

The Ultimate and Final Victory

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Date: 08 September 2024

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[0 : 00] I don't know if you took time to read that quote that was on the screen prior to class, so let me read it as we begin.

Hope in God's promises is not a wishful longing, but a faith-filled confidence for the future. It is simply impossible to trust one of God's promises and not anticipate its coming true.

To know God is to trust Him, and to trust God is to trust His promises, and to trust God's promises is to be sure of their fulfillment.

This assurance concerning the future, anchored in God's promises, is what the Bible calls hope. Certainly hope is a very important inner longing or sense that we can have.

In time of conflict, as we're going through those conflicts, we want to be people of hope. There was a book written this past year by Dr. Alex Mayhew, the assistant professor in the Department of International History at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

[1 : 19] And the title of his book is Making Sense of the Great War, World War I. I've not read the book, but found the review interesting.

In his book, he studied the diaries of letters and letters of English soldiers, primarily infantrymen, serving in the front-line units. And he was researching and writing about the issue of morale on the Western Front.

He specifically looked at the writings of soldiers that were written during moments in the war when the morale of the British Army is known to have been particularly low.

And one conclusion he came to was that hope is of supreme importance to morale. He wrote, hope is really the central point that morale and endurance pivot around.

It was essential that soldiers were able to conceive of a productive future that they were working towards. And this underpinned their ability and willingness to endure the most horrific of things.

[2 : 31] So as I thought of that, I thought further that in order for a soldier really to have hope and to be able to conceive of what he says and what they were looking for, a productive future, that soldier really needed to base all that on information from outside of himself that really assured him that such a productive future was possible and even probable.

And with such reassurance, he was encouraged to willingly continue on with the most enduring actions that would lead to that greater future, even though his present circumstances were described as most horrific.

Well, we've been studying about a spiritual warfare in which we as Christians are involved. And this warfare has been taking place in the human realm since Satan's confrontation with Adam and Eve and their fall into sin as a result of that confrontation.

And on a more individualistic plane, each Christian also has been involved in a spiritual warfare since his or her conversion.

A warfare against Satan and his spiritual forces. And any Christian who has an awareness of or an experience in that spiritual warfare can testify that it is warfare in which the Christian soldier could have low morale.

[4 : 09] And probably each one of us that are Christians here this morning have had low morale at some point. That sense of well-being and confidence that all is well.

And at that time, that individual, we could be tempted to lose hope and withdraw from the conflict, withdraw from doing the actions necessary to persevere in the midst of the conflict and the battle.

Well, to keep morale high and hope alive in the midst of our spiritual conflict, God has provided information that we desperately need.

Information that we now can consider, we can contemplate, we can meditate on, that will keep our morale high and contribute to that deep sense of hope.

Hope in the present, certainly, as we have to fight the battles, but hope for the future. And for that future, final, complete victory against Satan.

[5 : 15] We've been talking about that conflict that we've been fighting against Satan and his forces. Well, that morale building, that hope building information we have from God is provided and preserved in His Word.

And so that's what we want to take a look at this morning. Just three points from God's Word that we can consider and contemplate that our trust will keep our morale high and our hope high as well as we have to continue on in the spiritual conflict that we are in.

And so the hope builder has given us this information. What has he told us in His Word that we can focus on and meditate on now in the midst of the conflict?

One. The ultimate victory has been won through Jesus Christ's incarnation, His righteous life, His substitutionary death, resurrection, and ascension to the throne of God.

Well, after mankind's first entrance into the consequences of sin, morale certainly must have been low for Adam and Eve. as they experienced for the first time their guilt for their sin.

[6 : 39] Imagine that. Having never experienced guilt before. That sense of guilt. Because indeed, they were culpable for the decisions that they had made.

And experiencing that for the first time. But not just that. The other outer manifestations of their sin and their relationships with God, with each other, and the rest of creation.

All of life had changed for them to the negative. So indeed, morale must have been low and I think we could see that in their responses to each other, to God, running and hiding, trying to cover their shame, their conflict with each other now, the rest of creation.

But in the midst of that, God provided hope for them. He told them of the offspring of the woman, Jesus, that would one day come and crush the head of the serpent, Satan.

