

## Anchored to Heaven

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Hebrews 6:13-20

- Bed time in the Hall household for our son Fletcher, has become a bit of an event as of lately
  - If y'all have seen our boy, my brother like to call him "Ole Thickness"
    - He's a chunk, and he moves so much in his sleep! He's all over the place.
  - So when we had him in the crib, we would be getting up 4, 5, 6 times a night because he would move around so much and would keep getting his legs stuck in the slats of the crib
  - So we figured he was getting too big for the crib and so we decided to put a full size mattress on the floor with some rolled up blankets creating a barrier around the mattress inside the sheets
- However, we probably moved him to the big boy bed a little too soon, because we can't let him cry it out anymore because he'll get out of the bed and starting banging on the door
- So we have to wait until he's fast asleep before we can leave the room now
- So either Rachel or I will take him to bed whenever it is time, and we'll have to lay with him until he falls asleep
- So for the first 10-15 minutes he's rolling around and restless and then when he starts to settle, he'll grab your arm and force it around himself
- And right when you think he's asleep, you would be wrong, because whenever you try to leave he'll grab your arm again. Or he'll roll over and grab your face and put it on his
- Sometimes he'll take both hands, grab your head and force it into his chest as if to say, "You're not going anywhere!"

- And once you get to the 30-40 minute mark of you trying to leave and him waking up and grabbing you, you can start to get a little annoyed, a little frustrated
  - It might sound sweet, but that sweetness wears off after a while...ok, us parents are allowed to be honest about these things!
- But I remember one night, while going through all of this, I got a convicted, and I thought, "God why don't I stubbornly try everything I can to hold on to You like this?"
- Because I can remember times, especially early on in my faith where I feel like I did, but if I'm honestly with myself, I'm ashamed to say that that child-like dependence tends to wear off a little bit
  - And I desperately want to cling to my Father the way that Fletcher clings on to his!
- And as I was in this moment of conviction, I also had a moment of encouragement where I felt the Holy Spirit was reminding me:
  - Even when I don't stubbornly cling to Him, He still, always, stubbornly clings to me.
  - The writer of Hebrews says that we are anchored to our hope
- And these were the few verses that we didn't have time to really break down last week
- So I want to stay in the same passage of Hebrews chapter 6 that we discussed, but I want us to really focus on the final few verses
- However let's read the entirety of the passage together again so that we can keep everything in context:
- **"For when God made a promise to Abraham, since He had no one greater by whom to swear, He swore by Himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having**

***patiently waited, obtained the promise. For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of His purpose, He guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” -Hebrews 6:13-20 (ESV)***

- So last week, we explained the promise and oath that God gave to Abraham, as we walked through Genesis 12-17

- And we saw that God had promised to give Abraham, an old man who couldn't have children, to give him descendants that would turn into a multitude of nations, and through his descendants all of the world would be blessed.
- And God sealed that promise with a blood oath, and even though the people could not keep their side of the covenant, God had placed the sole responsibility of the keeping of the covenant on Himself
- And God fulfilled every part of the Covenant on His side, even at 100 years old, Abraham miraculously had a son born to him.
  - And that family line would indeed bless all of the world
  - Because whenever Matthew starts his Gospel, he tracks the lineage of Abraham, and 42 generations later, we see another miraculous birth.

- The birth of Jesus, who through His life, death, and resurrection, all of the families of the earth could find their ultimate blessing.
- And this is how God was able to make of Abraham, not just a great nation in the Israelites, but a multitude of nations!
  - Because Galatians tells us that all who believe in Jesus, and receive Him through faith are considered Abrahams descendants.
  - Paul says in Galatians 3, ***“Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.” -Galatians 3: 7-9 (ESV)***
  - So all of us, who claim Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we are today benefiting from the promises that God made to Abraham all of those years ago!
- And because of the great mercy and grace of our Promise Keeping God, the writer of Hebrews says that we have this Hope as a sure and steadfast anchor for our souls!
  - *We have this Hope: that even when we make mistakes, God’s promise to prepare a place for us still stands*
  - *We have this Hope: that even when we face battles, God’s promise to never leave us or forsake us still remains*
  - *And we have this Hope: that even when we are discouraged in our spiritual walk, He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion*
- You can keep going! You can keep chasing after Him! You can stand strong in your faith!
- Because even if you fall, due to the work that Jesus has done for you, you can get back up,

