

A GOOD HOPE THROUGH GRACE

2 THESSALONIANS 2:16-17 • TV109B

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By
HENRY T. MAHAN

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2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

“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, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.”

If you would like to follow me in the Bible today and read our text, I am going to speaking from the book of **2 Thessalonians chapter 2:16 and 17.**

I really believe firmly in my heart that I have a message for you today that will be most beneficial to those who know Christ. I believe it will be instructive to those who do not know the Saviour and I believe it might be challenging to those who up till this time have had no spiritual interest.

My subject is: **“A GOOD HOPE THROUGH GRACE”**

Now, in **2 Thessalonians Chapter 2:16-17** Paul writes: *“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: Comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.”*

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There was an old-timer called Richard Baxter; I have his works in my library and have spent some time reading him. He wrote the book entitled: “The Saints Everlasting Rest.” And I believe that’s been out lately and has been republished.

But anyway, Richard Baxter said this, “I preach as one who may never preach again. I preach as a dying man to dying men.”

Now my friend, I am conscience of the fact that “*it’s appointed unto men once to die.*” I am going to die and the years are moving along rapidly. It won’t be so awful long until I shall go the way from which I shall not return.

It won’t be so awful long before they are going to say, “The Master’s come and He’s calling for you.” “*It’s appointed unto men once to die and after that the judgment.*”

So, I am interested in a good hope. I realize I’m a dying man and I realize that I am preaching to dying men. And I realize eternity is mighty near at hand. I realize that I am in the sunset years of life. That’s perfectly obvious to you and that’s obvious to me.

I’m interested in a good hope. I’m interested in some assurance in life. I want to have some assurance, some confidence of an interest in Christ. I want to have some comfort in death. I don’t want to come to the day of my death uncertain and unstable, do you? I want to have some comfort in death. And I want to have some hope for eternity.

So, I ask this question: What is a good hope? What would you call a good hope?

Our text says: “*God hath given us a good hope.*” So, what would you call a good hope? Well, could I tell you what I believe a good hope is? I’m going to give you six or seven things:

First of all: Being born in sin. I know that I was born in sin, like David said: “*I was born in sin and shapen in iniquity.*” I was born in sin and so were you. I was born in sin; I’m a son of Adam. I was with Adam in the fall. I have the root of sin and iniquity; it dwells in me.

Paul said, “*Sin dwelleth in me. When I would do good, evil is present with me.*” My parents didn’t have to teach me to lie. They didn’t have to teach me to be envious and jealous and proud. They didn’t have to teach me to hate people.

You see, I was born with that nature; that just comes natural to hate. It doesn’t come natural to love; it comes natural to hate. It doesn’t come natural to be generous; it comes natural to be greedy. We have a nature, a root of sin in us that was born in us. It was born in every son of Adam.

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Now, a good hope; do you know what a good hope would be to me? It would be to be born again, to have a new nature. In Adam I received an old nature. In Christ, I receive a new nature. I receive a nature that loves spontaneously (that old nature hates). I receive a nature that is spontaneously generous (that old nature is spontaneously greedy). I am interested in a new nature, a new root, a new life, a life of God; that's what I am interested in.

I would call that a good hope wouldn't you, to be born again? The Lord Jesus said: *"Except a man be born again he cannot enter the kingdom of God."* He can't even understand the kingdom of God. So, I would say that a good hope, first of all is to be born again.

Secondly: Having no righteousness! I don't have any righteousness of my own; you don't either. There's no goodness in us. The Bible says: *"In my flesh dwelleth no good thing."* That's what it says. And it says, *"In the flesh no man can please God."*

Then Isaiah said in **Isaiah 64**: *"We all do fade as the leaf. Our iniquity is like the wind that has driven us away. Our righteousnesses are filthy rags in God's sight."*

Oh, they look pretty good to us and they look pretty good to our preacher and they look pretty good to our neighbor but they don't look too good to God because He sees the bottom of them. He sees the source and He sees the motive. God sees all those things. So, I don't have any righteousness of my own. I don't have any goodness in me by nature.

And a good hope to me would be to be clothed in the righteousness and holiness of the Lord Jesus Christ. That would be a good hope, to stand before God, as Paul said, *"without fault, without blame, unprovable in his sight."*

That would be a good hope wouldn't it, *"holy and unblameable,* Paul said in **Ephesians 1**, *"unblameable in the sight of God."* That would be a good hope.

