

We Have This Hope

May 23rd *Hope Keeps Us Focused on Jesus/Paul*—Many sections of Paul’s epistles reference Paul’s ability to be led by his hope and faith, not by his circumstances. Paul maintained hope in spite of not knowing the ending. *“Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.”* Heb. 12:3 *“For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.”* Philippians 1:21

Hope Keeps Us Focused on Jesus... And Eternity

John King and Steve Newcomer

McBIC

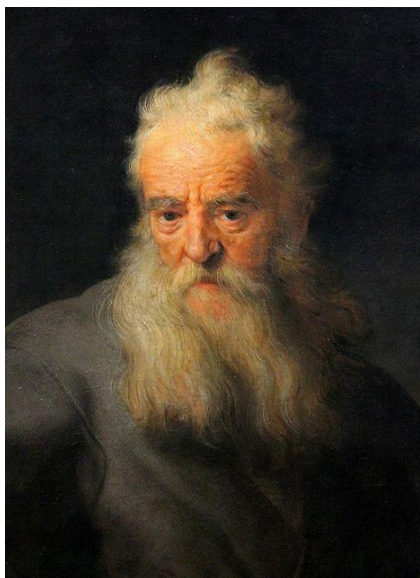
May 24, 2021

Today we conclude a series of messages on HOPE. And as we consider this last message in this sermon series, I want to start with a quote by C.S. Lewis.

“If I find in myself desires which nothing in this world can satisfy, the only logical explanation is that I was made for another world.” – C.S. Lewis

- This kind of “other world” thinking, this eternal thinking, is the best kind of hope that Christians throughout the last two millennia have lived in, especially those who have lived through difficult circumstances.
- Song writers throughout history have tried to put words and music to this idea of heaven and eternity.
- This world is not my home, I’m just a passin’ through.
- My treasures I’ve laid up, somewhere beyond the blue.
- The angels beckon me from heaven’s golden shore
- And I can’t feel at home in this world anymore.
- Oh Lord, you know, I have no friend like you.
- If heaven’s not my home, then Lord what will I do?
- The angels beckon me from heaven’s golden shore
- And I can’t feel at home in this world anymore.
- When I was a kid, my home church sang hymns from the hymnal every week. And my favorite verse of all of the hymns was the last verse – the fourth verse.
- When He shall come with trumpet sound, O may I then in Him be found.

- Dressed in His righteousness alone, faultless to stand before the throne.
- On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand, all other ground is sinking sand.
- How about this one:
- High King of Heaven, when victory is won.
- May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun!
- Heart of my heart, whatever be fall,
- Still be my vision, O ruler of all.
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- What does it mean for us to live our lives today in light of eternity? To live our lives in the kind of expectant hope that Phil Byers shared with us a few weeks ago as he and Pastor Layne preached?
- Here is the big idea that I believe God wants you and me to not only hear, but put into our hearts today:
- Because of Christ, we have a hope for eternity that transforms how we live in this world.
- **Because of Christ, we have a hope for eternity (an expectant hope) that transforms how we live in this world.**
- And as I thought about a story that relates to this, the first person I thought of is with my friend, Steve Newcomer. Steve, welcome today. You have been here at McBIC since you came back to the States after serving in two African countries for 25 years. Steve, could you briefly share about the first 20 years of living and serving in Africa, and then the last 5 years of Mozambique?
- STEVE – Share the short version of where you served through BIC World missions, and then how you got involved serving in Mozambique and meeting Tony.
- THERE ARE THREE PICTURES HERE IN THE PPT THAT YOU CAN SCROLL THROUGH AS STEVE INTRODUCES REVIS AS A MINISTRY AND ALSO TONY, THEIR PASTOR/LEADER.
- JK – The theme for this message is this idea: Hope keeps us focused on Jesus... and eternity.
- If anyone knew this, if anyone understood this idea of keeping focused on Jesus, it was the Apostle Paul.



