

IS MY HOPE A GOOD HOPE?

2 THESSALONIANS 2:16 • TV-031B

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By

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My subject today is entitled: **“IS MY HOPE A GOOD HOPE?”**

Now, I’m sure we don’t realize how often we use the expression, “I hope.” For example, someone says, “Do you think the snow will continue?” And you reply. “Well, I hope not.” “Will the sun shine tomorrow? Well, I certainly hope so; it’s been a long time since we’ve seen the sun shine. I hope it shines tomorrow.”

“Are the children coming to visit this weekend? Well, I hope so. Is the patient improving? Well, we hope he is. We hope he’s doing well.” We use that expression so frequently, “I hope, I hope.”

Well, the term is also used frequently in connection with our spiritual condition, “Are you a Christian? I hope so. Are your sins forgiven; are you a child of God? I hope so. I hope to meet you in heaven. I hope the circle will not be broken. I hope all will be well with me at the Judgment. I hope so, I hope.”

Someone said, “Hoping men live on and hoping men grow old and hoping men lie down and die and hoping men come to the Judgment, but too often, only to hear the Master say, *“I never knew you; depart from me.”*”

“I hope.” Is my hope a good hope? There’s nothing wrong with the word hope in connection with our spiritual condition, nothing wrong with it at all. In fact; it’s a Scriptural word, it’s a very good word. We have a good hope. We have a hope in Christ. *“Now abideth faith, hope, and love.”*

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And then in **Romans 8:24** Paul said, “*We’re saved by hope.*”

In **1 Peter 1:3** Peter said, “*God hath begotten us unto a living hope.*”

And then in **Romans 5:5** the Scripture says,
“*And hope maketh not ashamed.*”

And then my text, **2 Thessalonians 2:16**, “*God hath given us a good hope through grace.*”

Nearly all religious people have some kind of hope. That’s what I’ve been talking about: “Are you a Christian; I hope so?” “Are you going to heaven when you die? I hope so.” “Will everything be alright with you at the Judgment?” “Well, I hope so.” I have a hope, you have a hope. Almost everyone has some kind of hope. But the question is, is it a good hope?

When the old Titanic left the shores, on board were many classes of people, old and young, rich and poor, male and female, black and white, educated, uneducated and many classes of people.

But when the report was put on the wall after the ship had gone down and the water had settled over it the report was posted on the wall, just two classes of people, saved and lost!

And this is the thing that we’re dealing with today. We’ve got a hope but is it a good hope, a good hope or a bad hope, a strong hope or a weak hope, a true hope or a false hope. And I don’t want a false hope.

I don’t want to go through life with a false hope. I want to go through life with a hope but I want a good hope. So here’s the question that we have in our message today; this is our subject: “**IS MY HOPE A GOOD HOPE?**”

And it is for you to examine your hope and me to examine mine, and not to examine yours by mine or mine by yours, but by what God says. So, I have pointed; I have written down five marks of a good hope and I want you to listen to them carefully and weigh them. “*Search the Scriptures whether these things be so.*”

But here are five marks that characterize a good hope. And I believe if these five things are true of this preacher and of you then we have a good hope and we have a strong hope and we have a sure hope.

First of all: A good hope; (now listen to this) a good hope is one that a man can explain!

Now listen to the Scripture before you say anything: In **1 Peter 3:15** the Scripture says: “*But 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.*”

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In other words, if I come to you today there in your home or wherever you are and I ask you; “You say you have a good hope?” You say; “I hope am I saved, I hope I am a child of God, and I hope to be in heaven.”

Give me a reason. And it says here in God’s Word: *“You are to be ready always to give to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope. Give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you, (not proudly, not boastfully, meekly) with meekness and fear and trembling.”*

Not cocky, and haughty and smart aleck and grabbing somebody up by the lapel and saying “I’m a Christian; are you a Christian, are you born again *“with meekness and trembling and fear?”*”

Now a good hope is more than an idle wish. A good hope is more than just a desire. A good hope is one that is based upon a reason. And you are to be able to give to that man an answer that asks you to give him a reason for your hope.

You say that your sins are forgiven? You say that you’re a child of God? You say that if you die tonight that you’ll be standing in the presence of God? Well give me a reason for that. What’s it based upon?

I’m not saying that a man must be a theologian, that he must be a scholar, quite the contrary. Actually, a man can be brilliant in material things and not know God. A man can be brilliant even in religious matters and not know God. Nicodemus was and Saul of Tarsus was. Nicodemus was a Pharisee and he didn’t understand the new birth. He didn’t understand regeneration.