you can keep getting stronger, you can keep growing in your faith

- So yes, we can follow the example of a man like Abraham:
  - A guy who heard the promise of God and followed Him. Immediately made a mistake that God has to get him out of.
  - Then was reminded of the Promise of God, faced his battle with bold faith.
  - Then went into a time of discouragement. He talked to God about it, God affirmed him, but he just made a mistake again.
  - Had to be reminded of the promises of God a third time. And all of that was just the first half of his story.
- But that should encourage us, because this Spiritual journey is a rollercoaster, even for the great heroes of our faith! You're going to have your ups, you're going to have your downs

- You're going to have your wins, you're going to have your losses
  - But your mistakes aren't going to stop the promises of God in your life
  - God, who works all things out, can actually use your mistakes to lead you to deeper faith
  - And you don't have to put all of the pressure on yourself because you do not receive the promises of God based on your performance
- God made that covenant with Abraham, and fulfilled that covenant through Jesus so you could have the opportunity to go on this spiritual journey with Him.
- And the writer of Hebrews is letting us know that no matter what direction this life tries to pull you in, no matter what storms may come, no matter how beaten or battered you may get in this world, you can be sure, you can be steadfast and you can be confident:

- Even in the midst of this unpredictable life, because:
  - ***“We who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul” -Hebrews 6: 18b-19a (ESV)***
  - **YOU ARE ANCHORED TO HOPE**
    - And I think sometimes we take that truth for granted because hope, to us, doesn't seem like a very definitive thing
    - A lot of times whenever we think about hope, we think of it in the context of uncertainty and the remaining possibility of disappointment
- For example, whenever we were children, we would hope for a specific gift at Christmas time.
  - And we have so much joy and excitement but there is still the possibility of being disappointed by not receiving the specific gift we wanted
- The one story I always love to tell around Christmas time is whenever I was 4 or 5, and all I wanted in life was a Daisy-Red-Rider BB gun.
  - However, even though both of my older brothers got one, I did not. I got different really good gift, that I could appreciate because it wasn't the exact one that I wanted
  - My hopes for that BB gun were dashed!
  - However, where I went wrong in my young 5 year old mind, is the fact that my hope shouldn't have been in whatever gift I was receiving. My hope was actually in my parents who were the ones making sure that I had gifts to open on Christmas day
  - And they would give good gifts, they knew what was best for me...they knew I didn't need a BB gun because within minutes of my brothers going outside to play with theirs, one of my brothers came back inside crying with a BB stuck deep into the tissue of his thumb!

- Being the youngest, that would have been me if I was allowed to join in!
- But the reality is, we as Christians, we do not put our Hope in the gift, we put our Hope in the Giver
  - We put our Hope in the One who's character and purpose is unchangeable
  - We put our Hope in the One who cannot lie
  - We put our Hope in the One who keeps His Promises
- This Hope is sure, it is steadfast
- The biblical definition of the word, **Hope (Elpis): An expectation of good, joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation**
  - You see, no matter your circumstances, you can expect Good because, as Jesus said, ***"If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in Heaven***

***give good things to those who ask Him!"***  
***-Matthew 7:11 (ESV)***

- We have a confident expectation that God cares, that He is listening, and that He will provide the Good things that we need whenever we need them.
- And also: we will be more confident and secure in this life, whenever we put our Hope in our eternal security more than our current circumstances.
- This is exactly what the writer of Hebrews is trying to encourage the Hebrews with, because you have to keep in mind the immediate context of the readers
  - He is writing to believers that are living amongst probably the greatest persecution against the believers known to date
  - They are in fear for their lives constantly, some have lost spouses, parents, friends and family members

