



LIVING IN THE LIGHT OF THE BLESSED HOPE

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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Living in the Light of the Blessed Hope

SERMON REFERENCE: Titus 2:11-15

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #1996

In these increasingly dark days, we may wonder if there is hope for us. As believers, we can live in the light of the blessed hope that Jesus Christ is coming again.

Titus 2:11 and 13 says, "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men... looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ..."

Hope is certainty based on the Word of God.

It is a rock-ribbed assurance and anticipation. This hope is a purifying hope: "...teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age..." (Titus 2:12).

When people have hope, they are looking toward something in the future, so they will take care of the present. If we truly anticipate Jesus' return, we will clean up our lives and keep them clean. We will want to live pure lives and move step by step toward holiness.

Hope is encouraging.

God our Father is the power, preserver, and purpose of creation; everything is in His control. When Jesus comes, wrong will be made right. He will come for His bride, the Church. Jesus will subdue the devil and He will sit on His throne.

Hope is unifying.

As we move higher toward holiness, we draw closer together in abounding love with our fellow believers. As we wait for Jesus, we ought to have a fervent love toward one another, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.

Adrian Rogers says, "The closer we get to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, the closer we ought to be to one another, the more we ought to be in the house of God."

Hope is challenging.

Christ's return should motivate us to bring people to Him in faith. We have such limited time, and we must remember the most important thing is sharing the Gospel with others.

Hope is stabilizing.

When we're rooted in this hope, we will not be blown about by the things of this world.

Finally, hope is comforting.

The blessed hope reminds us that it is not over yet; our King is on the way.

Life Application

As the days become gloriously darker, we can live in the light of this blessed hope. Get in the Word of God and be faithful to your fellow believers.



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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Titus 2:11-15
 - i) The world wants to know if there is any hope.
 - (1) For some people, it seems as if there is no hope.
 - (a) It has been said that hopelessness is the saddest word in the human language.
 - (2) Some people have hope, but it is a false hope.
 - (3) Others have hope, but it is an uncertain hope.
 - ii) This passage of Scripture speaks of the Second Coming of Jesus.
 - (1) It calls the Second Coming the “glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.”
 - (2) The Bible calls it a certain hope, a “blessed” hope.
- b) The word “hope” in the Bible does not mean “maybe.”
 - i) It may be used that way in modern English, but that is not what it means in the Bible.
 - ii) The Bible word “hope” means “certainty,” but not just any certainty.
 - (1) It is a certainty based on the Word of God.
 - (2) It is a rock-ribbed assurance.
 - (3) It is certainty with anticipation.
 - (a) It means something that we know is going to happen.
 - (b) That certainty is based on the Word of God.
- c) The Second Coming of Jesus Christ is a certainty and a blessed hope.
 - i) Jesus is coming again.
- d) Hope is simply faith of the future tense.
 - i) We know that we know that with our eyes, we will see Him.
 - (1) Since this is true, then how should we be living in these last days?
- e) Today’s message will mention some things that this “blessed hope” will do for us.

2) IT IS A PURIFYING HOPE

- a) Hope teaches us.
 - i) Titus 2:12
- b) 1 John 3:2-3
 - i) We are the sons and daughters of God.
 - ii) This passage means that God is not finished with us yet.
 - (1) We cannot even begin to imagine what we are going to be; but we know that when the Lord Jesus appears, we shall be like Him.
 - (a) The resurrection body is going to be like Jesus’ resurrection body.
 - (b) Psalm 17:15
 - iii) Verse 3 states that everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, even as He is pure.
 - (1) If we knew that in five hours we would stand face to face with the Lord Jesus, then we would be cleaning up our lives.
 - (a) If we had any animosity, unforgiveness, or anything that was not right with God, then



- we would want to take care of it.
- (2) If we have this hope in Him, then we are going to purify ourselves.
 - (a) We will get ourselves clean and keep ourselves clean.
 - (b) If we do not realize that Jesus Christ is coming soon, then we can get very lackadaisical.
 - (c) "Where there is no faith for the future, there is no work in the present."
 - (i) If people have a hope, if they can see that there is something in the future, then they are going to take care of the present.
- c) We have a faith in the future; therefore, we are to be ready for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.
 - i) 1 John 2:28
 - (1) Some who are saved when Jesus comes are going to be ashamed.
 - (a) There are things that they could have done and should have done for the Lord Jesus that they did not do.
 - ii) 1 John 3:3
 - iii) When Jesus comes, we want to be excited to meet Him and not be ashamed to meet Him.
- d) If we believe that Jesus Christ is coming at any moment, then we are going to want to be living pure and holy lives.
 - i) We are going to want to move one step higher in holiness.