You know, in **Romans chapter 10**; Paul talked about those religious people of his day. He said: *"My heart's burden for them; I want them to be saved. I bear them record; they have a zeal of God. They have a religious zeal (enthusiasm) but it's not according to knowledge, not according to knowledge."*

He said; *"They are going about to establish their own righteousness and will not submit to the righteousness of God: For Christ is the end of the law, (the goal of the law), for righteousness to them that believe."*

That's the righteousness I want. I want that righteousness. Old John Jasper, the preacher from Richmond, Virginia, back during the Civil War who pastored one of the largest black churches of the South and he was famous. People came from many miles to hear John Jasper preach.

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One day a man walked up to him and probably in ridicule and mockery said: “John Jasper; do you think you’re going to heaven?” The old black preacher said: “Yes sir; I believe that I am.” Well, he said: “Let me ask you a question John Jasper.”

He said, “When you get to heaven and somebody meets you at the gate and they say to you, ‘John Jasper; what right do you have you got to be here’ and what are you going to say?” John Jasper replied, “I am going to answer if somebody asks me what right I’ve got to be in heaven, I’m going to answer; I’ve got no right to be here at all. I’m not here on my rights; I’m here on the righteousness of Jesus Christ.”

My friend; I would call that a good hope, not to be accepted in my works, deeds, fruits, and labors, but to be “*accepted in the beloved,*” clothed in that blessed wedding garment of righteousness.

You know, the old song writer said:

**“When I stand before his throne
Dressed in beauty not my own
Then O Lord shall I fully know
And not till then
How much I owe.”**

And another hymn writer said:

**“With his spotless garments on
I’m as holy as God’s own Son.”**

That would be a pretty good hope wouldn’t it, to be clothed in the righteousness of Christ?

Thirdly: Being guilty of sin before God’s justice!

And I am and you are, being guilty of rebellion against God in our father Adam back yonder in the Garden of Eden. We rebelled against God. We fell in Adam, judgment, death, condemnation, and sin passed upon all men.”

“*In one man we died.*” That’s what the Scripture says in **Romans 5**, and having my hands with all the rest of this race dripping red with the blood of God’s own Son, yes sir! When they cried; “*Crucify him,*” my voice was just about as loud as anybody else’s and yours was too.

I’m guilty of sin. I’m guilty of sin by choice, by practice, by nature, and by birth, that’s right, guilty of sin. Well, I’ll tell you this, a good hope will be to hear God’s say, “*Thy sins be forgiven thee.*”

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You know, Paul wrote in **Romans 4:7 and 8**: *“Blessed is the man to whom God will not charge sin. Blessed (happy) is the man to whom God imputeth not iniquity.”* Now you think about that; my sins are gone, all my sins are gone, washed in the blood of Christ, cleansed by the precious fountain of blood that flowed from Immanuel’s veins on Calvary’s cross.

My sins are gone:

**“My sins O the bliss
Of that glorious thought
My sins, not in part, but the whole,**

**Are nailed to the cross
I bare them no more
It is well, praise the Lord, with my soul.”**

That would be a good hope; that would be a good hope!

Fourthly: Being frail flesh and I am, being frail flesh, and so are you, and subject to trial, and subject to temptation, all matter of temptations: *“In the world ye shall have tribulation,”* temptations, and trials, and also subject to the on slots of the evil one.

Do you know what our Lord taught His disciples to pray? He said; you pray: *“Deliver us from the evil one.”* Do you know He warned Peter?

Peter was boasting about what he would do and what he wouldn’t do. The Lord Jesus said: *“Peter, Satan hath desired you that he might sift you as wheat.”* Let me tell you something friend; you are no match for his subtlety, you are no match for his power, and you don’t want to get in the ring with him either.

I hear these TV preachers talking about rebuking the devil and guiding the devil away and saying smart things to the devil. Let me tell you something friend; that just shows one thing; they don’t know the first thing about Satan and who he is or anything about him.

Did you know that Michael the ark angel would not challenge Satan? He said: *“The Lord rebuke thee Satan.”* I know he’s not almighty. God is almighty, but he’s mighty.

I know he’s not omnipotent; God is but Satan’s not, but he’s awful powerful. I know that he’s an adversary, *“a roaring lion that seeketh whom he may devour.”* I know that he’s been in the business; he’s been in the business of deceiving men for six thousand years.

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I know that he knows more about human nature than anybody else except God. And you don't want to challenge him and you don't want to do business with him. You want to turn him over to your Saviour and your Lord. That's right! When Satan is around you want to say: "Lord; you deliver me, I can't deliver myself."

But I will tell you; we are frail flesh and we are subject to fall. "*Let him that thinketh he standeth to take heed lest he fall.*" That's what the Scripture says.