- Some of their loved ones are being torn apart by wild animals in the colosseum for the entertainment of others
  - All because of this faith in Jesus that they have claimed
- And in the midst of that, he tells them that they can expect good? They can be joyful and confident?
  - The writer says, yes,: *You can have a joyful, confident expectation that this world is not your Home*
  - *You can have a joyful, confident expectation: that to live is Christ and to Die is gain*
  - *You can have a joyful, confident expectation: That the suffering of this present time is not worth comparing to the glory that will be revealed to us*
- Because our hope is not anchored to a circumstance or a desired earthly outcome
  - Our Hope is anchored to the Person and the Promises of God
  - And He went to such great lengths to give you the sureness, steadfastness, and confidence in this Hope
- Last week, we discussed in detail how Jesus fulfilled the covenant with Abraham and how Jesus' sacrifice on the cross lined up with the daily sacrifices in the temple, whenever Mark gave us the exact timeline of whenever Jesus was on the cross
- And at the 9th hour, as that 3pm Shofar was blowing and the people were asking God to remember His covenant, Mark says Jesus breathed His last. In doing so, He had put an end once and for all to the sacrificial system by being the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of mankind!
  - However, the verse we did get to highlight was right after that one in Mark, which says, ***“And the curtain of the temple was torn in***



***two, from top to bottom.” -Mark 15:38 (ESV)***

- Now, this is important because the writer of Hebrews says, ***“We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain...” -Hebrews 6:19 (ESV)***
- This was in reference of the curtain that separated the Holy of Holies, from the rest of the places of worship.
- The writer explains further in chapter 9, ***“Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness. For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place” -Hebrews 9:1-3 (ESV)***
- You see, when the high priest would first walk through **(PICTURE 1) the tabernacle**, He would first go through the entrance to the Holy Place and he would see 4 things: To his right would be a lamp stand, to his left would be a table with 12 loaves of bread, symbolizing the 12 tribes of Israel, and an alter of incense which symbolized prayer and intercession.
- Behind that would be a large veil or curtain which served as a covering or barrier to the Most Holy Place, or Holy of Holies. This is where the Ark of the Covenant resided. This was earthly resting place of the Presence and Holiness of God.
- And only once a year, Only the High Priest could enter that space.
- So the writer explains in chapter 8, ***“Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a High Priest, One who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in Heaven, a minister in the holy places,***

***in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man.” -Hebrews 8:1-2 (ESV)***

- The writer is saying, we now have a True and Better High Priest who is in a True and Better tent.
- Because Jesus did not go before us into a man made structure...He went before us into Heaven itself
- In fact in verse 5, when the writer of Hebrews is speaking of the things you see in the tabernacle he says that ***“They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things.”- Hebrews 8:5 (ESV)***
- In chapter 9, he says that they *“are copies of the true things”*
- And we see throughout the life of Jesus, just how these things were copies, or illustrations of the Better Thing to Come.
- And it gives us a little more context as to why Jesus refers to Himself in the various ways that He does.

- **(PIC 2) There was only 1 entrance:** serving as a shadow to show: **Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes unto the Father accept through Him**
- **(PIC 3) There was a Lamp Stand:** serving as a shadow to show: **Jesus is the Light of the World, whoever who believes in Him will not walk in darkness but have the Light of Life**
- **(PIC 4) There was Bread:** serving as a shadow to show: **Jesus is the Bread of life, whoever comes to Him shall not hunger, whoever believes in Him shall never thirst...**
- And again, Mark says immediately, after He gave up His Spirit, and breathed His last: **(PIC 5) “And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.” -Mark 15:38 (ESV)**
- Now, this Temple curtain being torn is so rich in meaning...and we know that it is of utmost

importance for us to acknowledge because Matthew, Mark and Luke all provide this specific detail.

