

## Unquenchable Hope

By Pastor Chris Holman

***21 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. <sup>2</sup>And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup>And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. <sup>4</sup>And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. Revelation 21:1-4***

While researching for this sermon I came across a historical sermon from a pastor named William E. Sangster entitled “When hope is dead, hope on!” The very sermon that God had placed upon my heart I found so beautifully written beyond my own ability I could not help but feel inadequate. His sermon was written with such eloquence that I was left with a “wow” moment as I sunk back into my chair. Before I tell you a little bit about Pastor Sangster, I want to say that I have decided to write this sermon in the same style of pastor Sangster to honor him and the great work that he had done so long ago. Pastor William Sangster was a Methodist minister in London during World War 2. His sermon was first preached during one of the many challenging times of the war for the British people as London was being bombed on a continual occurrence. Oftentimes during his sermons, the air raid sirens would begin to blare, he was known for telling his hearers in those moments “those of a nervous disposition may leave now.” The work of pastor William Sangster and other great men of God at that time helped to shepherd the people of London through one of the darkest times of that city's history. Pastor William Sangster did not shy away from proclaiming truth and the reality of the world, and he did not falter in his proclamation of hope.

*“He, who lives on hope, will die starving”* seems to be the sentiment of the world. Many would say that hope is an illusion, particularly for those who have experienced hardship, pain and trauma in life. A cynic may say that hope itself is absent any assurance whatsoever. When we walk through the streets of our towns and our cities today, we see countless faces devoid of hope. On television and on the Internet, we see stories of despair, homelessness and victims of violent crimes. It would seem that hope is deceptive, leading those who cling to it to their own destruction.

Soldiers who deploy into combat may arrive with hope, that hope oftentimes fades away. For the secular world who sees nothing beyond the immediate, what could there possibly be to provide them with hope? Life seems to be a continual repetition of one pain flowing into another. Life

seems to be a continual repetition of one hardship flowing into another. Life seems to be a continual repetition of one evil beginning after another. It is quite common for old men to become cynical and jaded, particularly old men who have suffered in life. A common assessment therefore in the world is that hope is in vain.

The New Testament presents hope in a different and unique way. The apostle Paul speaks at great length on faith hope and love, acknowledging them as foundational virtues of the faith. Paul speaks of our hope in Christ. In the epistle to the Hebrews we read of a “hope both sure and steadfast.” Hope becomes central in the life of a believer. We as believers have a hope in all the promises of God. We have a hope of the things to come. For the believer hope is greater than the world because our hope is in the Lord.

Why are there such conflicting views on hope between the world and scripture? The world will tell you that hope is an illusion or a dream or a disease of the mind or that hope will lead you into destruction. The Bible tells us that hope is a reality, a fact, a virtue, and that hope endures. If we look at the world around us without understanding the difference, we may come to the wrong conclusion. Is hope foolishness? Is hope something that deceives? Or is our hope a blessed assurance?

Anyone who knows scripture will see that the answer is not difficult. What the world calls hope and what the Bible calls hope are vastly different things. Just like with all things of God, the world, even the devil himself, presents a counterfeit. God gives you a promise and the devil will present a counterfeit so he can steal your promise from you. God gives you hope and the devil will tell you that it is an illusion.

I will now speak of the contrast between the lower hope and a higher hope.

A lower hope is more easily defined as optimism. Optimism is recognized in the medical community for being a key factor in the success of recovery following surgery. Those who proclaim themselves as optimists are viewed as having a good, or positive, outlook on life. As with many things, we tend to fall into the trap of applying some special virtue to varying aspects of our personality. Those who proclaim themselves as being a continual optimist are no different. Yes, optimism is good. Optimism is a counterfeit for hope.

We should not forget the value of optimism. “When life gives you lemons, make lemonade” Is something we have all heard. Optimism can get you through some challenging times. Optimism coupled with being motivated to endure is key to the success of soldiers enduring hardships, this is something that I have intimate experience with. Optimism is good for our mental state in the

short term, but it fails to generate results in the end. Optimism fails and crumbles under continual hardships and trauma. Oftentimes the worst of cynics, those most jaded, are those who had previously been consummate optimists before the weight of the world fell upon them. To quote pastor Sangster, *“Of course we appreciate optimism, and willingly admit it's simple service to the community, but it has been immoderately praised, and fully explains the world's cynicism concerning hope. Boisterous confidence which has no solid foundation looks pitifully ludicrous when crushing disappointment comes, and deepens the contempt in which it is widely held by the disillusion.”*

It is better to be an optimist than a pessimist. Any one of us would be happier spending our time with an optimist rather than a pessimist. Spend any amount of time around a pessimist can be detrimental to your mental well-being while spending time with an optimist can lift our spirits and bring us encouragement. So yes, optimism comes with benefits all the while being a poor counterfeit for hope. Optimism can only endure so long as life struggles are mild in nature. We should appreciate optimism and its many benefits while recognizing its failures, we should also recognize that there is something more.