Do you know what good hope would be? A good hope would be one that would enable me by the grace of God to continue in the faith of Christ as long as I live. Do you know the Scripture says: "*He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved?*"

Do you know the Scripture says in **Hebrews 3**: "*Jesus Christ is the Son over his house, whose house we are, if we continue steadfastly unto the end?*"

The Bible doesn't hold out any hope for a man who runs half a race or three quarters of a race but to the ones who will finish the race. The crown goes to those who cross the line. Paul said, "*The time of my departure is at hand. I fought a good fight; I've kept the faith?*"

When it talks about the Old Testament believers it says: "*These all died in faith.*" They all died; that is true, they all died. But brother, let me tell you something; these folks died in faith and they weren't looking back to an experience they had in the junior Sunday School department 45 years ago.

They weren't looking back to a profession of faith they made in a hotshot revival campaign under a Hollywood evangelist and called it salvation. They died in the faith, in the faith.

John said, "*They went out from us because they were not of us. If they had been of us, no doubt they would have continued with us.*" That's salvation; it's continuing in Christ.

Fifthly: Being a dying man; as I said at the beginning of this broadcast: I shall one day go the way of all flesh. When that will be only God knows. "*My times are in his hands.*" And the Scripture tells us in **Job 14**, "*that the number of our months is with the Lord. He has set our bounds and we cannot pass, I'm going to go the way from which I shall not return;*" I am going to die. Do you know what a good hope would be? A good hope would be to be able in that day to die the death of the righteous and my latter end be like his.

I fear too many people walk in what we call a "profession of faith" for a time and then when they get older they begin to grasp for some kind of straw, you know, straws of hope at the end.

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What I want to do is grow stronger in Christ. I want to grow stronger in Christ; I want to come to the end of life and be able to say with David: *“Although my house be not so with God; God hath made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure. This is my salvation, this is my desire, although he maketh it not to grow.”*

I want to come to the end of life and be able to say with Stephen: *“Lord Jesus; receive my spirit,”* without any fear of dying. To be able to say with Paul: *“I’m a straight betwixt the two. I have a desire to depart and be with Christ which is far better.”*

I don’t know why that it seems like the older people get and the nearer they get to God calling them home; they say heaven’s their home, but they hold a little harder to this life and a little more firmly to the things of this earth, when we ought to be at that day, letting them go. We ought to be releasing our grasp on these things.

We ought to be able to say with the apostle Paul: *“For me to live is Christ, for me to die is gain.”* I’m ready to be offered. A faith that does not give me strength to live in Christ will be of no benefit when I come to die.

What is a good hope? Well, having a corrupt body and this body is corrupt; this body is already decaying. It’s already getting weaker, weaker, and weaker. It’s already getting frail. It’s going back to the dust. That’s the goal of this flesh. *“It’s going back to the dust from which it came.”*

One of these days they are going to put me in the ground and the worms; they are going to destroy this body. This body is going to rot and decay. It’s a corruptible body, it’s a mortal body, it’s a shameful body, it’s a weak body, it’s a sinful body, and it’s going back to the dust.

Five hundred years from now you won’t be able to find enough of me to hold in the palm of your hands; it will be gone. Well a good hope is that in that day when Christ comes, when the trump of God sounds and the voice of the archangel and the clouds roll back and Christ shall appear. A good hope would be that I would have a part in that first resurrection.

“Blessed and holy are they that have a part in that first resurrection. And this corruptible shall put on corruption. And this mortal shall put on immortality.” That which was buried in shame shall be raised in glory.

And that which was put in the ground in weakness shall be raised in power. And that which was put in the ground in the corruption of human flesh shall be brought forth in the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you know what David said? *“I’ll be satisfied when I awake with his likeness.”* Oh my friend:

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**“These eyes shall see Him in that day
The Lord that died for me,
And all my rising bone shall say
Lord who is like unto thee?”**

That would be a good hope wouldn't it?

Sixthly: Having a desire to ever be with Christ! That's my desire, to forever be with Christ and be conformed to His image. A good hope would be to one day awake with His likeness.

You know, John wrote in **1 John 3**: *“Behold what manner of love, (what amazing love, what undeserved love, what incomparable love, what unsearchable love), the Father hath bestowed upon us, (of all people) that we should be called the sons of God: And it doth not yet appear what we shall be.”*

You can't look at us and tell what we are going to be. You'll have to read it in the Bible because we don't show any signs of what we are going to be. We just look just like everybody else, just as depraved outwardly, and just as weak and sinful.

“But, when he shall appear, we are going to be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” We are going to be like Christ. My friend; that would be a good hope wouldn't it, to one day wake up perfectly conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

“Now we see through a glass dimly but then face to face. Now we know in part and we preach in part but when that which is perfect is come then that which is in part shall be done away.” That's a good hope.