Saul of Tarsus was educated in the best school of his day. He was one of the top ecclesiastical leaders. He was a Pharisee and yet he didn’t know God; he was 40 years old. He didn’t know Christ; didn’t recognize Him.

Some of us say, “A man has to be a scholar or a theologian.” Quite the contrary! A man may be just a very poor, uneducated individual, and still know God because a knowledge of God comes by revelation, not by education. It comes by regeneration, not by education. It comes as God the Holy Spirit teaches a man to know Christ.

There was a great old black man not formally educated, a black man who pastored in Richmond, Virginia back during the Civil War. His name was John Jasper. He wasn’t educated in the schools of his day but he was educated at the feet of the Holy Spirit. He knew God. And he knew how to preach the Gospel.

And a man came to him one day and said; “John Jasper, do you think you’ll go to heaven?” And he said, “Yes I do.” Well he said, “When you get there and you walk through what they call ‘The Pearly Gates’ and someone meets you and says, John Jasper; what right you got to be here? What will you say?”

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And John Jasper gave this classic reply; “Well I’ll tell you; when I get to glory and somebody asks me John Jasper; what right you got to be here? I’m going to say, I got no right to be here. I’m not here on my righteousness; I’m here on the righteousness of another. Christ died for my sins and that’s my hope.”

My friends; I’m not saying that you have to be a public speaker. There are many people who know God who could never stand before this camera and speak. There are many people who know God who can never stand in a pulpit and preach.

There are many people who know God who could never stand to their feet in a large congregation or a small congregation and speak or pray or do anything openly like that but they know Christ and they can put it in their own words and they can talk to you.

You know, the Bible says; *“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love it profiteth me nothing. I’m like a sounding brass (gong) and a tinkling symbol.”*

But what I’m saying is this; if you have a good hope in Christ you’ll be able in your own words to explain the reason for that hope and the basis for that hope.

You’ll be able in your own words to say, “I’m saved because Jesus Christ died for my sins, because I, a poor lost sinner before the Lord did bow. And I cried to the Son of God to cleanse me and put away my guilt.” That’s my hope. A good hope is one that a man can in his own words explain.

Secondly: A good hope is drawn from the Word of God!

Now listen to this Scripture, **Psalm 119:49**; *“Remember the Word unto thy servant upon which thou hast caused me to hope.”* David writing here; *“Remember the Word, (the Word of God, the Scriptures), upon which you caused me to hope.”*

Listen to this, **Romans 15:4**; *“Whatsoever things were written before were written for our learning that we through the Scriptures might have hope.”*

Our hope is based upon the Word of God, not upon feeling. You can’t build a good hope on feeling because feelings come and go. The Scripture says; *“The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.”*

You may have a good religious feeling today and tomorrow not have such a good religious feeling. And the Scripture says in **Proverbs 28:26**; *“The man that trusteth in his own heart, (his own feeling) is a fool.”*

We trust the Word of God, not our feelings, God’s Word. *“He hath said so that I may boldly say. If they speak not according to the law and the prophets, (the Word of God) there’s no truth in them, (there’s no life in them).”*

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We cannot base our hope upon our own thoughts. A thing is not right because I think it's right; it's right because God says it's right. It's not true because I think it's true; it's true because God says it's true.

He said; *"Your thoughts are not my thoughts and your ways are not my ways. There's a way that seemeth right unto men and the end is death, (destruction, and damnation)."*

Old Naaman came down to the prophet of God to be cleansed of his leprosy and the prophet of God said; "Now I'll tell you what God said for you to do. Go down to the River Jordan and dip seven times and you'll come up clean."

And Naaman was angry and he stomped his feet. He said; "I thought, I thought, the prophet of God would come out and say some words over me and I would be healed. This is what I thought."

And his servants said to him; "It's better to do what the prophet said than to do what you think." And that's what I'm saying to you, not what I say but what God says, do what God says, not what you think.

We cannot build our hope upon our thoughts or upon our feelings or upon our deeds. Don't put any confidence in the flesh, in yours or mine, or anybody else's. The Scripture tells us that over and over again, *"Put no confidence in the flesh. In my flesh dwelleth no good thing. In the flesh no man can please God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. To offend in one point of the law is to be guilty of the whole law. All have sinned and come short of God's glory. Our righteousnesses are filthy rags."*

Don't put any confidence in your flesh, it'll fail. And if you belong to God He'll make sure it fails so that your confidence will be in Him and not in your flesh. Don't put any confidence in tradition!