3) IT IS AN ENCOURAGING HOPE

- a) Even if it is getting dark, it is getting gloriously dark.
- b) Colossians 1:16-17
 - i) There is absolutely nothing that is out of control.
 - (1) God has the devil on a leash.
 - (a) There is only so much that the devil can do.
 - ii) God is the power of creation.
 - (1) All things were made by Him.
 - (a) The world with its complexity and intricacies did not come about by random and blind chance.
 - (b) It takes a whole lot more faith to believe in evolution than it does to believe the Word of God.
 - (2) It is His handiwork.
 - iii) God is the preserver of creation.
 - (1) By Him all things consist.
 - (a) He is the glue of the galaxies.
 - (b) He is the One who regulates the universe.
 - iv) God is the purpose of creation.
 - (1) What is the world coming to?
 - (a) It is coming to Jesus.
 - (2) In verse 16, the word "for" means "movement toward an object."
 - (a) This world is moving to Jesus.
- c) Jesus will rule and reign.
 - i) Habakkuk 2:14
 - ii) Jesus is the controller of this universe.
 - iii) He is the King upon His throne.



- d) The world is in a mess today, and people are talking about a new world order.
 - i) All it is, really, is just a different disorder.
- e) There are three basic things that are wrong in the world today that will be made right when Jesus comes.
 - i) The bride belongs with the bridegroom.
 - (1) The bride is the church.
 - (2) The bridegroom is the Lord Jesus.
 - (3) When Jesus comes, the bride is going to be swept up to meet the bridegroom.
 - (a) The Lord Jesus used this as an illustration of the time when the saved will meet the Lord.
 - (4) What's wrong in the world today is that the bride is not yet with her groom.
 - (5) One day, there will be the marriage supper of the Lamb.
 - ii) The criminal belongs in prison.
 - (1) The criminal is Satan.
 - (2) The devil is not in Hell, but he will be in Hell.
 - (3) Hell is prepared for the devil and his angels.
 - (a) Revelation 20:10
 - (4) The reason why there are so many problems today is because the criminal is running loose.
 - iii) The King will be on His throne.
 - (1) The King is not yet on His throne on Earth.
 - (a) He is on the throne in Heaven.
 - (2) Matthew 6:10
 - (a) Jesus is going to rule on this Earth.
 - (b) Why would Jesus teach us to pray this prayer if He did not intend for this prayer to be answered?
 - (3) 1 Timothy 6:15
- f) After the resurrection of Jesus Christ, there is not a negative note in the New Testament.
 - i) We are not waiting to see who is going to win.
 - (1) Satan's back was broken at Calvary.
 - (2) Jesus is coming to rule and to reign.

4) IT IS A UNIFYING HOPE

- a) It brings us together.
- b) 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13
 - i) God wants us to increase (to move one step higher) in love one toward another.
 - ii) The Second Coming of Jesus is linked with holiness and love for all of the saints.
- c) If His coming is drawing nearer, then we ought to be drawing nearer to one another.
 - i) There are some things that ought to divide people.
 - (1) It is better to be divided by truth than be united in error.
 - ii) But those who love the Lord Jesus Christ ought to have a fervent love one toward another.
- d) When we know that the Lord Jesus is coming, we are to be encouraging one another.
- e) Hebrews 10:25
 - i) The closer we get to the Second Coming of Jesus, the closer we ought to be to one another and the more we ought to be in the house of God.
 - (1) Watching preaching on television is not an excuse or a substitute for church attendance.
 - (a) It is for those who are not yet going to church and those who cannot go to church.



- (b) It is never a substitute for being in the house of God.
- ii) If we love Jesus, then we are going to love what Jesus loves; and He loves the church.
 - (1) The church is not a building.
 - (a) It is the people gathered together.
- iii) When we go to church, we are saying two things:
 - (1) God is important to us.
 - (2) The church (the people) is important to us.
 - (a) Our brothers and sisters are important to us.
- iv) “Exhorting one another” in this passage of Scripture means “building up one another.”
- f) Parents need to see that their children are with the people of God.
 - i) As the days get darker, things are going to get more and more vile.
 - (1) Our children are going to be pulled in the wrong direction.
 - ii) Get them in the house of God and under the Word of God.
- g) We need to be moving up one step higher in faithfulness.
 - i) We need to be faithful to the church.
 - ii) We need to be faithful to our brothers and sisters in Christ.
 - (1) The Bible teaches it.

