

Faith, Hope & Love_Part31

Psalm 131:3: “O Israel, hope in the Lord from this time forth and forevermore.”

1 Timothy 4:10: “For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.”

We are studying **hope** and its connection to waiting on the Lord and the fear of the Lord. Last week we talked about our need for *endurance* as we choose to wait on the Lord. We also concluded that since He is our help and our shield, we can, without fear, invite the fire and the knife by praying: “Let Your lovingkindness, O Lord, be upon us, according as we have hoped in You.” It is clear that many of us prayed this prayer and things are very hot right now. It is amazing how fast it has happened. But it is so good; I am thrilled to see what God is doing with each of you. The fire is releasing all sorts of dross from our lives and I am hopeful you will let the Lord swipe it away from your soul. The knife is cutting deep and separating us even further from this world so we might embrace the reality that we are an alien and stranger in this place.

Yes, our journey to spiritual maturity is advancing aggressively but it is all happening just like Jesus said in **Matthew 11:12**, “From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force.” You are taking over the territory in your soul and it is a violent act as you are putting to death the deeds of the body and literally crucifying your flesh. I know it hurts, but the Lord is your help and your shield and “How blessed is He whose help is the

God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God” (*Psalm 146:5*). We are truly blessed and the eyes of the Lord are upon us.

Continuing with this theme of placing our hoping in the Lord’s lovingkindness to deliver our soul from death (which involves the necessary elements of waiting and *endurance*), I would like us tonight to look at a passage in **1 John 3:1-3** that takes a little different angle at both hope and the Lord’s lovingkindness. This passage connects the expectancy of hope in terms of what will be with the immediacy of our need for the Lord’s lovingkindness (His promise to deliver our soul from death and to keep us alive in famine) In other words, the Spirit talks about how our hope in one of the most amazing promises of God is to directly impact our willingness and desire to embrace the fire and the knife.

1 John 3:1-3

See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

There are so many amazing things about this passage that my mind was tweaking when I sat to consider the power and majesty of its implications. This speaks of a hope that we all should have—a hope that will motivate our heart, mind, soul, and

strength; a hope that fundamentally has the power to impact our choices in the now. This passage helps us understand that our hope is a confidence in what “is,” even if it is just a matter of time for that to be fully realized in our lives. Our hope births in us the excitement and expectation of knowing what will be.

Let’s work through this passage and we will come back around to this idea of hope being our very source of excitement and expectation. But the 2 key points I want you to grasp is 1) we are “like” Jesus in that we have the same relationship with the Father that He has; and 2) we are already like Jesus in substance. We have been born-again as spiritual beings, we have His Spirit in our being (**1 Peter 1:23; 1 Corinthians 2:12, 3:16**) and before too long will be completely like Him in form as well. In other words, our hope—or our confidence—is that we will be like God. How fantastic is that. It is a very powerful promise that is to excite us and motivate us to cooperate, even now, with that process of our transformation into His image. We know from **Romans 12:1-2** and **8:29** His will for our life is that we be conformed into the image of His Son so that He (Jesus) might be the firstborn among many brethren. So it starts now and will be finalized in eternity, but it starts now.

2 Corinthians 3:18

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

“See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would *[might]* be

called children of God.” First, this starts off with a command for us to always “behold” the great love of the Father. It is in the *aorist active imperative*. Therefore, let us contemplate just a bit of His love. I truly believe His love is beyond our comprehension, but let’s at least consider what we know. It is a love that forgives us from all our sins and removes all shame from our lives. It is a love that is patient and does not condemn us even when we deserve nothing but condemnation. It is a love that rescues us and redeems us from ourselves and is actively involved in killing off and removing from our lives that which is already dead and dying. It is a love that reaches down from heaven into the realm of humanity and hears our prayers and acts on our behalf. It is a love that provides for our needs, guides and directs our lives, and gives us wisdom to navigate safely through the kingdom of the world. It is a love that protects us from the enemy and teaches us how to fight those who dwell in darkness. It is a love that places us in a family, restores all that has been lost and stolen from us, and secures us in intimate fellowship and unity. It is a love that gives us the desires of our heart and is our source of joy, peace, and rest. It is a love that empowers us to experience His divine nature and live in a very naturally supernatural way. It is a love that gives to us eternal life that begins in our now. There is so much to His love. This is why Paul said:

Ephesians 3:14-19

When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down

into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

But all those things we listed as God's love is just the start. It is also a love that we would *[might]* be called children of God. I keep saying "might" because it is rendered in the *aorist passive subjunctive*. The *aorist passive* means that God is the one who will call us children of God. But the subjunctive indicates that there is some question as to the matter; a contingency, if you will. If it truly said "we would be called," it would have been rendered in the *indicative* mood which is used to indicate a statement of fact. But here is it's a possibility that we might be called children of God and we might not. I believe it is rendered this way because this designation "children of God" is not just a cute saying as in "all of us are children of God" in the sense that humanity got its origin from God. It is not even to be understood as "all of us are children of God" in the sense of all those who claim to be a part of Christianity. Rather, this is talking about a love that designates a true believer as a child of God (one who proclaims that Jesus is the Christ, has the Spirit of God living within their being, and does what is right thereby proving out that they have the Spirit, since God only does what is right).

Please understand the magnitude of this statement "children of God". There is only one other upon whom this designation sits, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who is the only begotten son of God. The Father's love is so great that we might be

called His sons and daughters in the same magnitude of glory as His very own son. This explains why Jesus is not ashamed to call us His brethren, for we come from the same Father (**Hebrews 2:11**). We are like Him in both relationship and substance, and soon we will be like Him in form.

The Spirit through John then highlights that his audience can claim in fact (it is rendered in the *present active indicative*) that they are children of God. He says, “For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.” Here the Spirit of God starts to make the link and the connection between the nature of Jesus and our very own new nature (our **New Creation**) which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of truth (**Ephesians 4:24**). Hence, the world does not know us and cannot know us because it did not know Him; and that is a statement of fact. In other words, we are truly like Him in nature and before long we will also be like Him in form. This is the message that the Spirit wants us to understand. We may not truly connect to this truth, but we are more like Him than you can ever imagine.

I am sure that many of you remember the movie “Parent Trap.” It was originally made in 1961 and redone in 1998. In this movie, a couple had twin girls. Shortly after the birth of the girls, however, their marriage problems were too much so they separated. As part of the separation, the parents decided to each keep one kid and to never tell the children that they had a sibling, much less that they were a twin. The story picks up when the kids are in junior high. One kid was raised on a vineyard and the other in the city; so they were very different and did not resemble on another at all in their mannerisms and behaviors. Then one summer the parents sent their kids to summer camp; yet, little did they know they were sending them

to the same camp. Circumstances played out that both girls ended up getting into big trouble and had to be alone together to work out their differences. They had no idea they were sisters, even though they looked alike. They thought it was weird, but did not give it much mind because they were so different in every other way. However, before too long they made the connection. They shared pictures, stories, memories, and realized that they were actually sisters and were cut from the same cloth. They were not just “like” each other in terms of resembling one another, but they were actually “like” each other for they shared the same blood and DNA even though they behaved differently. They were more like each other than they could ever realize.

I believe this is the point the Spirit is making. For now we may just resemble Jesus (even though our behavior is so different), but we are more like Him than we could ever realize. We are brothers. We share the same blood and the same Spirit; hence, we resemble one another; and, before too long we will completely share the same spiritual substance of light. This is to be our hope—our full and complete confidence. For now, we are like those twins who don’t fully realize who they are; but as with all of God’s promises, it is only a matter of time.

We are just scratching the surface of understanding the glory and magnitude of this reality—that we are children of God. Let me explain. All we truly know is that when Jesus appears, at the time of the rapture, we will be gathered together with Him and in a twinkling of an eye our mortal bodies will be transformed and changed in to immortal bodies which will live forever. Our bodies will be raised in glory and strength as spiritual bodies, and we will be like the heavenly man—Jesus (**1 Corinthians 15:35-58**). But in terms of what it will be like, this is all we know.

You see, it has not yet appeared as yet what we will be. God has not fully revealed it. I'm pretty sure that even if He did, we would have no ability to comprehend the reality of the Spiritual world of light, much less spiritual beings. This is why God communicates to us so much in pictures. He wants us to get an understanding of things so we can get excited and be motivated, even though in our mortal bodies we don't have the ability to comprehend the spiritual. For example, we are learning more and more about the realm of angels and demons, but what they are and how they intersect our material world is still beyond our grasp. They are non-corporeal beings (they don't have a body); yet, they have the power to impact us physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. We also know there are angelic beings of light (often described as flames of fire in **Hebrews 1:7; Psalm 104:4; 2 Kings 2:11, 6:17**) and there are beings of darkness (**Ephesians 6:12; Colossians 1:13**) who can pose as angels of light (**2 Corinthians 11:14**). But, again, we can't grasp how any of it actually looks, much less functions. Yet, we are instructed to walk as children of Light and put on the armor of light, for we are in the light (**Ephesians 5:8; Romans 13:12**). This is not just a cool metaphor, there is spiritual reality to this description.

