by the Word of God. In 1 Peter 3:15 the Scripture says; *“Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”* You are to recognize the holiness of God.

What is your reason? I will tell you mine, *“Christ Jesus is the Son of God.”* He is my substitute, sacrifice, Saviour and sin-offering. *“He loved me and gave Himself for me.”* He came to the earth and worked out a perfect righteousness in my stead. He went to the cross and died for my soul. He was buried and rose again and ascended to the right hand of God where He is my Righteousness, Sanctification, Redemption and Hope. *“Christ is all and in all.”* That is the reason that I have a hope.

Second: My hope is a good hope if it is based on the Word of God. It is not what I think or what you think. It is not what we suppose or believe. Romans 15:4 says this; *“For whatsoever things were written afore time were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort in the Scriptures might have hope.”* God said it and that is the only foundation that we have for believing it.

Faith’s foundation is the Word of God. My hope is a good hope if it is based on the Word of God. The Word of God says, *“Christ is the only Saviour. I am the way the truth and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by Me.”* Is your hope in what you think, believe or what my opinion is? That is all useless; what does the Scriptures say?

Third: My hope is a good hope if it rests entirely on the person and work of Jesus Christ. *“Christ in you that is the hope of glory. Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, Christ the Lord. There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, (except for Christ the Lord).”* Is that clear?

On Christ the solid rock I stand  
All other ground is sinking sand.

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus Christ and His Righteousness.

That is a good hope!

Fourth: My hope is a good hope if it brings me rest, joy and peace in Christ. Listen to Romans 15, *“Now the God of hope fill you with joy.”* I’m not talking about an artificial hand-waving, whoop-de-doo, excitement and emotion. I’m talking about a peace of heart and conscience and mind before God, a quietness of spirit, a blessed quietness.

I’m not making a lot of noise to be seen of men but a rest in Christ Jesus. May the God of hope fill you with joy and peace in believing, not celebrating, but believing, that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

I will tell you this; Christ in the heart gives you peace. That is at all times and that is not just in an atmosphere of religion. That is when you are on the job and at home. You may be in the kitchen, in the shop, in the garage on the street, in the park or in the store. Rest in Christ!

Fifth: My hope is a good hope if it believes God and acts in faith regardless of the circumstances. Romans 4:18 says, *“Abraham against hope believed in hope.”* He didn’t have a human reason to expect a son at his age but he believed God. He hoped against hope. *“He staggered not at the promise of God; so, it was imputed to him for righteousness.”*

Conditions and circumstances do not change a good hope which is based on faith in Christ and not feelings. That is a good hope if it can rest in Christ regardless of the circumstances or the situations or conditions.

Last of all, my hope is a good hope if it continues to the end. Christ is the Son over His house, *“Whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of this hope firm to the end. I have fought a good fight; I have kept the faith: Therefore, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.”*

That is a good hope!

It is not that I think or I believe or even my opinion; that is all useless. “What saith the Scriptures?”