5) IT IS A CHALLENGING HOPE

- a) It challenges us to win souls.
- b) 1 Thessalonians 2:19
 - i) The Apostle Paul had gone to a place that was filled with evil.
 - (1) He told the people about Jesus, and they were saved.
 - ii) Paul talked about the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus.
 - (1) He said that when Jesus comes, his hope, his joy and his crown would be those that he had led to Jesus.
- c) When Jesus comes and the church is caught up, will there be anyone in that crowd that you have led to Him?
 - i) Will we go empty-handed?
- d) Bible prophecy is not simply meant to settle our curiosity.
 - i) It is a motivating hope and a challenging hope to bring people to Jesus Christ.
- e) Some people sitting in churches today don't really believe what they say they believe.
- f) People are busy with a lot of things, but there is nothing more important than people being saved.
 - i) We get busy with our businesses, hobbies, and vacations.
 - (1) None of this can compare to someone being saved before the rapture.
 - ii) This is not to say that we can't do any of our hobbies, businesses, or take our vacations.
 - (1) We can do any of these things if they help us to be a better soul winner and a better Christian.
 - (a) But if they keep us from doing that, then these things are wrong for us.
- g) We are in the business of bringing souls to Jesus Christ.
 - i) If we believe that Jesus is coming, then we need to move up one step higher in soul winning.
 - ii) We don't want to stand before the Lord and not have one soul that we've won to Jesus Christ.
 - iii) The Bible says that he who wins souls is wise.
 - (1) Proverbs 11:30
 - iv) All the soul-winning that we are ever going to do is going to be in this day and in this age.



- (1) We are not going to do any soul-winning after the rapture.
- (2) If we are going to do it, then we had better get busy doing it.

6) IT IS A STABILIZING HOPE

- a) James 5:8
 - i) We should not be blown about.
 - ii) We should establish our hearts.
- b) The trouble with many of us is that we are not stable.
 - i) People go to church one Sunday but not the next Sunday.
 - ii) It takes as much of the blood of Jesus to save a Pastor as it does a lay person.
 - iii) Our friends do not pay us a compliment when they come to visit us on the day that we are supposed to be in worship.
 - (1) This simply means that they know that our worship is not very important to us.
 - iv) We need to be faithful.
- c) The coming of the Lord draws nigh.
 - i) Be faithful, weary pilgrim.
 - ii) Our King is on His way.

7) IT IS A COMFORTING HOPE

- a) 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18
- b) The Second Coming of Jesus is a great, comforting hope.
 - i) Death is not God's final plan.
 - ii) There is coming a resurrection.
 - (1) The saved will get a glorified body and will be swept up to meet the Lord in the air.
 - iii) The Lamb will dry our tears.
 - iv) We'll have a grand homecoming when Jesus comes.
 - v) It is not over yet.

8) CONCLUSION

- a) The Second Coming of the Lord Jesus is a blessed hope.
 - i) You are to be living in the light of this hope.
 - ii) You are to be moving up one step higher.
 - (1) Would you make a commitment to the Lord that, by His grace and for His glory, you will move up one step higher?
- b) Are you ready for the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ?
 - i) If you are not saved, you can be saved today.
- c) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- d) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16



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Take God's Word and find Titus chapter 2. We've been in a series of Bible studies on the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and this morning we come to the end of this series and today we want to see what that means to us personally. We're going to be talking today on this subject, "Living in the Light of the Blessed Hope." If Jesus Christ is coming, and He is as surely as I'm standing here, if He's coming soon, and many feel that He is, what does that mean to me? What does that mean to you?

Look in Titus chapter 2 and verse 11 through 15, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak and exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee."

A number of years ago a submarine sank off the coast of Massachusetts and that submarine went by the title S-4. It sank in deep waters and many ships sped to the rescue to see if they could raise that ship and rescue that crew. They sent a diver down many feet beneath the surface, and that diver put his gear up to the shell of that submarine, and there was being tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, tapped out on the surface of that submarine a message in Morse code, and the diver who knew Morse code listened as they continued to tap. And here was the question that was being asked from inside that submarine. The question was this: "Is there any hope? Is there any hope?" That's what this world wants to know. I mean, is there any hope?

For some people, there is no hope. As one person said, "It looks like we're looking into the muzzle of a loaded cannon." Somebody said that, "Hopelessness is the saddest word in the human language." For other people, they have hope, but their hope is a false hope. Somebody said, "There's no greater false hope than the first four hours of a diet." For many people, there is hope, but it is a false hope. For other people, they have hope, but it is an uncertain hope. It is not a certain hope. But the Bible here in this passage of Scripture that I just read to you speaks of the Second Coming of Jesus. It calls the Second Coming of Jesus the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ. And the Bible calls it there a hope, a certain hope, a blessed hope.

Now what does the word mean? What does the word hope mean in the Bible? It doesn't mean maybe. We may use it that way in modern English, but that's not what the word hope means in the Bible. The Bible word hope means, listen to me now, it means certainty, but not just any certainty. It is certainty based on the Word of God. It is rock-ribbed assurance based on the Word of God. But it means more than that. It means certainty with anticipation. It means something I know is going to happen. That certainty is based on the Word of God, and I can hardly wait for it to happen.

When I was a little boy, my dad used to take us out for a ride on Sunday afternoon and the kids would be in the back seat. Mom and Dad would be in the front seat, and you know how kids are in the back seat. They get into squabbles; they get into fusses. And we'd be riding out around the countryside on Sunday afternoon, and my brother and I would start to fight. Now my dad would turn around and say, "When you boys get home, I'm gonna whip you." Now it wasn't a threat, but it was a promise. "When you get home, I'm gonna whip you." Now, folks, I knew my dad well enough to know that was not an idle threat. It was a rock-ribbed assurance. Now, it was just as certain as the sunrise in my heart and mind. Now that was certainty,



but there was no anticipation. Now what I'm talking about is this, that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ is a certainty, but it is a blessed hope, the blessed hope, "The glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." Jesus is coming again, say "Amen." He is coming again. He may come soon. Now what hope is, is simply faith of the future tense. We know that we know that we know that with our eyes we will see Him. Soon and very soon we're going to see the King.

