

Laying Hold of Hope Hebrews 6

Hebrews 6 Introduction

"What oxygen is to the lungs, such is hope to the meaning of life." Emil Brunner, Swiss theologian

"To live without hope is to cease to live." Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Russian author

"We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope." Martin Luther King, Jr.

"To eat bread without hope is still slowly to starve to death." Pearl S. Buck, American author

- Hope wins elections.

Hope (Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms):

- *"A biblical term (Greek *elpis*) referring to the expectation of the believer that God will fulfill promises made in the past."*
- *"Biblical hope is more than a simple wish; it entails certainty based on God's demonstration of faithfulness to people in the history of salvation as recorded in the Scriptures and as experienced by the church."*
- *"Ultimately the Christian's future hope lies in the promise of Christ's return and the anticipation of resurrection from the dead."*

Jesus offers a sure and steadfast hope to all who trust in Him. Lay hold of that hope.

Hebrews 6 Outline

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|------|-------------------------|---------|
| I. | Move toward maturity. | 6:1-8 |
| II. | Do not become sluggish. | 6:9-12 |
| III. | Patiently endure. | 6:13-20 |

I. Move toward maturity. 6:1-8

- **6:1-3** The rabbi wants us to move on to spiritual maturity.
- This means leaving the basics or the ABCs.
- It means learning the Bible's deeper truths.
- It means exercising our faith in obedience.
- It means taking responsibility for ourselves and for the good of others.

- **6:4-6** Becoming a mature Christian means, above all, not straying from faith in Christ.
- There is no true repentance outside of Him.
- To reject Him is to crucify Him again and put Him to an open shame.
- It is to say that His sinless death, at best, was a pointless tragedy.
- At worst, that He deserved it.

- **6:7-8** The faith of mature Christians is visible by its fruit.
- Your faith will be evident to anyone who examines your life.
- The visible evidence is the fruit of God's Spirit working within you.
- Others will rejoice at what they see God doing and acknowledge the blessing they receive.

- Think for a moment: Is that true now?
- Do others rejoice at your faith?
- Is God's grace evident in your life?
- One effect of visible fruit is that it convinces us of a person's authenticity.
- Without it, we lose the assurance that a person really knows the Lord – even if that “person” is yourself.

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II. Do not become sluggish. 6:9-12

- Faith, hope and love are an important New Testament trio.
 - See **1 Corinthians 13:13**
 - See **1 Thessalonians 1:2-3**
- Underline those words “faith,” “hope” and “love” in this section:
 - **Love** appears in **v.10**.
 - **Hope** appears in **v.11**.
 - **Faith** appears in **v.12**.
- **6:9** Despite some severe warnings, the rabbi is still confident in his congregation's faith. He sees visible evidence in the things that accompany salvation.
- **6:10** This is an active group of believers.
- Their service is a labor of love toward the saints – and love for God's people is one of the indicators that God is at work in us.
- See **1 John 3:14**
- And when we love and serve God's people we are actually loving and serving Him – it is “toward His name.”
- And God is not unjust. He will not forget what you do.
- If you have ever served and gotten tired and wondered if anyone cared – or if anyone even noticed – put brackets around verse 10.
- You may have noticed that love takes effort.
 - *“We are not to spare ourselves from labor if we want to do our duty to our neighbors ... We must show great zeal, and put up with many annoyances, and sometimes undergo many hazards. Whoever wants to engage in the tasks of loving must be prepared for a laborious way of life.”* (John Calvin on this verse)
- **6:11-12** Promises, by their nature, often take time before we see their fulfillment.
- We need to be diligent to the very end.
- We need to be patient – which means that we are waiting for God's promises to be fulfilled.
- Others have done this before us, and we should make an effort to imitate them.
- We will next look at Abraham, who provides one example.

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III. Patiently endure. 6:13-20

- When you were in grade school, how long did it take for summer vacation to arrive?
- I thought it took forever and I remember counting it down month by month.

- **6:13-15** Abraham received the promise that God would multiply his descendants.
- He then had to wait a full 25 years before Isaac, the child of the promise, was born.

- Then God tested him by asking him to give up Isaac as an offering.
- When Abraham passed the test, God confirmed the original promise with an oath, which the rabbi reminds us of here.
 - See **Genesis 22:15-18**

- **6:16-18** People can change a lot over time.
- The rabbi reminds us that God's counsel is **immutable** or **unchangeable**.
 - Read **Numbers 23:19**
- So to His immutable nature, He adds an oath – an unchangeable promise.
- He wanted Abraham – and wants us – to have complete and unwavering confidence in Him.

- **6:17-18** If God's word is so certain, why does He need to give an oath at all?
- It's not to bolster His truthfulness, but to encourage our faithfulness.
- He is speaking to our weakness and slowness to believe.
- He does more than invite us, He urges us bluntly to flee to Him for refuge and lay hold of the hope that He offers.

- **6:19-20** Christian hope has long been represented by an anchor.
- Long before the cross was used as a universal symbol for Christianity, early believers widely used three other symbols:
 - The Dove
 - The Fish
 - The Anchor – which the rabbi uses here.

- When Jesus died, the veil or curtain that marked off the holiest place in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.
- God reached down from heaven to do what no priest would ever dream of doing.
 - Read **Matthew 27:45-51**

- That act illustrated the free access we now have to God because of Jesus Christ.
- The temple is no more, but Jesus is in heaven, having passed as a sinless man through the "veil" that separates us from the Father's heavenly throne.
- God invites us to anchor our lives upon Him.

- A ship puts down an anchor, which catches in the rocks at the bottom of the sea, in order to keep it firmly in place.
- Surface waters are never very stable.
- Our hope is **an anchor of the soul** in heaven.
- This anchor holds the ship of our soul in place while we experience the instability of life here on earth.

- John Phillips of Moody Bible Institute put it like this:
 - *“The vessel is safe. Our hope is an anchor cast upward to the inner sanctuary of heaven, where it lays hold of Christ and cannot be moved. Life is the sea, the soul is the ship, hope is the anchor, Christ the hidden rock within the veil.”*

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Hebrews 6 Conclusions

- The “take away points” of this chapter fit nicely into the acronym G.R.A.S.P. – another way to say “lay hold of.”
- So you can use the word GRASP to remember the points.
- And since I’ll probably forget them unless I look back at my notes, you can remember what I say here and remind me of it later.

- G
- R
- A
- S
- P

- **Growth** Stay committed to spiritual growth and keep maturing in your faith.
- **Refuge** Run to Christ for protection. He is your refuge in the storms of life.
- **Acceptance** Christ will never turn anyone away who comes to Him seeking shelter.
- **Stability** Christ gives stability – like an anchor on a rock – in a world of constant change.
- **Patience** is what we learn as we wait for the fulfillment of God’s promises.

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