- Keep in mind that this curtain wasn't like your living room set.
- This curtain was was 60 feet tall, 20 feet wide and 4 inches thick.
  - This thing was massive, and it had to be, because it's purpose was to be the covering for the Holiness and Presence of Almighty God
- And the first thing we see from the veil being torn after the death of Jesus is:
  - **THE TORN VEIL: GOD'S HEARTBREAK**
- The Temple Veil, or curtain could be seen as essentially the clothing of the presence of God
  - And throughout scripture we see a cultural trend of whenever someone would die, or if a person was in deep anguish, they would tear their clothes as a way to show their grief

- Even some devout Jews today still observe the tradition where at a funeral of a loved one, there will be a ceremonious fabric that will be torn and pinned to the clothes of the grieving.
- *You see, this was not some formal occupational hazard that God went through by sending Jesus to the cross*
  - The Father was deeply hurt having to witness His Son, the Exact Imprint of His nature, be mocked, spit upon, disrespected, unappreciated, brutally tortured, and viciously killed
  - Witnessing the full weight of our sin, be taken upon His innocent Son, and then having to turn His back on Him in that moment
- The Father was in deep anguish and utter heartbreak.
  - There's a reason darkness covered the land while Jesus was on the cross.

- There's a reason why Matthew said, not only was the veil torn, but the earth shook, and rocks split
- God's anguish was being felt upon the earth
- But His anguish would be our Gain
- Because, the 2nd thing that the tearing of the veil shows us is:
  - **THE TORN VEIL: GOD'S OPEN ARMS**
    - You see, the curtain may have been a covering for the Holiness of God but it also represented the separation that sin had created between God and mankind
    - Before the cross, people could not be in the direct presence of God, and only once a year, only the High Priest could enter into that Most Holy place, behind the curtain.
  - But whenever Jesus, took the penalty for our sins upon Himself, He did away with that separation between God and man.
- There was no longer a need for that curtain anymore! Because of what Jesus accomplished on the cross, God's arms and His direct presence are now open to all who would choose to accept and believe.
- The writer of Hebrews says in chapter 9...
- ***"Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf."* -Hebrews 9:24 (ESV)**
- You see, Jesus is our great High Priest who didn't just enter into a copy of Heaven to intercede for us, but rather into Heaven itself and He sits at the Right Hand of the Father, which is the position of completed work.
- And He doesn't just represent us once a year, like the old covenant, but the writer says in chapter 7, ***"Consequently, He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to***

***make intercession for them.” -Hebrews 7:25 (ESV)***

- Jesus is your personal representative before God the Father Himself, He has made the way to welcome you into the Family of God, right now and for the rest of eternity
- And you don't have to worry about whatever sins you may have committed or how many good deeds you may or may not have done
- Because that Veil is torn, the presence of God is made available to you, and the consequences of your sins have been paid for, the debt has been wiped clean
- Because, as the writer of Hebrews explains in chapter 10:
  - ***“For by a single offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.”- Hebrews 10:14 (ESV)***
  - *This is why when Jesus was giving up His Spirit on the cross, He said “It is FINISHED”*

- *Tetelestai: It is the same word a greek painter would say whenever they would complete their work of art*
- *Jesus is saying that on that cross He completed the picture that the Old Testament began to paint*

- And because of this, the writer says in chapter 10: ***“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that He opened for us through the curtain, that is, through His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith...” -Hebrews 10:19-22 (ESV)***
- Can you appreciate the great lengths that God went to, in order to give you a sure, steadfast, confident hope?
  - The lengths that He went to, to be able to open His arms to you?

Sunday, March 24, 2024

- As CS Lewis once said in the very opening line of his book, “Mere Christianity:” “The Son of God became a man to enable men to become sons of God.”
- And whenever you choose to believe in the work that Jesus did for you on that cross, and confess Him as your Lord and Savior...
- The writer of Hebrews says that you are anchored to the Hope of Heaven
  - You are anchored to the Love and Acceptance of God Himself because:
- ***“We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf...” -Hebrews 6:19-20a (ESV)***
- So for our last point today:
- **YOU ARE ANCHORED TO JESUS:**
- You know, the main reason we have a warped view of hope in our human condition is because we are scarred by the inconsistency of this world
- And it’s to the point that we almost try to avoid hope at all costs, because of all of the disappointment that we have experienced
- I know for me, I never want to get my hopes up whenever one of my sports teams are playing well, because I have had those hopes dashed more times than I can count
- I don’t want to get my hopes up if Rachel and I come into any extra money because almost every time, something in the house will immediately break and that money will be gone in a snap!
- However, the things that we have the most hope and confidence in are the things that are the most consistent
  - You confidently sat down when you came into this service because you chair consistently hold you up every Sunday