Now if that is true, and it is true, then how should we be living in these last days? I want to mention some ways. I want to mention some things that that blessed hope will do for me and it will do for you. First of all, that **hope is a purifying hope**. Look in Titus 2 verse 12, it teaches us that, "Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." And then take your Bibles and turn to First John chapter 3 verses 2 and 3. And here's what John says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." And what a blessed privilege. Isn't that wonderful? That we are the sons, the daughters, the children of God? "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." What that means is God's not finished with us yet. You can't even begin to dream to imagine what we're going to be, "But we know that when he shall appear we shall be like Him." Now I don't know exactly what the resurrection body is going to be like, but it's going to be like Jesus' glorious resurrection body, and that's wonderful. No wonder the psalmist said in Psalm 17 verse 15, "I shall be satisfied when I waken in Thy likeness." "Now are we the sons of God. It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Now we all sign off on that, I hope.

Now notice the "therefore" in this passage of Scripture, First John 3:3, and it says, "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." What if you absolutely knew, absolutely knew, that in five hours you would stand face to face with Jesus Christ? What would you do? I mean, if you absolutely knew in five hours you'd be face to face with Jesus Christ. I think I know what you'd be doing. You'd be cleaning up your life, wouldn't you? If you had any animosity, any unforgiveness, any dirty literature, anything that is not right with God, you'd be say, "Hey, I'm going to see the Lord. I'm going to meet my Savior face to face in five hours." Well, what if you knew that you were going to meet the Lord Jesus Christ in fifteen minutes? You see, we don't know when Jesus is coming. We don't know. And the Bible says that if we have this hope in Him we're going to purify ourselves, we're going to get ourselves clean and keep ourselves clean because, folks, if we don't realize that Jesus Christ is coming and coming soon, we'll get very lackadaisical.

In New England, they were going to build a dam, and the dam was a very important dam to generate power and conserve water. And down in the little valley, where the dam was going to be built, there was a village and some beautiful homes down there. And those homes were bought by the government, condemned because when the water came in, those homes would all be under water. They said to the people, "The dam is not yet ready to be built. We've signed the contract. Your home is sold, but we're going to let you continue to live in these houses until a certain time, and then you'll have to move out." It was a beautiful little village, but from the moment the contract was signed, the thing began to deteriorate, and it began to run down, and people, they would not repair their houses. They didn't take care of their lawns. They didn't do all the things that people normally do. And what was once a beautiful little village, a little community, became just almost a slum. People continued to live there for a while. Somebody said, "How do you explain that psychologically?" And here was the answer, "Where there is no faith for the future, there's no work in the present." Where there is no faith for the future, there is no work in the present. If people have a hope, if people can see that there's something in the future, then they're going to take care of the present. Now, folks, you and I have a faith in the future and therefore we are to be ready for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Let me give you another Scripture here. Well, you're in First John chapter 3, go over to chapter 2 and look in verse 28, "And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." Did you know some are going to be saved when Jesus comes,



but they're going to be ashamed? If Jesus Christ were to come right now this moment, some of you who are members of this church, you'll say, "Hallelujah!" Others of you would want to crawl under the seat, be ashamed!

I spoke to one of the members of our church, I'll not call his name, a dear man, I loved him. But he was on his death bed. He called me into his bedroom. He said, "Pastor, I am dying." He said, "I love Jesus. He has saved me. I know I'm going to Heaven." But he said, "Soon I'm going to meet the Lord." And he said to me, "Pastor, I am not afraid to die!" But he said, "Pastor, I'm ashamed to die!" And then he said, "Pastor, I've not been a soul winner." And he told me some other things that he could've done and should've done. You know what the Bible says here in First John 2 verse 28. Whether you're dying or whether Jesus is coming, "He that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself," and "abide in Him, that when He shall appear ye will not be ashamed, but have confidence before Him at His coming."

When I was a little boy, my dad was in the Coast Guard. He lived up the Florida coast from where we lived in West Palm Beach. My dad would get a leave every so often and would come home. He had a model-A Ford, and we'd be playing in the neighborhood. Before my dad would go away, he would tell me, "Adrian, do this and this and this, and don't do thus and thus and thus," and he would give me assignments, yard work and other things, and tell me how to obey my mama. Sometimes I would and sometimes I didn't. But I tell you it made a lot of difference as to how I was living when I heard the sound of that model-A Ford coming around the corner.