The one that they had felt who had deceived them. Genesis 3.15, And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers and he will crush your head and you will strike his heel.

[7 : 55] And then throughout the ages that followed, God was always the hope builder. In different ways, he revealed truth about himself and he pointed his people to that future deliverer, the Messiah, the Redeemer that was to come and deliver them out of this bondage that they were living in.

And not just them, but for many others throughout the ages. And he certainly provided information in his word that we have in full now, but he communicated to them through the prophets.

Isaiah 7.14, Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Emmanuel.

And then Isaiah 9.6, For to us a child is born and to us a son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulder and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, of the increase of his government and of peace.

There will be no end on the throne of David and over his kingdom to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness. From this time forth and forevermore, the zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

[9 : 23] These certainly would have been morale boosters and built hope that contributed to persevering love and obedience to God for those who were willing to hear and to believe what the great hope builder had promised them.

Well, there were other prophecies also given that gave additional insight to the broader mission. We've been hearing about this in the morning service. Prophecies given about that additional information that they needed to hear about the mission that the Messiah would pursue and accomplish.

Isaiah 53, we could take the whole chapter but don't have time to read the whole chapter but to focus on some of those verses. Verse 3, He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

And as one from whom men hid their faces or hide their faces, he was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace.

[10 : 47] And with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

So the broader scope of what God was going to do through this promised one, the deliverer, the redeemer that would rescue them out of their bondage. Giving them these prophecies, others in the Old Testament as well.

But he also provided pictures or types of the Messiah. The tabernacle and the sacrifices offered there. They pictured the work that Jesus would do to rescue his people from sin and Satan, have their sins forgiven once and for all time, and finally be at peace with God.

Not driven away from God but now invited in to his presence. And Jesus would be the ultimate fulfillment of what took place regularly in the tabernacle and temple.

For he was the Lamb of God that would take away the sin of the world. But there were other types. Moses and the bronze serpent set up on the pole. The bronze serpent was a foreshadowing of Christ on the cross.

[12 : 05] In order for those who had been bitten by the poisonous serpents, they had to, in faith, look upon that bronze serpent on the pole and they would live. And John wrote of this event as an illustration of Jesus' death on the cross.

In John 3, verse 14, he writes, And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life.

Another hope-building verse for those who needed hope and their morale boosted. Certainly Abraham offering Isaac while they were on their way to make the sacrifice.

Isaac asked about the Lamb. We usually have a Lamb to make a sacrifice. There's no Lamb here. In Genesis 22.8, we read of Abraham's response.

And Abraham said, God will provide for Himself the Lamb for a burnt offering, my son. So they both of them went on together. Well, God was always providing that firm foundation for hope for His people to have that their rescue out of greater bondage to Satan and sin, it will be accomplished.

[13 : 33] And as again, we've been learning in Pastor John's morning message, many of his people look forward, certainly to the Messiah. Who wouldn't? Look forward to this deliverer's coming.

But again, they didn't completely understand the full scope of His mission. But what He had promised did come to pass.

What was hoped for came to pass. Jesus came and accomplished the ultimate victory against Satan. He fulfilled all that was necessary in leading up to His sacrifice of Himself on the cross.

And even in all these events, there was still the opposition against Him. Trying to prevent Him to accomplish that ultimate purpose for which He came.

In His incarnation, He left heaven and came to earth. He left the glory that He shared with the Father in heaven and took upon Himself human flesh and bone.

[14 : 37] Philippians 2, we're familiar with these verses more in depth than length, but I've got a couple. Though He was in the form of God, He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant being born in the likeness of men.

And even the angels pronounced His coming to the shepherds. Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

But the opposition came. And it came through one of Satan's sons of disobedience, as Paul describes it in Ephesians 2, Herod. He had all the male babies under two years of age killed, hoping that he would kill the one promised by God to deliver his people from bondage to sin.

But of course, we know that failed. And Jesus came into the world and lived a perfectly righteous life. That which was necessary for him to be, that perfect sacrifice on the cross.

1 Peter 2.22, He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. 1 John 3.5, you know that he appeared in order to take away sins.