For now, however, we see things imperfectly as in a cloudy mirror. But there will come a day when we will see everything with perfect clarity—face to face. All that we now know is partial and incomplete, but there will come a day when we will know everything completely, just as we are known by God so completely (**1 Corinthians 13:12**). Thus, the Spirit is telling us that when Jesus appears, when we are called to Him at the time of the rapture, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. This is such a critical reality. When Jesus was on earth He had

to set aside His glory—He literally emptied Himself being made in the likeness of men (**Philippians 2:6-7**). We only got a glimpse of His true nature of light when He partially transfigured for a brief moment in time. We are told by those who saw Him that His face shone like the sun and His garments became as white light (**Matthew 17: 1-8**). But when He appears, we will see Him in the fullness of His glory of light, and we won't die because we will be "like" Him.

Follow me on this. We know that no man has seen or can see the Father because the Father dwells in unapproachable light (**1 Timothy 6:16**), for He has covered Himself, or cloaked Himself in light (**Psalms 104:2**). We also know that God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all (**1 John 1:5**). Thus, He is the Father of lights (**James 1:17; Psalm 136:7**). Furthermore, we are told that no man may see the face of the Father, for no man can see Him and live (**Exodus 33:20**). So there is a clear impassible delineation between the Father and man.

But we know that Jesus has seen the Father. In fact, only the Son has seen the Father, and He has explained Him to us (**John 1:18; 1 John 4:12**). Why? Because Jesus is like Him. Jesus does not just resemble the Father, but they are alike—one and the same. They share the same spiritual makeup and construct of light. In fact, Jesus says that He and the Father are one (**John 10:30**). He is in the Father and the Father is in Him (**John 10:38; 14:10-11**). Therefore, Jesus—the heavenly man—can see the Father and live. And we have been given this same promise. We will be one with the Father and the Son—Jesus in us and the Father in Jesus (**John 17:22**). Therefore, it is clear that whatever we will be, we will be like Him and will share in His substance, form, and very nature of light. Thus, like the Son, we will be able to come to the Father and live; and we will know Him as we are known. How

phenomenal is this promise. This needs to be your very hope.

Philippians 3:20-21

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

The word translated as “conformity” is the Greek word “*summorphos*” which gives us the notion of a total (“*sum*”) morphing (“*morphos*”) into Him. We will be completely consumed into Him and be like Him in His glory, in His honor, in His power, and in His rule. This is why if we are called “Sons of God,” it literally means we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ (***Romans 8:16-17***). What the Father gives Him is ours in totality; it is not just shared, but it is ours. This should be freaking out your brain. As Jesus sat down with His Father on His Father’s throne (indicating that He shares in the rule and reign of His Father) so shall we sit with Him on His throne (***Revelation 3:21***) and rule the nations with a rod of iron in His power and His glory (***Revelation 2:25-27***).

If you are a Son of God, then you will be like Him. That is your promise. You will see the Father and you will live, just like the Son. Whatever form of light the Son has you will have, and we know it will be the same form and substance of light as the Father. We will be one as they are one. Just the thought of this reality makes this life seem so pathetic. Why do we fight so hard to hold on to what is dead and

dying? Why do we desire so much to be accepted by the darkness of this world? It is such a waste of time. Understand who you are, understand who you will soon be. And let the **hope** of this truth birth in your heart a desire and motivation to push into the knife to push into the fire so you can—**even now**—experience what it is like to be conformed into the image of Christ.

This brings us to **1 John 3:3**, “And everyone who has [and continues to have] this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” With this perspective of who we are and who we will be, the circumcision and the fire are really not that big of a deal. We can *endure* the suffering and wait on the Lord refusing to take any matters into our own hands and refusing to reach out for comfort from any unauthorized source. And more than that, we can rejoice confident that the fire and the knife will bring us into conformity with His nature. You see we have a different reality than everyone else; we have a different future than everyone else. Don’t ever be confused on this point. Let’s turn quickly to the book of ***Ecclesiastes***.