There were times, a model-A Ford, this was a 1931 model-A Ford. It had a running board. You kids don't know what a running board is, but that's a board on either side of the car where you can come and step on it and, and ride along. Or people getting out of the car would step on that running board to step down. My dad would come, and I would see him. If I'd been doing all he told me to do, what a day that would be. I would run to meet him and ride the last half block on that running board with my head in the window hugging my dad and kissing him. There're other times when I heard that model A, I'd head the other direction. Now he's still my dad, but, folks, listen, when Jesus comes, I want to run to meet Him. Don't you? I don't want to be ashamed! First John 3:3, "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." So put it down in your heart and in your mind. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ is a purifying hope. If you believe that Jesus Christ is coming at any moment, you're going to want to be living a pure, holy life. And you're going to be moving one step higher in holiness.

Now I'll tell you something else it is. Not only is it a purifying hope, but the Second Coming of Jesus is **an encouraging hope**. You don't have to go around with your head between your knees, and even if it's getting dark, as we say, it's getting gloriously dark. Put this Scripture down, Colossians 1, just turn to it in your Bibles, Colossians chapter 1, and look if you will in verses 16 and 17. It speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ, our dear Savior, and it says, "For by Him were all things created," this is Colossians 1:16 and 17, "For by Him were all things created that are in Heaven and that are in Earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him, and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." Now what does that verse mean? It means, ladies and gentlemen, that absolutely nothing is out of control. Nothing. You say, "Well, the devil's having a heyday." God has a leash on him. There's only so much that he can do, and the Bible teaches that our **God is the power of creation**. All things were made by Him. Do you think this world with its complexity and intricacies came about by random, blind, impersonal chance? Do you believe that out of nothing everything came, and out of inorganic matter life came? Do you believe that? Friend, it takes a whole lot more faith to believe in evolution than it does the Word of God. I mean, you think what they're asking us to believe. It's His handiwork. It was made by Him.

He is the power of creation, and **He is the preserver of creation**. This verse, Colossians 1:17, says, "By Him all things consist." What keeps it from flying apart? You say, "Well, gravitational pull." Well, tell me what that



is. You say, "That's what holds everything together." Well, what holds everything together? You say, "Gravity." And you just keep trying to explain it by defining it, but you never define it. Do you want me to tell you what holds everything together? "By Him all things consist." He's the glue of the galaxies. He is the One who regulates this universe. He is the power of creation. He is the preserver of creation.

And **He is the purpose of creation**. This verse, Colossians 1:17, says, "It was all made by Him and for Him!" People say, "What is the world coming to?" Come up close, I'll tell you; It's coming to Jesus. This little preposition 'for' is epsilon iota sigma in the Greek language, pronounced ice like ice cube. All things are ice Him, for Him, and that preposition means movement toward an object. This world is moving to Jesus, and Jesus will rule and reign. Habakkuk 2:14, "The Earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord as waters that cover the sea." Jesus is, friend, the controller of this universe. He is the king upon His throne.

Now listen, the world is in a mess today. It's in a mess today, and people talking about a new world order. It's just a different disorder is all it is. C.S. Lewis said, "You can't make a good omelet out of bad eggs no matter how you stir it." You know what's wrong in the world today? There are three basic things that are wrong in the world today, and when Jesus comes, this is why it's such an encouraging hope. When Jesus comes, there are three things going to be made right. First of all, **the bride belongs with the bridegroom**. Who is the bride? The church. Who is the bridegroom? The Lord Jesus. When Jesus comes, the bride is going to be swept up to meet the bridegroom. I've stood down here so many times with a young, budding bridegroom, and I'd stand here and watch him. I watch her for a while and I watch him for a while, and I see that bride coming down that aisle. I've told you before, I've never seen an ugly bride. I've seen some that just did make it, but I've never seen an ugly bride. And here she comes down that aisle, and here he comes. And, folks, I get to stand there and watch that; I see that man as he goes over here and stands by her. What a blessing that is. Friend, the Lord Jesus used that as an illustration of that time when we're going to meet the Lord. I'm telling you, what's wrong in the world today is this, that the bride is not yet with her groom, but one of these days there's going to be that wedding. One of these days, the marriage supper of the Lamb.

I'll tell you something else that's wrong with this world: **the criminal belongs in prison**. Who is the criminal? His name is Satan. Don't ever talk about the devil in Hell; the devil is not in Hell. He will be in Hell. Hell is prepared for the devil and his angels. And the Bible tells us in Revelation chapter 20 and verse 10, "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone." He will be. The reason we're having so much problem today is that the criminal is running loose.

I'll tell you a third thing that's going to make it right, when the bride is with the groom, when the criminal's in prison, and when **the King is on His throne**. The King is not yet on His throne. Now He's on the throne in Heaven, but I'm talking about what's wrong here on this Earth. How many times have you prayed this prayer from Matthew 6 verse 10? "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven." Have you ever prayed that prayer? Of course you have! "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on Earth!" Some people don't believe that Jesus is going to rule again on this Earth or rule on this Earth; friend, He is! Why would Jesus have taught us to pray that prayer if He didn't intend for that prayer to be answered? Well, I want to ask you a question. Has it been answered? Do you think His kingdom has come and His will is being done on Earth as it is in Heaven? Do you think this is what Heaven is like? No. Will it be done? Absolutely! Jesus is going to reign.

