

“One Hope”
Ephesians 4:1-6
(Preached at Trinity, December 7, 2014)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. One of the great themes of the Book of Ephesians is the unity of the body of Christ. Paul has maintained a focus on the union of Jews and Gentiles as one holy church in Christ. **Galatians 3:28 NAU** - "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."
2. In **Chapter 4** Paul begins to work this out practically. In **Verse 1** Paul admonishes us to walk worthy of our calling. Christians are called to a particular kind of life. The emphasis in the second half of **Ephesians** is the way our Christian calling transforms every aspect of our lives, particularly our relationships with one another.
3. In **Verses 2-6** Paul describes the substance of our unity. Paul maintains in these verses that unity is something we **DO** have. It is of the essence of being the body of Christ. Unity is something we share but it is also something we have to preserve. **Ephesians 4:3 NAU** - "being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."
4. In these verses Paul sets forth the foundations of our unity using a seven-fold expression of the word "One." They are not exhortations but declarations. They describe what we are, what we share. He is not saying, "Let us be united as one body" but "There is one body, one Spirit, etc." Our duty is to preserve the unity we have.
5. So far we've examined the first two of these. There is one body and one Spirit. We share a unity unknown outside of Christianity. We are joined together as Christ's body and enjoy the fellowship made possible by the Holy Spirit.
6. This morning I want us to look at the third of these elements that unite us together as one. We share one hope. **Ephesians 4:4 NAU** - "Just as also you were called in one hope of your calling"
 - A. The world has its eyes fixed upon many hopes. There is the hope of long life and good health. There is the hope of a good marriage and that our children do well. There is the hope of financial security, of maintaining a good name and leaving behind a legacy. There is the hope of freedom and a life free from war and strife.
 - B. For the world hope implies a strong desire but it is in no way a certainty. It is more like "wishful thinking." This isn't the Christian concept of the word.
7. Christian hope is unique and distinct from the worldly concept of hope. This morning I want us to direct our thoughts towards the unique "one home" shared by Christians. We are united in this hope.

I. What is hope?

A. Hope for the Christian is based upon a future expectation

1. It is the one, true, absolute hope. It is a bold confidence. Christian's hope is based on absolute certainties, unfailing promises.
Our hope finds its foundation in eternity – it is the hope of our calling.
This hope is shared by those who are called of God.
2. Paul describes the certainty of our confidence
Romans 8:30 NAU - "these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified."
3. We have the blessed promises of God concerning our future. Much of our redemption is still future but we have absolute confidence and assurance regarding it.
Romans 8:22-23 NAU - " For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. ²³ And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body."
3. In other words, although our salvation has not yet been brought to completion, we rest in confident expectation.

B. This great confidence rests upon our trust in work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit has been given as our pledge or guarantee.

2 Corinthians 1:20-22 NAU - " For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us. ²¹ Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, ²² who also sealed us and gave *us* the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge."

1. This life is full of difficulty. There are many uncertainties. Everything you own could disappear tomorrow. But our hope is not in this world. Our hope is built on the sure foundation of Christ.
2. Your confidence can only be based upon your relationship with Christ
Paul was driven by this confidence
NAS **Philippians 3:12** – "Not that I have already obtained *it*, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus."
3. Do you know Him – not of Him or about Him. Do you know Christ?
Is your hope built on Christ?
My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly trust in Jesus' Name.
4. It is because of our hope we press on. Our hope is in Christ. We are patiently waiting for Him. This is made possible because of our confidence of His love for us and by the love that God has placed in us.
2 Thessalonians 3:5 NAU - " May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ."