Ecclesiastes 9:3-4

It seems so tragic that everyone under the sun suffers the same fate. That is why people are not more careful to be good. Instead, they choose their own mad course, for they have no hope. There is nothing ahead but death anyway. There is hope only for the living. As they say, "It's better to be a live dog than a dead lion!"

Those in this world have no hope; they have no future. That is why they are not

more careful to do good. They figure why try to be good if it gets them nothing. Accordingly, they choose their own “mad” course because all they have to look forward to is death (unfortunately they don’t realize it is both physical and spiritual in nature). But the irony of it all is that it only “seems” as if everyone suffers the same fate; the reality is they don’t. We are children of God; and, unlike them, we will be like Him—we will be like God. In fact, even now, we are being transformed in to His image. But others who cannot say they are actually children of God don’t get this fate. Instead, they face a lifetime and an eternity of death. But we get life, both in our now and throughout eternity. The knife and the fire are about giving us life in our now. It is about burning away and cutting away everything that sucks away life and tempts you to walk through this life like a dead person treading a “mad” course. Remember, “everyone who has [and continues to have] this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” As we have been saying now for weeks, pray the prayer: “Let Your lovingkindness, O Lord, be upon us, according as we have hoped in You.” Invite in the fire and the knife. Then don’t resist or fight it when it comes. Press into it and let the Lord do His work. It is necessary. Don’t hold on to death (anything that is not from God). Let it go; it will only hurt you.

When the passage says that “everyone who has [and continues to have] this hope fixed on Him **purifies himself**, just as He is pure,” the verb “purifies” is in the *present active indicative*. This therefore does not mean that you dig down deep in your soul and effect change within yourself. That would be the *middle* and not the *active* voice. This means you are not being commanded to stop sinning and purify yourself. We know that won’t work; go ahead, dig down deep and try. You will fail. The *present active indicative* indicates that you have an active part in the process;

in other words, you press into the fire and the knife. It means you don't resist, fight, argue, push back, run away, or avoid.

Do you remember in the original temptation of Eve in the garden, what Lucifer said to her? He said that if she ate of the tree of good and evil that she would be like God. The implication is that with this knowledge she would be able to choose good and reject evil. It was a twist on the truth. He seduced her to believe that if she did this one thing, she could actually choose to be like God. Well the truth is that we will be like God. But it won't come by way of our own efforts, whether by eating the fruit, trying to be good and do it right, avoiding evil, or through any other way that comes from ourselves. God has promised that He will make us like Him; thus, there is no place for our *flesh* to manhandle this process. This is why **Romans 3:20** and **Galatians 2:16** says that no *flesh* will glory in His presence. If we fix our hope on Him and His promise, we will purify ourselves as He is pure—we will let the fire burn and let the knife cut.

To inherit this promise of glory, you must be a son of God. And if you are a son of God, then you must be conformed into the image of Jesus Christ. The hope of being like Jesus in our now and ultimately completely like Him in our eternity, is to be our motivation and the source of our desire. Trust me, this reality of who we are is far bigger than the pain. The pain is temporary. Please, believe this to be true; the pain is just for a little while (**1 Peter 1:6**). Go through it, get done with it, don't hold back, and whatever you do don't drag it out. Your now and your future is glorious. "See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are." When God starts pressing in on you rejoice confident that before long you will be and more like Him. If, however, that

is neither your goal nor your desire, then maybe you have to ask yourself if you are one who can truly claim to be a son of God.

I have one final comment for you to consider. Culturally we tend to hope for what is in front of our face, what we can see, and what think we can grab hold of to benefit our lives (like Eve did with the fruit on the tree). But **Romans 8:24-25** says, “For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance (or *endurance*) we wait eagerly for it.” When you look in the mirror, you may not yet see the image of Christ; but hope in it and endure. Wait for it; it will come. Place your hope in God, He will ensure that before too long you look more and more like Him. And one day, He will morph you into His own being and you will be one with Him as He is one with the Father. You are a child of light and one day, soon, all that Jesus has will be yours. This is an amazing promise—it is guaranteed. In faith, place your hope in Him, fix your hope on Him, bind yourself to Him, and you will know His lovingkindness.

Let's Pray