Let me give you one of the great verses, one of my favorite verses. First Timothy chapter 6 and verse 15, "Which in His time," it's talking about Jesus, "He shall show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and the Lord of lords." I can hardly wait. When the bride will be with the groom, when the criminal will be in prison, and when the King will be on His throne. Now folks, that is an encouraging hope, isn't it? That is an encouraging hope.



Well, what does that mean to me? What does that mean to you? Folks, we ought to put a smile on our face. We might have to go to the doctor and have our ears moved back to make room for that smile. Our King is on His way! After the resurrection of Jesus Christ, there is not a negative note in the New Testament. We're not waiting to see who's going to win. Satan's back was broken at Calvary, and Jesus is coming to rule and to reign. The Second Coming of Jesus is a purifying hope. I'm moving up one step higher in purity. The Second Coming of Jesus is an encouraging hope. I am moving up one step higher in courage and confidence and assurance.

I'll tell you a third thing that that hope is. The Second Coming of Jesus is **a unifying hope**; it brings us together. Take your Bibles now and turn to First Thessalonians, and look if you will in verses 12 and 13. First Thessalonians chapter 3 verses 12 and 13, "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another." God wants us to increase, to move up one step higher, and He wants us to abound in love one toward another. "And toward all men, even as we do toward you, to the end," now listen, "that he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God," we've already talked about that, "even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints." Now he links the Second Coming of Jesus with holiness and love for all of the saints. Now you know if His coming is drawing nearer and closer, we ought to be drawing nearer and closer to one another. Surely there are some things that ought to divide people. It's better to be divided by truth than united in error. But those who are God's children, those who love the Lord Jesus Christ, if we believe that Jesus is coming at any moment, you know what we ought to be doing according to Paul there as he told the church at Thessalonica? We ought to be having a fervent love one toward another.

I want you to imagine a scene. You walk into a home. Let's say there's a father and a mother and several children, and let's say that they're red in the face. They're calling each other names. They're kicking shins, they're pulling hair. They're having a family feud! And you say, "What on earth is going on here? Why are you, members of the same family, at one another's throats? What is happening?" They said, "Well, you know, we have a beloved elder brother. His name is William. He's been away for many, many years. We received a telegram signed by him that says he's coming home, and we have met to make plans for the homecoming of our elder brother." "Well, why you having such a fuss?" "Well, we don't agree as to how he's coming. Susie says he's coming by car, but Jim says he's coming by train. But Dad says he's coming by airplane, and Mother says he's bringing some friends with him. And others say, no, he's coming by himself, and we just don't agree on the details. So we're fighting about it." About that time, the door opens, and there stands William, and the whole family is fighting over his coming.

Does that remind you of anything? Somebody says, "Well, he's coming back before the tribulation." "No, He's coming back after the tribulation." There's pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation, a-millennial, post-millennial. Friend, listen, it's fine to have some opinions about those things, but you need to get off the program committee and get on the welcome committee. I mean, there are a lot of details that none of us understand about prophecy, but we know that we know that our elder brother, the Lord Jesus, is coming, right? And when we have this hope in Him, we are to be encouraging one another and loving one another! Hebrews 11 and verse 25 says, "We are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching." Do you know what that means? It means the closer we get to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, the closer we ought to be to one another, the more we ought to love one another, the more we ought to be in the house of God.

Some of you are listening to me by television, if you think this television program is an excuse or substitute for church attendance, you're dead wrong! It's for those who are not yet going to church and those who cannot come to church and those who have never been to church, but it is never a substitute for being in the house of God. "You are not to forsake the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is."



Some go to church three times, when they're hatched and matched and dispatched. First time, they throw water. Second time, they throw rice. The third time, they throw dirt.

You are to go to church! Why? Why church attendance? You say, "Well, Pastor Rogers, I don't have to go to church to be a Christian." That's right, you can be saved anywhere. But if you love Jesus, you're going to love what Jesus loves, and He loves the church. The church is not this building, it is the people gathered together. And when you're here, do you know what you're saying, those of you who are in this building? You are saying two things. You may be saying something else, but I tell you there're two things that you are saying by being here, living in light of the soon coming of Jesus Christ, there are two things that you say when you're in that seat. Number one, you're saying God is important to me. Number two, you're saying you other people are important to me. That's what you're saying. You're saying God is important to me. But not only is God important to me, the church is important to me! My brothers and sisters are important to me. Listen to Hebrews 11 verse 25 again, "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another," that means building up one another, "and so much the more as you see the day approaching." And Moms and Dads, you better see to it that your children are in Sunday School. You better see to it that they're with the people of God. As the days get darker, things are going to get more and more vile, and they're going to be pulled and pulled and pulled and pulled. Get them in the house of God. Get them under the Word of God. Get them in a loving fellowship, a Bible study. And as we believe that Jesus Christ is coming, we need to be moving up one step higher in faithfulness. Be faithful to your church. Be faithful to your Sunday School class. Be faithful to your brothers and sisters in Christ. The Bible teaches it!

