

THE BLESSED HOPE

JAMIE MCNAB

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Today we live in a very troubled world.

Killing in Syria — threats from Russia — serious divisions among countries in Europe — Brexit — USA ... people talking about a “cold” civil war (for now) ... which could eventually lead to bloodshed.

We live in a snow-flake generation ... where everybody seems to be offended by something ... old certainties such as marriage ... family — even gender — now in flux. Where is it all going?

And if you do look around ... it’s easy to get dismayed — despondent — by the mess our world is in. It’s a natural reaction to have!

But ... unlike most others ... we do have a hope. Hope for a glorious future. At the Feast of Tabernacles we spend some time looking at the World Tomorrow — but the hope isn’t just for the Feast period.

That hope we do need to preserve alive in our minds all of the time.

Titus 2:11-14

11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,

12 teaching us that, *denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,*

13 looking for *the blessed hope* and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

The blessed hope is the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Looking = Constantly ... all of the time

Hope = Expectation (definite ... confident)

This hope is an antidote against this ungodly world.

We often see the quote: “Man can live 40 days without food, 4 days without water, 4 minutes without air, but only 4 seconds without hope”. That is not probably scientifically accurate — but it does highlight the importance of hope. To have a successful life ... we need hope.

As believers ... we have a great hope — the Greatest Hope.

2 Peter 3:11-18

11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, **what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,**

12 **looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God,** because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

13 **Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.**

14 Therefore, beloved, **looking forward to these things,** be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;

15 and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation--as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,

16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked;

18 **but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**

To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

2 Peter 3:12 (Amplified)

12 **While you wait and earnestly long for (expect and hasten) the coming of the day of God ...**

We should be waiting for and earnestly longing for it. It's taking time. Longer than we would want ... but God is being patient.

2 Peter 3:8-9

8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

9 **The Lord is not slack concerning His promise**, as some count slackness, **but is longsuffering toward us**, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. (*Longsuffering ... means that God is very very patient*).

We share in that longsuffering too — hence we need to keep that hope alive.

Philippians 3:17-21

17 Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.

18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things. (*the things that are here and now*)

20 For **our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,**

21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

Verse 20 in the KJV just says, “**look for** the Saviour”. But the Greek is “eagerly and patiently wait for”.

Our heavenly citizenship — our eternal home — we receive our glorified bodies at the glorious appearing!

The Apostle Paul could “see it”.

Romans 8:16-18

16 The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,
17 and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ,
if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

18 **For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.**

What we’re going through today is no comparison to what we will have in the future.

Romans 8:19-25

19 **For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.**

20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;

21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

22 For we know that **the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.**

23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even **we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the sonship, the redemption of our body. (When it will be changed)**

24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?

25 But if we hope for what we do not see, **we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.**

The whole creation eagerly waits too!

The KJV in verses 19, 23 and 25 just says, “waits for” — but the Greek is the same word as in Philippians 3:20 — Apekdechomai — eagerly and patiently wait for.

We’re all waiting... perhaps impatiently? But that’s where the hope comes in — something to eagerly look forward to ... something to keep us going.

Even in this life ... some people have difficult ... boring jobs — they may even hate them — but they keep themselves going by having something to look forward to — hoping. Look forward — perhaps next summer’s vacation — perhaps a leisurely retirement — perhaps hoping to just get to next weekend.

But they have hope — something to look forward to — that keeps them going.

1 Peter 1:3-9

3 **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,**

4 **to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,**

5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,

7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

9 receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.

We have a living hope for an inheritance.

1 Peter 1:4 (NIV)

4 and **into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you**

Using a human illustration: If you had a fabulously wealthy benefactor in this life — guaranteed to leave you his personal inheritance of \$250 million when he died (now aged 99 😊) —you might well “eagerly await” your inheritance? And be patient!

In this life ... even such an inheritance would “fade”. Our future inheritance is glorious and eternal!

Hebrews 2:5-10

5 For **He has not put the world to come**, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.

6 But one testified in a certain place, saying:

"What is man that You are mindful of him,

Or the son of man that You take care of him?

7 **You have made him (mankind) for a little while lower than the angels;**

You have crowned him with glory and honor,

And set him over the works of Your hands.

8 **You have put all things in subjection under his feet."**

For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him.

9 **But we see Jesus**, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death **crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.**

10 **For it was fitting for Him**, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, **in bringing many sons to glory**, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Three worlds — was (up to Noah's flood) ... now (the one that we live in) ... the world to come.

This is our future — our destiny — our inheritance — everything! That's part of our blessed hope ... our eager expectation.

To be CO-HEIRS WITH THE LORD JESUS.