My friends; if I could tell the whole world this today I'd do it; a thing is not so because it was said a long time ago. A thing is not so because it was said by a great man. A thing is not so because the majority of people believe it. A thing is not so because we've always done it this way. A thing is not so because my forefather's practiced it. A thing is only so because God said it.

And if you can't find a reason for what you are believing and a reason for what you're trusting and a reason for what you're practicing and a reason for your hope in God's Word, you're in trouble because Christ said, *"My Word will judge you."* He said, *"Let every man be a liar and God be true."* And we must do that. *"The Bereans searched the Scriptures to see if these things were so."*

So, a good hope, is one that you can put in your own words, it's a hope that's based on the Scriptures, not on feeling, experience, good deeds, or tradition, or denominational sectarianism, or our forefather's practice, but it's based on God's Word.

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Thirdly: A good hope rests entirely upon Jesus Christ and Christ alone!

Now listen to the Scripture, **1 Timothy 1:1**: *“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Saviour and the Lord Jesus Christ who is our hope.”* He is our hope.

And in **Colossians 1:27** Paul wrote: *“Christ in you; that is the hope of glory.”* Christ in you, not you and the pool, not you in the church, not you in the moral law, but Christ in you; that’s your hope. He is our wisdom, He is our righteousness, He is our sanctification, and He is our redemption. That’s our hope.

My friends; we know that we have sinned. *“If any man say that he hath not sinned he’s a liar and the truth is not in him and he’s made God a liar and he’s deceived himself.”* We know we’ve sinned. We know we have no righteousness of our own. What the law says it says to every one of us that the whole world might become guilty and every mouth be stopped before God.

And we have no hope of any kind of righteousness in our flesh. And the only way we can do business with a holy God is to have a perfect righteousness. And we can’t produce it and we can’t present it so somebody else is going to have to do it for us.

And that’s the reason Christ came to this earth, to give to us a perfect righteousness. By the disobedience of one our father Adam; we were made sinners. That’s how we got in the mess we’re in because of what happened in the Garden.

And it was passed onto us by imputation and by impartation. This guilt was born in us. This nature of sin was born in us. The nature of holiness was lost by Adam in the Garden and we retained only the will to do evil.

The natural mind is enmity against God. We’re without natural affections. Our feet are swift to run to mischief. The poison of snakes is under our tongues. Our mouths and throats are open sepulchers and there’s none that doeth good, no not one.

We need some help. And that’s why Christ came down here. *“By the disobedience of one (Adam) we were made sinners, so, by the obedience of one, (Christ) we were made righteous. What the law couldn’t do because of the weakness of this flesh; God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh condemned sin in the flesh.”*

Christ did for me what I could never do for myself. And He gave to me all that I lost in Adam and more. *“He restoreth my soul.”*

And then we know that our sins must be punished. The justice of God as well as the law of God must be honored. The justice of God as well as the holiness of God must be satisfied. And God says, *“The soul that sinneth shall die. The wages of sin is death. I will not clear the guilty.”*

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So Christ came down here to pay that debt. The sword of God's justice was bathed in the blood of Christ. It pierced the heart of the Son of God. *"He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."*

"He was wounded for our transgressions." On the cross of Calvary He took our place. He died in our stead. He took our guilt and our sins. *"He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was laid on Him and by His stripes we are healed."*

The Gospel can be summed up in two words, the first word is substitution; Christ took our place. He took our place before the law as a human being. *"He was tested in all points as we are, yet without sin."* He was tried. He was made flesh just like His brethren in order that He might be a faithful, perfect, high priest. He was our substitute. He went to the cross and there He was our substitute. In the grave He was our substitute.

And the second word is satisfaction. What He did in the flesh, the Father was satisfied with. What He did on the cross satisfied the justice of God and honored the law of God.

What He did in the tomb satisfied the Father because He raised Him. He put His stamp of approval on Christ's work and took Him to glory and sat Him down on His right hand.

Now, the old high priest in the Old Testament never sat down. They never sat down because their work was never finished. But Christ having finished His work sat down. His work's done. He redeemed us. *"He entered once into the holy place and having obtained eternal redemption for us."*

He came once into this world, appeared in human flesh, to put away sin. He did it:

**"Tis done, the great transaction's done
I am my Lord's and He is mine
What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus."**

This is; this is what our hope's based upon, Christ and His perfect work. The Father can be just and justify the ungodly because the Son did all that was required of us.

**"My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But holy lean on Jesus' name."**

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That's the mark of a good hope, a good hope. It can be explained in your own words. You can say that, "Christ died for my sins." How do you know that? God's Word says it. That's what God's Word says.