This hope that we have is a purifying hope. It is an encouraging hope. It is a unifying hope. I'll tell you what else it is. It is **a challenging hope**. What does it challenge us to do? To win souls. You're in First Thessalonians, look in chapter 2 verse 19. Paul had gone to the place where, it was just filled with evil. And he told them about Jesus, and they got saved. And then he says, talking about the Second Coming of Jesus, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" Friend, underscore that in your Bible, First Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 19. He says, "When Jesus comes, my hope, my joy, my crown will be you because I led you to Jesus!" When Jesus comes, when the church is caught up, will there be anybody in that crowd that you have led to Him? "Must I go in empty-handed? Must I meet my Savior so? Without one soul with which to greet Him? Must I empty-handed go?" You see, listen, we preach this series on Bible prophecy. Is that just simply meant to settle your curiosity? No. It's a motivating hope. It's a challenging hope to bring people to Jesus Christ.

Some people sitting in this auditorium don't really believe what they say they believe. Suppose there's a house on fire. It's burning. It's caving in. And let's suppose, there in the nursery is a little baby asleep, and the mother in that house is there, and she sees that the house is on fire. And now let's suppose that she is going to all of the closets in that house, and she's gathering the wire coat hangers and putting them in little bundles, putting them in paper bags and carrying them out to the curb because the house is burning down. And the whole time that baby is there asleep in the crib, just about to perish in the flames. What would you say about that woman? I'd say she's mentally unbalanced. She's demented, that she would be gathering coat hangers when she's got a baby there that needs to be rescued from the flames. You see, folks, we're busy about a lot of things, but there's nothing more important, listen to your pastor, there's nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing more important than getting people saved. If you believe Jesus is coming again. Your business is a bunch of coat hangers. Your garden is a bunch of coat hangers. Your front lawn is a bunch of coat hangers. Your clothes is a bunch of coat hangers. Your vacation, a bunch of coat hangers, compared to getting people saved before the Rapture.

You say, I can't do those things? You can do any of those things if they help you to be a better soul winner and a better Christian, but if they keep you from doing that, then it's wrong for you. We're in the business of



bringing souls to Jesus Christ, and if you believe that Jesus Christ is coming, you're saved by His grace and for His glory, I'm moving up one step higher in soul winning. If I've never been a soul winner, by God's grace I will. I don't want the trumpet to sound! I don't want to stand before the Lord and not have one soul, not one soul, that I've won to Jesus Christ. You take people that this world calls unworthy, illiterate, impoverished, stupid, sinful, weak, vile. You name the worst things you can say about them is what the world says about them. You led them to Jesus Christ, and you wait 'til that day when you see them shining like a beautiful gem in His crown, made like His likeness, and you'll realize why the Bible says in Proverbs 11:30, "He that wins souls is wise." I'm going to tell you something, folks. All the soul winning you're ever going to do you're going to do in this day and in this age. You're not going to do any soul winning after the Rapture, that I can find in the Bible. If you're going to do it, you'd better get busy doing it.

Now let me say something else about this hope. This hope, not only is a challenging hope, it's **a stabilizing hope**. Turn to James chapter 5 and look in verse 8. Here's what James says, "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." Don't be blown about. Stablish your hearts! You know the trouble with many of us? We're just not stable. You know, it'd be difficult to put all the members of this church in these two services that we have Sunday morning if they all came on the same Sunday. Isn't that true? You come one Sunday and then next Sunday you don't come. Do you know why you don't come next Sunday? "Well, we had company, Pastor, and so we had to stay home. Mama had to stay home and cook for company." I've been a pastor for 45 years. We have never stayed home because company came. You say, "You're a pastor." That's right. I'm a pastor. I'm going to tell you something, friend. This is not a job for me. It is a ministry. And it takes as much of the blood of Jesus Christ to save you as it does me. And your friends and your company don't pay you a compliment when they come to you and your house on the day you're supposed to be in worship. That just simply means we know that your worship is not very important to you, or we wouldn't come on that day. You tell those folks, "We're going to church. You want to go?" "Oh, we didn't bring anything to wear." "Well, you'll be here when we get back. Have dinner ready." Listen, you just be faithful! Be faithful! Don't blow hot and blow cold! James 5:8 says, "Stablish your heart! The coming of the Lord draws nigh." Be faithful, weary pilgrim. Our king is on His way.