- People are more confident in Chic-Fil-A than they are McDonalds because of the consistency in service
  - We're not even really mad that they're closed on Sundays, why? Because at least they're consistent about it!
- The truth is: You can be confident in what is consistent
  - Therefore, the believer that is anchored to Jesus can have the utmost Hope and confidence because God is the most consistent Being in the entire universe!
  - The writer of Hebrews says that God is unchangeable! His Character, His Purpose is unchangeable! He cannot lie!
  - ***“For I the Lord do not change; therefore you...are not consumed.”- Malachi 3:6 (ESV)***
  - ***“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.” -James 1:17 (NIV)***
- So praise God that you are not anchored to this chaotic and constantly changing world!
- Praise God that you are not anchored to the roller coaster of your performance!
- Praise God that you are not anchored to the wishy-washy opinions of other people!
- Praise God that you are not anchored to a flawed church!
- Praise God that you are not anchored to an imperfect pastor!
- No, you are anchored to Jesus Christ Himself
  - Therefore you can be sure in the midst of hardship
  - You can be steadfast in the midst of a storm
  - You can have Hope even when the whole world seems to be against you, because you are anchored to the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords Who, is the same yesterday, today and forever! Who, “Upholds the universe by the word of His power!”

- THAT is Who you are anchored too, and THAT is Who you can have supreme confidence in
- Now the visualization of being Anchored to Jesus become much more powerful if we understand what these Hebrews would have pictured in their minds whenever they heard the word "Anchor."
  - Because we picture an anchor as this large metal object that would be dropped down to the floor of the sea in order to keep the boat where it was
- However, that type of anchor would not have worked in the Mediterranean Sea. The sea floor of the Mediterranean was very sandy and very slick and that type of anchor would not hold the ship in place if a storm were to come.
  - At the same time, the harbors were very small and shallow and could not hold but a certain amount of boats and only boats of certain sizes.
- So to anchor a ship in the harbor of the Mediterranean, the anchor would be placed in

connection to another boat that would sail into the harbor and be safely secured to the dock

- Therefore, even though the anchored ship was out in deeper and rougher waters, it would still be safely secured and have a direct connection to the Harbor.
  - Even if a storm were to come, even if rains and winds were to beat and pull on that ship, it would be held fast to the dock no matter the circumstances
- *So when I read the language that the writer of Hebrews uses, it gives me a picture of the Gospel in this way:*
- *It's as if I was a ship, lost a sea*
  - *Floating around this life, with a broken compass, unsure of direction, being pulled by the winds and currents every which way*
  - *However, God sent out a rescue boat, in the Person of Jesus*



- *And He met me out in the midst of my aimless wandering and He offered me a lifeline*
- *He gave me the opportunity to anchor myself to Him*
- *And when I chose to accept His graceful offer, He connected Himself directly to me, and He went before me, guiding me in the direction that I was supposed to be going*
  - *And He made His way to the dock*
- *And though, on this side of eternity I may not be pulled all the way into the harbor as of yet, Jesus docked Himself in Heaven, in the very Throne Room of God*
  - *And because I am anchored to Him, I now have a direction connection to Heaven!*
- *And yes, the waters of this life that we are currently living in are still deep, the currents are still strong, the storms can be brutal, however He is not letting go of that anchor*
- *So no matter what hardships we may experience in this life, we are anchored to Heaven.*
  - *No matter what mistakes you may make or what detours you try to take, because you are anchored to Him, because He is stubbornly clinging to you...He'll only let you go so far before He pulls you right back to where you need to be*
- *And with each passing moment we are slowing being pulled closer and closer to the Dock of Heaven itself,*
- *Until the day will come, whenever we are safely secured in the peace of Heaven's Harbor for the rest of eternity.*