[15 : 59] And in him there is no sin. Hebrews 4.15, In every respect, He, Jesus, has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

In 1 Peter 1.19, Like a lamb without blemish or spot, he's described. But even in his public ministry of teaching and healing, casting out demons, the opposition and conflict was still there.

The religious leaders who were jealous of Him were always questioning Him, testing Him, accusing Him of blasphemy. And then when all else failed, plotted to kill Jesus.

But Jesus, the ever one building hope, knowing the full scope of His mission, provided instruction.

The foundation for hope that His followers needed to have. Matthew 16.21-23, From that time, Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and the scribes and be killed.

[17 : 15] And on the third day, be raised. He was declaring to them information that they needed. They needed to know this information in order to have hope in the horrific time of His death.

They didn't need to be caught off guard about what was to come and what they would see and what they would experience and what He would experience ultimately.

But even as it unfolded, they could still be hopeful because that last phrase, on the third day, He would rise again.

But even as He sought to give them hope, the opposition came. We've heard this in the morning service through one of His own disciples. Peter rebuked Him and said, This shall never happen to you.

He wasn't seen clearly, was He? Like that blind man who was healed incrementally. Peter didn't understand and wasn't seen it clearly.

[18 : 24] But Jesus was. He recognized this battle was not against flesh and blood. Peter, as the words came through Peter, but ultimately against Satan and the forces of evil trying to get him to turn aside from the mission that he needed to complete.

And he rebuked Satan. And Jesus eventually did go to the cross and He died on the cross while Satan and the sons of disobedience thought that this was their ultimate victory.

It was God offering His Son as the Lamb of God that would be the sufficient, perfect, final sacrifice for the sins of His people. And Jesus went to the cross willingly.

Even though in the Garden of Gethsemane with His human nature He struggled with what He would experience on the cross. And still, He said to the Father, Nevertheless, not My will but Yours be done.

Certainly, humanly speaking, a great struggle taking place within Jesus. But even the hope builder was living as one with hope.

[19 : 40] Well, we know in the Scriptures it says, for the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross that horrific time. He had the firm foundation of information that He needed and that was His contemplation.

He brought that to account in the circumstances that He was experiencing. and for the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross despising the shame that was there.

And through His act of offering Himself as a sacrifice for our sin He was truly bruised and He died but Satan's head was to be totally crushed.

Hebrews 2.14 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood He Himself He Himself likewise partook of the same things that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death that is the devil.

You see the great conflict that was taking place there that Jesus was enduring and experiencing on behalf of His people and Satan's defeat was sealed when Jesus was raised from the dead.

[20 : 57] death in the grave could not keep Him. God was satisfied with the holy sacrifice of His Son and raised Him from the dead. Even in this the opposition continued.

Matthew 28.11-16 I don't have all those verses but the guards had come and told the priests what happened at the tomb and the priests and the elders gave them money and told them to tell people His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.

And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day at that time. The opposition you would think why not believe the truth? Well the battle was not against flesh and blood but against Satan who was still mounting his forces against what God was seeking to accomplish through the death of His Son and His resurrection.

But there were those who finally did understand Peter one of those with faith and hope preached the truth in Acts 2.32 This Jesus God raised up and of that we all are witnesses and yeah there were many witnesses during the 40 days on earth after His resurrection the hope builder appeared to many people providing again them the firm foundation for hope of their own resurrection one day to come Mary Magdalene the disciples and then He appeared to more than 500 of His disciples at one time and after those 40 days He ascended into heaven seated at the right hand of God even at His ascension God provided them a firm foundation for their hope of what was to come Acts 1.11 men of Galilee the angels speak to them as they were gazing up to heaven which ones of us wouldn't have continued standing there what now what's next or maybe hoping at that time well maybe He'll just come right back men of Galilee why do you stand looking into heaven this Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven again a firm foundation for the future hope that they needed in trying times that they would need to make that their contemplation their focus in the days that were to come for them even as we do well there's another source of hope that we can draw upon and that's the victories that Christians have over Satan now the victories that we have because that ultimate victory was accomplished through Jesus Christ we have the scriptures full of examples of these who live new lives because of that ultimate victory of Jesus Christ