Let me say the last thing. This hope is not only a stabilizing hope, and I want to move up one step higher in faithfulness, but this hope is **a comforting hope**. Turn if you will to First Thessalonians chapter 4, First Thessalonians chapter 4. Look if you will in verses 16 through 18, "For the Lord Himself," not some event in history, "for the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God and the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord and so shall we ever be with the Lord." And notice what he says, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." The Second Coming of Jesus is a great comforting hope.

I was with a friend who had just said goodbye to his wife until Jesus comes when he'll meet her face to face. And we prayed about it. What do you say? What do you say to somebody who has just said goodbye to his wife? What do you say to a mother who has had a little baby snatched from her bosom? What do you say to the person who has just been to the doctor and gotten that bad report? What do you say to those people? I'll tell you what you say to them. "This is not God's final plan. Our King is on His way. There's coming a resurrection. We're going to get a glorified body. We're going to be swept up together to meet the Lord in the air. We'll sing and shout and dance about! The Lamb will dry our tears. We'll have a grand homecoming week the first ten thousand years when Jesus comes." It's not over yet! It's a comforting hope.

Former pastor of this church was Robert G. Lee. He used to tell a story that always moved my heart. He said, "When I was a little boy," he said, "we lived on a farm. It was such a poor farm." He said, "It was so poor you couldn't even raise an umbrella on it, much less the mortgage." And he said, "I was lying on the front porch.



Everybody else had gone out into the fields. My mama was there, and I had my heels sticking up in the air and my chin tucker in my hands, and I saw my mama as she was working, and I looked at my mama's hands, and they were toil-worn. And I thought about my mama, and I said, 'Mama, tell me the happiest day of your life.'" He said, "I thought perhaps she would tell me about the time when my daddy, a tall man with dark eyes, spoke to her about his love out by the garden gate, but she didn't mention that." He said, "I thought maybe she would tell me about the time over by the corner of the porch where he proposed to her and asked her to be his bride. But she didn't tell me that." He said, "I thought maybe she would tell me about the time when they stood in a little cottage and made their wedding vows where they kept all the days of their life, but she didn't tell me that."

She said, "Son, you've asked me a hard question, but I wanna tell you what I believe was the happiest day of my life." She said, "I was a little girl. There was a war between the states, between the North and the South, and my daddy, your grandfather Bennett, went off to fight in that war. We stayed home. The women had to work in the fields." She said, "We got our coffee from parched corn. Our tea was sassafras tea. We got our salt from the floor of the smokehouse. We just had enough to live on. We received word that your granddaddy, my daddy, had been killed in the war." She said, "I remembered my mother. She didn't cry much when she heard that. I wondered if she really cared." And then she said, "I would hear her at nighttime, putting her face in her pillow, just sobbing out her heart." And Dr. Lee's mother said, "And my heart was broken as a little girl, because my mama's heart was broken, and my daddy was dead."

She said, "Then one day, we were sitting on the front porch at the old river home. My mama had a bowl of beans that she was snapping and straining those beans. She looked across, down the river road. She saw a man walking, and she said to me, 'Elizabeth, I declare that looks like your daddy, that man.' She kept snapping the beans. Then after a while she said, 'Elizabeth, look! He walks like your daddy.' And I said, 'Oh now, Mama, daddy's dead. Don't get yourself upset.'" And then she said, "That man crossed a little cotton patch and started toward the house, and my mama threw those beans in the air. They went all over the front porch. And she said, 'Elizabeth, it's your daddy!' And he had one arm that was gone, his sleeve pinned up, walking across that cotton field" and she said, "My mama ran out there and embraced my daddy, and they kissed and hugged, and he put that one arm he had left around him, around her and held her up close." Then she said, "I ran as fast as my little legs would carry me and put my hand around Daddy's knees and hugged him and reached my hand up that empty sleeve and felt that funny little arm." And she said, "Son, I believe that was the happiest day of my life."

But, friend, you wait 'til Jesus comes. You wait 'til our Lord comes. Wait 'til we're caught up together with the loved ones of all of the ages to meet Jesus in the air. "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." We're not looking toward a hole in the ground. We're looking toward a cleavage in the sky, when our Lord will come. It is a blessed hope, and we are to be living in the light of that hope! And we're to be moving up one step higher.

Would you bow your heads in prayer? Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. If you're not certain that you're saved, would you like to be saved, would you? Would you like to know that you really do have life? Jesus said, "I've come that you might have life." Could I lead you in a prayer? We'll call this prayer the sinner's prayer. And you can pray and accept Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. You can do it right now. Would you pray this prayer? "Dear God, I know that You love me. Thank You for loving me. And I know that You want to save me. Jesus, You died to save me and You promised to save me if I would trust You. Jesus, I do trust You. I believe You're the Son of God. I believe you paid for my sin with Your blood on the cross. I believe that God raised You from the dead. And now I receive You as my Lord and Savior. Forgive my sin. Cleanse me. Come into my life. Take control of my life and begin today to make me the person You want me to be. And Jesus, give me the courage to make it public. Help me never to be ashamed of You. In Your name I pray, Amen."



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