Well, what's the source of this hope? What's the source of a good hope? Where can I get a hope like this? Well, it says in our text: *“God who loved us, hath given to us a good hope through grace.”*

Who gave it to us? God did. This kind of hope is not in us, it's not in ourselves. You can't look within your heart or within your mind and find any comfort or any consolation or any reason to have a good hope.

Oh, you know, old John Newton use to say:

**“Tis a point I long to know
And oft it gives me anxious thought
Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I his or am I not?”**

You can't look within yourself and find any reason for having any hope at all. But I will tell you, if you will turn your eyes to Calvary to see where the Lord Jesus Christ died for

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our sins, if you will turn your eyes to heaven's councils of eternity and see where God in His purpose and grace determined to have a people and gave them to His Son and made Christ the Surety; you can have a reason to hope. It's not in us; it's in Him. He's the source of a good hope.

And it's not in our works. Actually, when we've done everything God commanded us to do; we have to say we are unprofitable servants. *"Man at his best state is altogether vanity."*

People talk about doing good works of religion. Let me tell you something; what are good works; whose done any good works? *"Who maketh thee to differ? What hast thou that thou hast not received?"*

Whatever I have, if it's any faith, repentance, love or grace, manifested in my heart at all, it's not I; *"it's Christ that dwelleth in me."* I can't take credit for something that God does. It's Him, it's not us.

So, our hope is not found in our good works. Actually, we don't call them good at all. There's no good in man; it's in Christ.

And then, our good hope is not in the law, our good hope is not in the rituals of religion, but it's by His grace: *"For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it's the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast."*

Listen to David in **Psalm 65:4**: *"Blessed is that man whom thou chooseth and causeth to approach unto thee that he may dwell in thy courts."* That's a blessed man.

What was the source of His grace, God? What was the source of his coming to God, God? What was the source of his continuance or perseverance, God? *"We are kept by the power of God through faith, (not apart from faith) but through faith and that by the power of God."*

Listen to David in **Psalm 62:1**: *"Surely my soul waiteth upon God: From him cometh my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation."* I have a good hope but it was given to me and it was given to me not as a reward, not as a wage, not as a result of my merit; it was given to me through grace and grace alone:

**"Amazing grace how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me,
I once was lost but now I'm found
And by God's grace I see."**

Grace is unmerited, unmerited favor of God.

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Then in the last place; here is my last question: This good hope, what is the foundation of this good hope? Let me give you three things and I want you think carefully on these three things. You can examine your hope by these three questions:

First of all: Is your hope based on the Word of God?

Now, my friend, a man can't have a good hope because he feels like it. It can't be because of an experience. It can't be because of a feeling. A good hope is based on the Word of God. God has written His Word and we can hope if we can find it in His Word.

We believe God. We don't believe feelings and we don't believe experiences and we don't believe voices we hear, dreams or visions; we believe God. Listen to David in **Psalm 119:49:** *"Remember the word, unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope."*

I believe God will forgive sin because He says so in His Word. I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God because I read it in God's Word. I believe Christ died on the cross for sinners because you can read it in God's Word.

I believe Christ was buried and rose again and ascended to the right hand of God where He intercedes for us because I read it in God's Word. I believe He's coming again because I read it in God's Word. I believe that God will receive me the chief of sinners by faith if I come to Him because that is what He said in His Word.

"Abraham believed the promises of God and it was counted to him for righteousness. It was not written for his sake alone but it was counted to him for righteousness but for our sake also if we'll believe on him who raised Christ from the dead." Your hope must be based on the Word of God.

Secondly: Our hope, is it based on the person and work of Christ, the Word of God, and on Jesus Christ?

Now listen to Paul in **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."* And again he said: *"Christ in you the hope of glory."*

Is your hope based on the Word of God? And is your hope built on the person and work of Jesus Christ? Huh? *"Christ died for our sins."* Why should God receive me into His presence, because Christ died for me?

One old hymn writer wrote this:

**"I once was lost but now I'm found
And by God's grace I'm heaven bound.
My only hope, my only plea,**

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Is that when Christ died, he died for me.”

Those people at the judgment said; “*Lord, we preached in your name and did many wonderful works and cast out demons.*” He said, “*I never knew you.*” Not a one of them said, “But Lord, you died for me.” Oh, that’s our hope!

Then last of all: Is your hope felt in your heart and revealed in your life?

If it’s a good hope it will be felt. A hungry man can’t eat without being satisfied. A thirsty man can’t drink without being refreshed. A weary man can’t lie down without being relaxed and a naked man can’t be clothed without being comfortable.

And to be in Christ is to know it!