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- (Rembrandt's depiction of Paul)
- Paul: who was the Pharisee of Pharisees...
- Who was present and gave the order to stone Stephen, the first Christian martyr...
- Who heavily persecuted the Church
- Who was radically transformed through meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus...
- Who gave his life to Jesus...
- Who became the first missionary to the Roman Empire...
- Who suffered through many dangers, toils, and snares...
- Who as stoned and left for dead, who was shipwrecked, imprisoned many times...
- Paul, who wrote most of the books of the New Testament.
- And Paul, who shared many, many encouraging words for the Church, admonishing us to live for eternity – to have an eternal perspective.
- Listen to these words from Paul as he sat in a Roman prison and wrote to his friends and the Church in a city called Phillipi:
- **Philippians 1**
- **Paul's Chains Advance the Gospel**
- ¹² Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters,¹² that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. ¹³ As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard¹³ and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. ¹⁴ And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

- He continues on after a few verses: STEVE
- Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, ¹⁹ for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. ²⁰ I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹ For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ²² If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! ²³ I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; ²⁴ but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. ²⁵ Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶ so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.
- Paul understood that his life on this earth was limited. The Kingdom of God would last long beyond himself.
- Steve, what has your relationship with REVIS meant for you as you live out your life in light of eternity?
- STEVE - Talk about the joy it is for you to invest your time, money, prayers etc. for a church family half a world away.
- JK - Because of Christ, we have a hope for eternity that transforms how we live in this world.
- CONVERSATION WITH STEVE AND JK
- (In this short 5- minute conversation, Steve, I want to be able to highlight that our current ministries are done in light of eternity. I would like to highlight James 1:27 – pure and faultless religion is to look after orphans and widows in their distress...)
- Steve, you are one of the guys I know who is eternally minded, and that transformed how you live your life today. You understand how this relationship that you have with REVIS and Tony will live long after you are gone from this world...
- I know that for Cindy and me, we have invested the past almost 30 years of our married life together in the lives of orphans and widows and seeing the Kingdom of God come through orphan care
- We know that the seeds that we have planted in the lives of people around us are germinating and will result in generational change... in the lives of our own children, in the lives of others...
- ...our work with adoptive couples who believed that they were preparing to adopt an orphan. And what so many of these couples have found as they

travelled out of state to receive their child from a birth mother, they began to realize even more that they were not adopting an orphan, but they were rather adopting an orphan's child. There is a big difference.

- We both are really in the business/ministry of orphan care.
- Describe who the orphans are today, and who the widows are today...
- JK
- Because of Christ, we have a hope for eternity that transforms how we live in this world.
- The Hope that we have in Christ and in eternity first
- **1. That hope results in JOY**
- Joy to the World! The Lord has come! Let Earth receive her King! This song is one that we sing at Christmastime, but it is actually a song that points to the day that is coming soon when Jesus will return. Check out verse 4:
 - He rules the world with truth and grace
 - And makes the nations prove
 - The glories of His righteousness
 - And Wonders of his love...
 - Steve, talk about the joy you feel as you continue to interact with Tony at Revis?
 - THERE ARE TWO PICTURES TO SHARE IN THIS SPOT HERE. JUST MAKE SURE THAT BOTH PICTURES ARE SHOWN.
 - This expectant hope that we have in Christ brings us joy. And it also results in POWER
- **2. That hopes results in POWER**
- 2 Corinthians 12:7b-10 - Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

- Paul's expectant hope in the resurrection, and his expectant hope in eternity in heaven gave him power – not the power and strength we would normally think – but the inner power and strength that helps us live for now, because eternity will be so, so wonderful.
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- **3. That hope results in a CHANGED WORLD VIEW**
- And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight.
- The clouds be rolled back as a scroll.
- The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend.
- Even so, it is well with my soul.
- It is well... with my soul...
- It is well, it is well with my soul.
- When we sing words like this, and really mean them, our world view changes. In the midst of tragedy And pain and sorrow, because of the hope of Christ, our entire world view changes.
- Steve, how has your friendship with Tony changed your world view?
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- **4. That hope changes EVERYTHING.**
- The resurrection
- And when before the throne
I stand in him complete
Jesus died my soul to save
My lips shall still repeat
- Jesus paid it all
All to him I owe
Sin had left a crimson stain
He washed it white as snow
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- Steve - "A difference that makes no difference is no difference at all."
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- Listen to these words of Paul from 1 Thessalonians 4 – the words that I read at the graveside of someone whose family passed away:
- 1 Thessalonians 4: Steve
- ¹³ Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of

mankind, who have no hope. ¹⁴ For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. ¹⁵ According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

- This is the hope that we profess. This expectant hope that someday we will be united with Christ and where there will be no more pain, sorrow, death, brokenness, addiction, and trauma. I don't know about you, but That promise that I have – that all of us have - from God changes how we live today.
 - So don't live for the moment
 - Don't live for the temporal
 - Don't live for your image
 - Don't live for the things that won't make a bit of difference 100 years from now.
 - Don't live for now only.
 - Live your life in the HOPE of eternity, and that reality of eternity will transform the way that you live in the present.
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- Because of Christ, we have a hope for eternity that transforms how we live in this world.