

The anchor of the soul

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[0:00] As we meditate together in a portion of God's word from the epistle to the Hebrews and the sixth chapter. False epistle to the Hebrews, the sixth chapter, and reading at the close of verse 18.

The hope set before us, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.

Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast. Now in this chapter, the apostle, after having set before the people of God the danger of apostasy, and having earnestly impressed on them the imperativeness of perseverance, of diligence and perseverance in the faith, he goes on here to close the chapter with this marvelous word, this marvelous message of comfort.

And this comfort is no mere illusion. It is not something that is ill-founded or ill-grounded. Rather, it is substantially fixed and immovable, because it is rooted in the counsel and in the oath or the promise of God himself, as the apostle says in the context.

And what you say, you ask, what is the counsel of God? For here, the apostle refers to the immutability of his counsel.

[1:58] Well, as A.W. Pink observed in his commentary on this letter, it respects the agreement which he entered into with Christ in the everlasting covenant, that upon the fulfilling of the stipulated condition, the promises made to his seed would certainly be fulfilled.

This, it is, is the counsel of God. But you see what is even more wonderful and marvelous is not only that God formed an immutable counsel in the court of heaven, but that he was willing, as the apostle says in the chapter, that he was willing more abundantly to show or to manifest to the heirs of promise how immutable and how glorious this counsel was.

And so he confirmed it by a note, or he confirmed it by his word of promise. And this leads us, as to quote Pink again, this leads us, he says, to call attention to the distinction between God's counsel and his promise.

His counsel is that which originally was a profound and impenetrable secret in himself. His promise is an open and declared revelation, he says, of his will.

It is most blessed to perceive that God's promises are the transcripts of his eternal decrees. His promises now make known to us in words the hitherto secret counsels of his heart.

[3 : 48] Thus, the immutability of his counsel is that from which his sure promises proceed and by which they are expressed to us in terms in which we can understand them, at least in a measure.

And this is surely the believer's unspeakable source of comfort and consolation. You see, his comfort is not merely derived from what he believes he is, or what he believes he feels, or has taken place in him, but from what he knows God to be in himself.

This indeed is comfort, and this is assurance, and this is consolation. And this is the comfort that is brought before us in these words.

See, then the hope referred to here, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul. Now it is not so much the grace of hope that is being referred to here as the object of hope.

And what you ask, what is the object of hope? Well, it is, of course, it is the anchor.

[5 : 07] It is the one to whom the believer is moored, to whom he has been united by the operation of the grace of God.

It is not the anchor in isolation from the vessel, but the vessel securely tied to the anchor. To know that there is an anchor near at hand is no comfort and affords no hope.

Unless the mariner can get his vessel securely moored to that anchor, this is what gives him confidence, and this is what gives him hope.

And so this is the object of hope. We are not saying that the grace of hope cannot bring much comfort and much consolation to the believer.

But what brings the greatest comfort of all is the object of hope, the one to whom he is moored. And we have this again and again brought before us in God's word, this standing that God's people enjoy with the Lord Jesus Christ.

[6 : 22] In Ephesians chapter 2, for instance, the apostle Paul is there referring to the Ephesians in their unregenerated days.

And at verse 12, he says, concerning that time, concerning those days, that at that time you were without Christ. Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

Oh, they weren't without hope in the absolute sense. No man is. Scripture makes it very clear that man, that no man is without.

A hope of some description. He has some hope or other. He is building on something or other. But the word of God makes also very clear that the hope of the hypocrite shall perish.

It is a hope that will vanish when a day of testing and a day of prayer will come. And so this is the hope that the apostle is referring to here, in the unregenerated days of the Ephesians.

[7 : 32] At that time you were without hope, but now in Christ Jesus. He goes on, ye who were some time afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

You have hope. You are moored to the anchor. And then in Colossians chapter 1, where the apostle is referring to the mystery of Christ, the chapter we read together, he says, you remember that verse 27, to whom God would make known what is the richest of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man.

This is the object of hope. The Lord Jesus Christ. He is the basis of hope. He is the only hope of men in their need and in their sin.