So it's based on God's Word. A good hope will be taken from the Word. And a good hope is based not on my work but His work, not what I've done for God but what God did for me in the person of His Son, built on Christ.

Fourth: A good hope is felt in the heart!

Now, a feeling is not salvation but salvation is a feeling. Somebody says: "Well, I feel saved." Well, that doesn't necessarily mean you're saved. But if you're saved you do feel it.

Now listen to **Romans 5:5**: *"And hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. If any man be in Christ he's a new creature."*

Let me ask you some questions; can a weary man lie down and not feel rested? Can a thirsty man drink and not be refreshed? Can a hungry man eat and not be satisfied? Can a sick man be healed and not rejoice?

Well neither can a weary, guilty, defiled, hell-bound sinner, be born again, regenerated, and brought to a living union with the Son of God and not be filled with joy in his heart and elated in his heart. That's right!

Salvation, a good hope, is not just a mental agreement with a system of doctrines. A good hope is not just a decision of the mind. A good hope is felt in the heart. A man who has a good hope has joy.

A man who has a good hope has peace with God. He has peace with people because he knows that God worketh all things out for his good and God's glory and he has happiness in Christ.

Someone says; "Well, really a Christian is a great paradox," and he is. A Christian is empty. He'll tell you he's empty but he's also always full, full of joy and gladness, full of the spirit of God, full of praise for His Redeemer. He needs nothing. God meets his every need.

A Christian is sorrowful. He has great sorrow, heaviness of heart, because of the sin in him, and the sin around him. But he's always rejoicing: *"Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice."*

A Christian is humble but he's also exalted. He is lest than the least of all the saints, and yet he's a child of God, an heir of God, a joint-heir with Jesus Christ and the Son of the King.

A Christian is guilty; he'll tell you he's guilty. He'll tell you he's the chief of sinners, but he'll also tell you that he is justified and he is holy and he is unblameable in God's sight.

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He's poor but he's rich and all things are his in Christ. He's at war with sin but he's at peace with God. It's felt in the heart. A good hope is felt in here in the heart. Now we don't base it on that feeling; we base it on God's Word and on the work of Christ.

But that feeling's there; that joy is real. And that gladness is real and that peace is real and that comfort is real. He may not be able to explain it to you but he feels it in his heart.

A little boy was standing out one day flying a kite and he'd bought several balls of string. He had a big kite and he had it way up there in the clouds. You couldn't even see it. And a man walked up to him; he said, "Son what are you doing?"

And the boy said, "Well I'm flying a kite," standing there holding a string. The man looked around and he said, "I don't see it; how do you know it's still up there?" The boy said, "I feel the pull on the string. I know it's up there."

And that's the way it is with the child of God; he may not be able, he may not be able to pass onto you this joy but he knows it's there because he feels it in his heart. God will have to give it to you.

Fifthly: The mark of a good hope; it'll be manifested in a good life!

Now **1 John 3:2** says: "*Now are we the sons of God, (right now, through faith in Christ). And it doth not yet appear what we shall be. But we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is and every man that hath this hope,*" what hope, what hope?

Now brethren; this is the blessed hope and this is not just the return of Christ; that is a blessed hope. But the blessed hope here is that we're going to be like Him. That's what He's talking about here.

We are now the sons of God through faith in Christ. We are born again, regenerated, blood-bought children of God. That's right! But, we're going to be something else; we're going to be like Christ.

When He comes we are going to be, perfectly conformed to His holy image. We're going to be done with sin and we're going to be done with the things of this world and be just like Christ in thought, in Word, in deed, in attitude, in motive, and in all things. We're going to be just like Him.

When He comes we're going to be just like Him. "*And he that hath this hope in him, (what hope, that he's going to be like Christ), purifieth himself, even as Christ is pure.*"

He wants to live for His Lord's glory. He wants to live for the glory of His Gospel. He wants to live for the good of others. He wants his life to be a life of honesty, holiness, integrity, purity, and truth. He wants others to see Christ in him.

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And we grow in that grace and in that knowledge, manifesting His love, His joy, His peace, His meekness, His humility, His gentleness, His kindness and His patience.

That's the fruit of the Spirit and that is manifested in a man's life day by day more and more as he grows older in Christ. And that's the basis and that's the mark of a good hope, five marks of a good hope.

It can be explained in my own words. It's based on the Word of God. It is because of what Christ has done. It's a joy and a reality in my heart.

And then it will be manifested in a good life!