Hope is as different from optimism as is night from day. Optimism can be foolish for those who do not know Christ. Jesus Christ is the source of our trust and our hope. The world around us grows ever darker with each day. I have felt overwhelmed by the events of the world around us. I have family members who carry themselves through with foolish optimism absent faith in Christ. They have convinced themselves that there is a political solution to the problems of this world, making politicians in Washington to be some kind of savior for them. As authoritarianism waxes strong and our nation falls into ever more tyranny, I fear that these family members of mine will find themselves in a deep pit of despair. I tell them of the hope we have in Christ, like so much in the world they reject the gospel with mockery and ridicule. Let us all pray for our family members, let us pray for our community, let us pray for our nation, that they will all come to Christ.

The Infallibility of truth. The world would tell you and I that truth is determined by the winners. The statement “the right side of history” would be the version of historical events from the perspective of the victor though not necessarily rooted in truth. The world will tell you that truth itself is subjective, I am telling you today that truth is singular and objectively true. There is only one truth. The world will combat truth with their lies and propaganda. We are bombarded with propaganda from the moment that we wake up until we go to bed. You cannot watch a TV show or a movie or the news without being exposed to the propaganda of the world. The media will rephrase a story to be something unrecognizable to the truth. Three years ago, the media told us of the summer of love that was fiery but mostly peaceful when in reality they were violent riots rampaging through over 30 cities in this country resulting in billions of dollars of damage and dozens of lives lost. The attorney general of the United States recently stated that no one was above the law while the DOJ and the FBI were investigating and targeting Christians, Catholics, and pro-life groups as domestic terrorists while ignoring the real threat of violence from leftist militant groups in this country. Propaganda is everywhere, it is pervasive, it is systemic.

The media would have us believe that good is now evil and that evil is now good. Our society has fallen to such a degree that traditional family values are now counterculture. I look at our country today and I do not recognize it. All these lies, all the propaganda, all the manipulations, will fail in the end. Lies win battles and can drive culture and governments into destructive directions, truth wins wars. Truth will always win.

Our hope is in truth. The truth is not a what or a how, but a who. **“*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*”** John 14:6  
Truth was nailed to a cross and placed into a sepulchre and sealed with a stone and in three days that truth rose again unto life! Truth is everlasting and cannot be extinguished. Truth is triumphant!

(Tell about sister Anne)

Another aspect of our hope is the knowledge that God is on His throne! God Is Sovereign over all! God places rulers into power and removes them. God establishes nations and kingdoms and then tears them down. God's ways are not our ways, we must learn to trust in God's perfect plan and his perfect timing.

The nature of suffering has puzzled mankind for millennia. Why do good people suffer while the wicked prosper? Not long ago I preached on this very topic. God's righteous judgment never fails. Our suffering can come from one of three sources: suffering can be a result of our own words and deeds, our suffering may be the result of God testing us, and our suffering may be the result of the evil deeds of others and even the devil himself.

God is patient, God was patient with you when your life was lived in full rebellion to Him. Throughout your life the Holy Spirit worked on you to bring you where you are today. For a time, each of us resisted the pull of the Holy Spirit, yet God was patient. We must learn to be patient and wait on the patience of God. I say again, trust in God's perfect plan and his perfect timing, God is still on his throne!

Too often we pray selfishly treating God as if he's some kind of divine ATM machine. And so often those prayers go unanswered, and they go unanswered because they are not conformed to the will of God. We must learn to seek God's will for our lives. We must trust in God and rely on him.

The world is on the brink of war. China has been waging economic and electronic warfare for years and are now poised to invade Taiwan. Such an invasion is likely to spark a new World War, sides have already been drawn. That war will not have the result that you may think it will have. We are seeing wars and rumors of wars.

Totalitarian governments are on the rise. We see this all over the globe, and sadly, it is most evident to us in our own government today. Freedom is an illusion, democracy is an illusion, even truth itself is obfuscated to facilitate the indoctrination of the masses. Europe has fallen into the hands of leftist ideologue that would deprive their people of even the simplest of liberties sacrificing them on the altar to their secular gods of wealth and power.

Ukraine is embroiled in a bitter war with Russia that itself has been a proxy war for the West. Thousands die while thousands more are wounded. The war in Ukraine risks embroiling all of Europe into another continent spanning conflict. How long before the world is embroiled in global conflict once again? We are seeing wars and rumors of wars.

The Lords of hell have been unleashed on the world. Perversions and degeneracies are not only tolerated but are celebrated. These demonic powers are targeting our culture, our families, our churches, and our children. Romans 1: 18-32 is clearly manifest all around us. The United States has been judged and turned over to a reprobate mind.

Our civilization that was once God fearing now hates God. A nation that turns its back upon God will find itself in decline and will soon perish.

Praise God the victory is already won! God's will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven! We have the promise that he shall never leave us nor forsake us! No matter how terrible things may be, you and I will not face it alone. As you walk with God, he walks with you. Trust in God and rely on him! Our hope is in Christ Jesus! This life is just a speed bump to glory! You are fully known and loved by God! We have a victory in Jesus! Have patience for God's perfect timing. Yes, God's will shall be done!

The cross of Christ is the perfect demonstration of the indestructibility of God's truth and the sovereignty of God. The cross of Christ was planted in unquenchable hope! God is forever on his throne! Truth is indestructible! While the evils of the world rage on, while despotic tyrants rise to power at home and abroad, we set our trust and hope in Christ! While the optimism of the world falters and turns to cynical depression, we have an unquenchable and never-failing hope in our savior Jesus Christ!