And then in 1 Timothy, in chapter 1, at the very commencement of the aged apostle's letter to his young friend, Timothy, he writes these words, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God, our Savior, and the Lord Jesus Christ, which are, who is our hope.

Our hope is united, in other words, to something concrete, something substantial, something immovable. It is more to someone who is real and alive.

[9 : 04] It is gripped, as he says, in this very chapter, within the veil. He is within the veil. And that is where our hope is moored. It is to that, that it lays hold.

Now, as we mentioned a moment ago, there is indeed the grace of hope in the believer, in the experience of the Christian, the experience of the man of God.

It is this, it is this grace of hope, hope of grace, that is in exercise. As he looks forward to the consummation of all things, the grace of hope, of Hines, fulfillment in him as he looks through the darkness, as he walks through the darkness.

[10:35] And this is the hope that we have referred to in these words. Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul. But then, I think very clearly, the apostle is speaking of the glory of this hope in the words that he is using here, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul.

And this is the confidence of the apostle, as he writes. Which hope we have. It is something that we have in possession. It is something that we have been enabled to lay hold upon.

Something on which it lays hold. The vessel, of course, as we know, has a separate existence from the anchor.

It can live without him who is a true anchor of the soul. It can have a separate existence without Christ as we know to all sorrow in the lives of men.

But ah, what will he do in the swellings of Jordan? What will happen to him when it comes to the cross? He may go through the boisterous storms of this life but what will happen when it comes to the great final trial?

[13:10] But this is something to the apostle which we have something which we have in possession which hope we have as an anchor of the soul. And that is precisely what the Lord Jesus Christ is to the believer who has come to be anchored to him.

I have he has laid hold upon me and I am joined to him. It is possessed but it is sure we have which hope we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast.

That the elements will not prove too much for it. Frequently as we know this has happened in the course of history and frequently that's happened with disastrous results.

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You know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich yet for your sake he became poor that you through his poverty might be made rich.

and it is that grace that laid hold that cable that grace that laid hold upon you for by grace we are saved through faith and that not of yourself it is the gift of God it is he himself who has a firm hold of the soul it is he is connected the believer is connected to the anchor by the grace that has been that has operated in him and this guarantees that the hold which Christ has on him will never be broken and so there is good reason to why the apostle is saying that it is sure it is something that is immobile something that cannot be shifted from its foundation and so the one who is more to him will himself not be shifted from this foundation and says the apostle it is not only sure but it is steadfast or firm and is steadfast or firm as of course as to its object and only as to its object that is the Lord

Jesus Christ this alone is what makes the hope of the believer steadfast the object the Lord Jesus Christ is saved in the midst of all the billows of all the raging billows of this life he may indeed find from time to time that he is rising up to heaven and then going down again into the depths that his soul is melting and fainting because of the troubles and the afflictions which he has to endure because of the boisterous nature of the sea upon which he is sailing but he will never be dislodged from his mooring for this mooring is sure it is steadfast and he will be brought at length to his desired haven he will be brought in and he will inhabit the peace and the blessedness of the haven that is beyond the confines of life but then notice the practical value of this blessed hope the apostle calls it a blessed hope elsewhere you ask what is the practical value of this hope when the believer is properly exercised in his own life and in his own soul and his conduct when he conducts himself in a way that is to the glory and to the honor of the

Lord then there is boundless blessing and immeasurable value derived from this hope it imparts for one thing divine boldness in the heart of the Christian because the affections have been transferred from the self to the anchor to the one who is the anchor of the soul this is what grace does it transfers the affections of a man from himself and from being centered upon himself and what concerns himself to what concerns Christ and what concerns his glory as the apostle observes in chapter 4 of this very letter at verse 15 when we know that we have this confidence when we know that we have this high priest who is passed into the heavens this high priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities and tempted in all points like us we are yet without sin it is when we know this that we can come with boldness to a throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need so there is a boldness brought by grace a boldness that is given to the sinner by virtue of the operation of divine grace and this is one of the great blessed values of this hope of this good hope through grace this divine boldness to the one who has it and of course we know too that it conveys a sense of tranquility and peace and safety when a vessel anchors in harbour after a particularly dangerous and rough passage will not the sense of peace and safety be greatly valued by the mariners they look back and think back upon that voyage they think of those terrible days and those awful nights when they were tossed like a cork on the face of the deep when darkness surrounded them on every hand and now as they enter into the calm of the harbour the peace of the harbour and as they moored the vessel by the quay then the sense of peace and blessedness surely grips them then are they glad says the psalmist in reference to this matter then are they glad because at rest and quiet now they be so to the haven he then brings which they desire to see and looking back over the life over the course of your own life can you not testify to that peace that has been wrought in you and wrought for you wrought for you and also wrought in you for being justified by faith we have peace with