Paul he would call himself the chief example certainly he says I thank God I thank Him who has given me strength Christ Jesus our Lord because He judged me faithful appointing me to His service though formally I was a blasphemer persecutor an insolent opponent but I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with faith and love that are in Christ Jesus the saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance you can base faith in what you believe upon this that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the foremost Paul was a new man he was a changed man or even as he wrote he's a new creation in Christ Jesus and then he was living in the reality of what the great hope builder had done for him in his sacrifice on the cross and his resurrection not just Paul but the believers in Thessalonica in that first chapter

[25 : 06] Paul writes we ought always to give thanks to God for you brothers as is right because your faith is growing abundantly and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring these are the people that turned to God from idols people that were serving these dead idols but now we're new creations in Christ and on the basis of that ultimate victory of Jesus Christ on the cross and his erection now we're serving the living and the true God these are hope builders for us the man with many demons in Mark 5.15 after Jesus had cast the demons from the man the people returned and they came to Jesus and they saw the demon possessed man the one who had had the legion sitting there clothed and in his right mind the man this new man wanted to stay with Jesus of course who wouldn't after what he had done for him the deliverance that came to him but Jesus told him no no you need to go and to go back and the man as it says went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him and everyone marveled a firm foundation for hope in the midst of the warfare coming from this man's lips many people heard and they marveled as we should as well today in our times of conflict well how about this example your own life examples from your own life story and how God has brought into your life new desires and love for Jesus and to live for his glory let's exalt his name together had you always been doing that no no I know some of your testimonies and what God brought you out of because of that ultimate victory of Jesus Christ on the cross that you're a new man now a new woman now you're walking in newness of life you can draw upon those victories as you move into the next victory and say

I don't have to live as one as I lived in the past I can put on the new man that's been created in true righteousness and holiness and walk in newness of life you can draw upon those and be of one who has good morale and great hope in the conflict well there are also exhortations and teachings from God's word that show the Christian no longer is in bondage to Satan because of what Christ has done and won on our behalf Romans 6 1-3 what shall we say then are we to continue in sin that grace may abound by no means how can we who died to sin still live in it do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death we were buried therefore with him by baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father we too might walk in newness of life you see these exhortations are faith builders and hope builders morale builders for the people of God that no longer you don't have to live that way any longer should we continue in sin that grace would abound no by no means united with Christ and his death that we too might walk in newness of life we can walk as new creatures in Christ well those are words of hope for the present but he continued in that chapter verse 6 we know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin on all kinds of trying situations trying situations that Paul describes in the scriptures that he lived through he could confidently say in Romans 8 37 we are more than conquerors through him who loved us remember that next time you're facing that temptation you feel so weak and susceptible to the temptation and the task set before you no I am not a weak soldier in the midst of this conflict the victory has been won the ultimate victory has been won

I'm more than conqueror now in the midst of this and can move forward with great hope in the midst of the conflict well even in Ephesians Paul wrote we should be very familiar with these verses finally be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might put on the whole armor of God that you might be able to stand against the schemes of the devil he doesn't give those kind of exhortations if it was not true and possible for us he doesn't command us to do the impossible he commands us to do the things that are now possible through Jesus Christ and we can stand firm against the schemes of the devil well time limits us from looking at so many more scripture passages that the great hope builder has provided us so we can be of good morale now knowing that we can experience some of the victory over sin now and Satan as we wait for the day of final victory through Jesus

Christ at his return truly the present experience of victory in daily life is just the foretaste of the full glory that's to come on the day of final victory and this is the final hope building truth that God has provided for us as his people God does promise full and final victory Jesus reassured his disciples with this promise when their morale must certainly have been low as he's been telling them that I'm going to have to die I'm going to have to leave imagine hearing that information when they've grown to depend on him so much and have seen him do so many great works how could we continue on without you in our presence right now and Jesus came along to them and said let not your hearts be troubled believe in God believe also in me in my father's house are many rooms if it were not so would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you