- II. We share this one hope, yet this one hope can manifest itself in different degrees
- A. On one hand, it is a part of the Christian experience.
1. We all have this one hope. It is unique to us
 2. Only Christians are united to the body of Christ. Only Christians understand the love of Christ which is beyond comprehension. Paul described this in **Chapter 3 Ephesians 3:17-19 NAU** - "so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God."
 3. Only Christians have this hope. Only Christians have the pledge of the Holy Spirit who indwells us. He is our guarantee.
- B. On the other hand, this hope is not always appreciated equally by all Christians. There are times we have much greater confidence than others. Isn't it true?
1. In Romans 15 Paul is praying that they might have it abundantly **Romans 15:13 NAU** - "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."
 2. Sin crushes confidence and carelessness brings us to lose sight of our blessed hope.
 3. Our hope is increased as we walk with Christ in holiness. It is the essence of our assurance. As we draw near to Christ our assurance is increased. We draw near to Him in His Word and through prayer. We can pray that the God of hope will continue to make our hope abound in Christ.
- III. What is the effect of this abounding hope upon our lives?
- A. Hope creates patience
1. Life is full of difficulty, but hope keeps an eye towards eternity and our reward.
 2. If your hope is in this world and this world is your reward you will be continually disappointed
 3. If your hope is beyond this world you patiently await the consummation. **Romans 8:24-25 NAU** - "For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he *already* sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it."
 4. As we suffer our hope causes us to endure
As we go through the trials of this life our blessed hope comforts us and keeps us pressing on.
Romans 5:1-5 NAU - "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. ³ And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; ⁴ and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; ⁵ and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

- B. Hope creates patient waiting but waiting for the Christian is not a passive inactivity
 “But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.” ὑπομονή - Patience
1. Waiting for the Christian demands watchfulness, caution, great care
 2. Paul describes this in 1 Thes.
1 Thessalonians 5:6-8 NAU - "so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. ⁷ For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. ⁸ But since we are of *the* day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation."
 3. Patient waiting for the Christian demands great self-discipline
 - a. He maintains strict standards for his life – he is pressing towards the goal.
 - b. This is no time for carelessness. This is the time for remaining alert. This isn't the time for spending all our time in the seeking of pleasure. Remember, our reward is yet to come
- C. One of the wonderful experiences of hope for the Christian comes at the hour of their death.
1. We have the glorious expectation of a new body
2 Corinthians 5:1-2 NAU - "For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ² For indeed in this *house* we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven,"
 2. This present life is characterized by “groaning”—we are currently groaning in the physical desiring to be clothed with the heavenly.
Romans 8:23 NAU - "And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body."
 - a. The word for “groan” is from the Greek στενάζω
 It means to groan from grief or sorrow
 The Christian is weary with this life –
 - b. The Christian is weary with his struggle with sin—in his life and in the lives of others.
 - c. The Christian is weary with living in an environment where people hate Christ.
 - d. The Christian is weary with watching in sadness as men and women strive for earthly things.
Philippians 3:19 NAU - "whose end is destruction, whose god is *their* appetite, and *whose* glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things."
 Wasted lives—there's so much more!!!

3. Death means freedom from all that currently grieves us
 - a. The day of our death should be more blessed than the day of our birth – our birth bringing us into corruption, our death to glory. Oh blessed hope!
 - b. This hope should give us confidence in death
 - c. We are leaving this earthly existence for heavenly eternity
 - d. We have our blessed hope of seeing Christ and putting on immortality.

Conclusion:

1. There is one hope, one ultimate confidence, one source of ultimate peace and joy. We've met Christ and have found Him glorious. We share together in the glorious hope we have in Him—our glorious expectation.
 - A. Your blessed hope should cause you to strive to honor the One who's saved your soul

1 John 3:2-3 NAU - "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."
 - B. It should cause you to walk with your head up looking towards Christ.

Colossians 3:1-4 NAU - "Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. ³ For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory."

Hebrews 12:1-2 NAU - "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith"
2. We must live as though this is the greatest thing in our lives – there is nothing greater. Paul wrote: **Romans 5:1-2 NAU** - "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God."

The word "exult" is from the word meaning to make our boast. What do you boast in? Do you glory in your unshakable confidence in Christ? Is He your joy, your peace, your unshakable hope? Are you rejoicing in it? Can other people tell?

*"Let those refuse to sing
That never knew our God;
But children of the heavenly King, but children of the heavenly King,
May speak their joys abroad, may speak their joys abroad.*
3. It is because the gospel is true; it is because God cannot lie; it is because God has purposed to accomplish his work of salvation that the believer can have assurance. The believer can sing with the people of God, "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name."