But ... Hebrews Chapter 2 includes a warning:

Hebrews 2:1-3

1 **Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.**

2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward,

3 **how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation**, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,

Don't neglect! There is no second chance!

The men (and women) of God who went before us had this great hope of a glorious future. Let's look at a couple of illustrations.

Hebrews 11:8-10

8 **By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance.** And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

9 **By faith** he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, **dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;**

10 **for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.**

Hebrews 11:10 (NASB)

10 for **he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God**

Living in a tent was not very exciting for Abraham (Ur of the Chaldees — where he came from — had great stone temples ... quite an advanced culture ... schools ... libraries ... expensive homes ... lush gardens ... many conveniences — a decent place to live). Abraham probably lived in a very expensive home.

Abraham saw the vision — his future eternal inheritance in the City of God! That's what motivated Abraham — Moses too:

Hebrews 11:24-26

24 **By faith Moses**, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,

25 **choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,**

26 **esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.**

Abraham and Moses were just sojourners — temporary dwellers. As we are.

They had a great hope ... and eagerly waited for it. Even sacrificed for it. Like the pearl of great price ... it was worth giving up everything for!

But not everyone had this attitude. Equally with good lessons for you and me. Let's look at Esau.

Genesis 25:29-34

29 Now Jacob cooked a stew; and **Esau came in from the field, and he was weary.**

30 And **Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary."** Therefore his name was called Edom.

31 **But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day."**

32 And **Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?"**

33 **Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob.**

34 And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. **Thus Esau despised his birthright.**

Esau had some temporary difficulties. He was so focused on the here and now — his flesh. He didn't value his future inheritance — wasn't "eagerly waiting" for it. He "despised" it.

What's the lesson for us? KEEP THE HOPE ALIVE so that it is real!

Ecclesiastes 2:4-9

4 I made my works great, I built myself houses, and planted myself vineyards.

5 I made myself gardens and orchards, and I planted all kinds of fruit trees in them.

6 I made myself water pools from which to water the growing trees of the grove.

7 I acquired male and female servants, and had servants born in my house.

Yes, I had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all who were in Jerusalem before me.

8 I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the special treasures of kings and of the provinces. I acquired male and female singers, the delights of the sons of men, and musical instruments of all kinds.

9 So I became great and excelled more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me.

Solomon tried almost everything he could in this life.

The end result? He was suicidal!

Ecclesiastes 2:17

17 Therefore I hated life because the work that was done under the sun was distressing to me, **for all is vanity and grasping for the wind.** (*Useless ... waste of time*)

Ecclesiastes 2:18-23

18 Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me.

19 And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will rule over all my labor in which I toiled and in which I have shown myself wise under the sun. This also is vanity.

20 Therefore I turned my heart and despaired of all the labor in which I had toiled under the sun.

21 **For there is a man whose labor is with wisdom, knowledge, and skill; yet he must leave his heritage to a man who has not laboured for it.** This also is vanity and a great evil.

22 **For what has man for all his labor, and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun?**

23 **For all his days are sorrowful, and his work burdensome; even in the night his heart takes no rest.** This also is vanity.

Solomon was depressed — bitter!

He took his eyes off the future — the great hope and expectation of Abraham and Moses.

He focused on the here and now — his wealth ... his building projects ... his wives ... idols.

“What does it profit if a man gains the whole world and suffers the loss of his own soul”.

We’re at risk too if we don’t keep the hope real and alive.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

16 **Therefore we do not lose heart.** Even though our outward man is perishing, (decaying and wasting away) **yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.**

17 **For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,**

18 **while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.** For the things which are seen are temporary, (subject to change) **but the things which are not seen are eternal.**

Don’t lose heart. Remember the hope of our inheritance — eternal glory!

It was on Paul’s mind as he came to the end of his life.

2 Timothy 4:6-8

6 **For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.**

7 **I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.**

8 **Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me (award me) on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.**

At Jesus' appearing — that's when we inherit our hope.

Matthew 6:9-13

9 **"In this manner, therefore, pray:**

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.

10 **Your kingdom come.**

Your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.

11 **Give us this day our daily bread.**

12 And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.

13 And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Our daily prayer should be — "Your Kingdom come"... Jesus' return — the blessed hope. The quicker the better ... and we should be eagerly waiting for it.

Let's return to:

Titus 2:11-13

11 **For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,**

12 teaching us that, **denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,**

13 **looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,**

Blessed — glorious ... our inheritance ... forever more! That should be on our minds all of the time.

The world today is crazy. It is easy to observe it all and get despondent. But keep our eyes on the goal — THE BLESSED HOPE — AND GLORIOUS APPEARING OF JESUS CHRIST!

GOD SPEED THOSE DAYS!