I will come again and will take you to myself that where I am you may be also they would have to remember this truth this truth and this hope building information it would have to be their contemplation and they'd have to bring it to account as they would be going through and moving through great horrific times they would have to make this their meditation all the day long Paul wrote of the exceeding glory that was to come as well Romans 8 18 and we know what he experienced in his life and he's doing what we need to do he brought truth to consideration brought truth to bear in his mind and what he was thinking in those times of great difficulty he says for I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that's to be revealed to us and then he continues a little later we ourselves who have the first fruits of the spirit grown inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons that redemption of our bodies for this hope for in this hope we are saved you see what was happening with the apostle Paul he truly was experiencing the horrific effects of having to continue to live in a sinful world and yet he was not living as one defeated but one with great hope because of what the great hope builder had revealed to him and promised to him and he was carrying that truth with him as he moved through the experiences of life and making that his consideration and able to say well even though these things are horrendous that are happening to me

[34 : 42] I still consider what is the what is that that's ahead to be a greater treasure for me so that I don't give up what is greater in the future for what might be temporary now in 2nd corinthians 4 16 17 so we do not lose heart we don't lose morale and hope though our outer self is wasting away and that's going to happen to each one of us in different ways I feel the outer self wasting away at 73 years of age but he said we're not going to lose heart even though the outer self is wasting away our inner self is being renewed day by day how could that be he says for this light momentary affliction you see the consideration the proper evaluation of what he was experiencing here he considers the great difficulties of life but in comparison to the greater they were light momentary afflictions they're preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison

I mean eye has not seen nor ear has heard of the great wonders and glories that God has for those who are his children is that a hope builder a morale booster it is to me when I think of the wasting away of this present body and the difficulties that we move through can't compare it's beyond comparison I can't even begin to comprehend the glories that are waiting for me and then John of course John wrote of the coming glory and the final victory as well remember he was writing as he was in exile on the Isle of Patmos maybe horrific conditions but the hope builder guided him in writing of the final victory certainly it had to have been an encouragement to John as he sat there but God knew that there would be others who would need to understand the final victory was sure because the ultimate victory was accomplished through Jesus

Christ at the time of the end when Satan the great deceiver would endeavor to deceive God's people one more time John wrote the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever and sad to say but justly as well not only Satan but those who had rejected Jesus in the gospel they will join him as well for John wrote and if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life he was thrown into the lake of fire well the battle of the ages finally comes to an end isn't that what each soldier hopes for and dreams of certainly to be the victor not the one who is captured and thrown away we anticipate in hope for the final victory and such has been promised and such will come to pass he continues to write for those who believed and followed the redeemer

Jesus hope finally becomes reality John wrote then I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and the sea was no more and I saw the holy city the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride adorned for her husband and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying behold the dwelling place of God is with man he will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will be every tear from their eye and death shall be no more neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore for the former things have passed away hope building truth that we need while we're still here waiting for that final victory in appearing of Jesus Christ John described their glorious dwelling further and wrote and I saw no temple in the city for its temple is the

Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb and the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it for the glory of God gives it light and its lamp is the Lamb but nothing unclean will ever enter it nor anyone who does what is detestable or false but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life no longer will there be anything accursed but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it and his servants will worship him they will see his face and his name will be on their foreheads and night will be no more they will need no light of lamp or sun for the Lord God will be their light and they will reign forever and ever will be will be will be will be will be will be the final victory is assured because it's based on the promises of

[40 : 42] God who is sure so don't lose hope my friends we can have high morale and a living hope a sure hope for Jesus has won the ultimate victory and we can live in that victory and experience those victories even now as we wait for the final victory to come and they will come they're based on the ever sure promises of God so what do we do be strong in the Lord strength of his might put on the full arm of God so that you can stand firm against the schemes of the devil let's pray father this morning wow we can be people of hope hope in a world that at times seems so hopeless and there are people in the world who are living without hope without God in the world but for those who have placed faith and trust in

Jesus Christ oh father we can be people of great hope living hope now even as we pass through the difficulties that are still associated with this life but this is not the final for those who are in Christ Jesus and for that we bow to you and just say certainly by grace we are saved and hope in the glory of God in Jesus Christ who will come and we look forward to that in Jesus name amen thank you to you because when we