[21 : 38]

Lord Jesus Christ it can be something catastrophic and unless by the grace of God we are watchful and prayerful any one of us can be subject to this drifting we find it happening in the course of the history of the church of God the people of God we find reference being made to it in for instance our Lord letters to the seven churches in the book of Revelation where there was not a closeness on the part of God's people to the ankle where there was not a watchfulness and a prayerfulness of life in reference to the way they were living and the result was that little by little they drifted you see drifting can happen very quite imperceptibly we don't know that we are drifting and all the more reason as to why we should exercise ourselves in watchfulness and prayerfulness every one of us whoever we are and the most practical and positive way by which surely a believer can exercise this watchfulness over himself is by and through the word wherefore this very letter we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard lest at any time we should let them slip lest at any time they should literally drift away from us and when these things the things which we most surely hear when they drift away from our minds and from our thoughts we are automatically drifting away from them it stands to reason and this is the great danger that is confronting us confronting the believer in every in every step that he takes in life he is then to ensure that by the grace of

God he is securely anchored he is securely tied to the anchor that he is securely moored we have to examine ourselves lest the mooring should become loose this can happen and when the mooring becomes loose the drifting will start let us then and the closer we keep to him the more likely we are to be kept secure in our birth the birth that will bring glory and honor to himself this then is the confidence and this is the hope and this is the comfort of the people of God as the apostle says before us in these words that he is moored to an anchor that is himself a moored and that the anchor is in heaven whither the forerunner is for us entered

Jesus made an high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek this is the great confidence the great comfort and consolation of the man of God that his anchor is fixed within the veil and this is what we ought to lay hold upon this is our abounding comfort as John Owen says in his commentary on these words whither for us whither the forerunner is for us entered he says that he entered for his people by way of declaration you see a forerunner is someone who carries tidings to a certain place someone who goes on ahead and Jesus entered heaven and he announced that he had spoiled principalities and powers that he had been a show of them openly that he had abolished death and wrought life and immortality to light through the gospel that he had finished the work which the father gave him to do and he had accomplished all this in order that those whom he gave himself would have a good hope a good hope through his death and through his resurrection and this is the confidence of the believer as he looks upon the object of his hope he entered heaven the forerunner is for us entered and he entered as Owen says by way of declaration and he entered to as Owen says by way of preparation indeed he himself he announced this as we know before the final act he said that this is this was a reason why he was going I go to prepare a place for you if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself but where

I am there you may be also this is your confidence believer that you are more to one who has gone ahead who has gone before to prepare a place for you and habitation of light he himself is a door of entrance I am the way he said in the course of his teaching the truth and the life no man cometh unto the father but by me which hope we have as an anchor of the soul it has entered within the veil whither the forerunner is for us entered and as Owen suggests he entered also by way of occupation by way of occupying heaven he entered as the first fruit of a great army who were eventually to follow him Christ says the apostle in first Corinthians chapter 15

[29 : 39] Christ the first fruit afterward they that are Christ's at his coming he has begotten us again says Peter to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible undefiled that fadeth not away reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation so this then is a great comfort and confidence of the man of God as he looks towards the object of his hope as he fixes his gaze upon him not so much upon the grace of hope but upon the object of hope he who has entered within the veil the forerunner who is for us entered even Jesus that is what will give the greatest confidence and comfort and strength to your own faith as you go on your way as you battle in with the various conflicts of life go on in strength of God the Lord and derive more and more of confidence and strength from this that your hope is anchored within heaven within the veil amen and this would add his son■■■■ son■■■■ be son ■ ■