

Hebrews Chapter 6

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[0 : 00] Wonderful hymn, My Hope is Built on Nothing Less. We're going to read now from the scriptures and if you'd like to find in your Bible Hebrews chapter 3, sorry not Hebrews chapter 3, Hebrews chapter 6, don't worry about that, it's just like normal, there are always going to be mistakes as well.

And the eagle eyed of you might have spotted that up here on the readings board, it's back to front. But that's because the camera that we're using is a selfie camera so it's opposite way around. But it is Hebrews chapter 6. Reading from verse 13. When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, saying, I will surely bless you and give you many descendants.

And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised. People swear by someone greater than themselves. And the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged.

[1 : 29] We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and steadfast. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where our forerunner Jesus has entered on our behalf.

He has become a high priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. About three quarters of a mile out to sea from Whitby Harbour is Whitby Rock Boy.

You can easily see it when you're on the harbour wall or on the cliff. It's painted bright yellow. Day and night, that boy remains in place, warning all shipping of the dangerous rocks that lie to the south of it.

It is exposed to all the assaults of the North Sea, the winter storms, the strong tides and currents, the high winds and the huge swell that sometimes comes up.

Yet it's never moved from its place. How does the boy cope with such massive changes out at sea? Why isn't it driven ashore or dragged away?

[2 : 39] Unseen to us, as we watch from the shore, is an anchor, weighing about two to three tons. The boy is united to that anchor by a strong chain.

Without the anchor, the boy would be at the mercy of the sea and the elements would undoubtedly be swept away and lost. In Hebrews chapter 6, verse 19, where we read a few moments ago, the writer reminds his Christian readers that we have an anchor also.

Like us, those to whom the writer wrote in the first century, we're living in a time of great uncertainty. A time of, a time where they felt buffeted by the circumstances.

Sorry, I'm laughing a little bit because there's a Holly Davidson motorbike out the front and making a loose noise. Now it's gone. You may have heard that on the recording. These believers were facing great challenges in their day.

Precious. They feared that perhaps they might be lost also. That they might be swept away. That they might be overcome. And for that reason, the writer of the Hebrews sends them this letter.

[3 : 57] Yet because of this anchor to which he refers, these believers have great encouragement. That's why he wrote there.

God, who does not lie. Those of us who have fled to take courage of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged.

Whatever unsettling changes may come our way or their way, they would not be moved from their secure position. We're living in unsettling days. Time of momentous change.

The like of which has now been seen in our generation and for many generations past. UK, like the rest of the world, has had to make changes.

Decisions. In an effort to control the spread of the coronavirus. For some of us, these changes are huge. They have effects upon our daily life.

[4 : 56] Children are prevented from going to school now. Those who work in hospitality. In Whitby and in other places too. Will have to lay off staff. And maybe even lose their job.

Some premises will have closed. Perhaps they might never reopen. Those of you who have health conditions or over 70 have been advised to avoid company.

To isolate yourselves. And for some of us, that may feel a lot like being in house arrest. What makes matters even more difficult and troubling is there are no toilet rolls to be found in any of the shops.

What are we to do in these unstable, difficult, confusing, anxious times? Well, we need not be anxious.

We need not be concerned. We need not be fearful. If we are those who have put our faith and trust in the living God. Every believer has an anchor.

[5 : 58] An anchor which keeps us secure. Steadies us in the stormy days and weeks and months ahead. What is this anchor? Well, the writer tells us, doesn't he?

We have this anchor. Sorry. We have this hope, verse 19, as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. Therefore, this hope is the anchor.

Hope is the thing that we most need. And yet, for the majority of people, it's the thing that they most lack. The hope that the writer to Hebrews is talking about is the Christian hope.

It's a hope unlike any other hope in the world. When most people use the word hope, they use it in a sort of light way.

A little bit like a wishful thought. A dream. A desire. A hope which is not based on anything certain or secure. We say things to one another like this.

[7 : 02] Oh, I hope it doesn't rain tomorrow. Or I hope you feel better soon. It's well-intentioned. It's a way in which we show that we care and are concerned for people.

But it really isn't built upon anything secure. There's no guarantee that this hope will actually come to fruition. Will actually happen.

And so around about today, and you speak with people in conversations, they'll say things like this. Or like, I hope I don't catch coronavirus. Or I hope you don't get coronavirus. Or I hope that we can get back to normal by the summer.

Christian hope, which is an anchor, is much more than a wish or a dream or even a deep longing. It's something absolutely certain and secure.

That's why we're told we have this hope as an anchor for the soul. Firm and secure. Yet like Whitby Rock Boy, it's an anchor that's hidden from our sight.

[8 : 07] The anchor for the boy is hidden under the sea, on the seabed. Our anchor is hidden. We can't see it with the natural eye. But what hope does this anchor refer to?

What hope is it that anchors us during life's storms, that anchors us under unsettling circumstances? Surely the hope to which the writer is talking of here, and the hope which is all the way through the scriptures and the New Testament, is the hope of eternal life.

The hope of heaven. The hope of being in the presence of God. Of seeing his face. Of being with him in everlasting joy and peace. Free from all the sorrows, the tears, the struggles, the difficulties of this world.

That's why it's called an anchor for the soul. Each of us has an undying soul. It's unseen, but it's very, very real. It will outlast our mind.

It will outlast our body. They must fade and fail and die. But we ourselves, our soul, our spirit, that will not die.

[9 : 20] The soul is the true self. One day it must leave this present world and enter the next.

A Christian's hope is that we shall be where Jesus is. So we have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where our forerunner Jesus has entered on our behalf.

Jesus is there in heaven now. He has passed through the curtain. He has passed from this life to the next. And he is with the Father at his right hand.

Hebrews reminds us on more than one occasion. And he is the one who makes our anchor secure. For he himself is the anchor, really. The hope of what Jesus has done for us.

The assurance that by his life and death and resurrection, he has accomplished on our behalf, eternal life with God. He is God the Son, who at his birth became fully man, while still remaining fully God.

[10 : 33] He came into our world so that he could, so that we could come to God. He came to us so that we could come to God.

So that we could enjoy the Father's love. And Jesus died and rose again from the dead. Dying as our substitute, in our place for our sins.

He offered his own life as that atoning sacrifice for the sins that we committed against God. So that in him, we might have full forgiveness. The language that the Hebrew writer uses is language that his readers would have understood.

They would have been Jewish people who were converted to follow Jesus. He's referring to that temple in Jerusalem where the Holy of Holies, the most special place, was behind a very thick curtain.

No one was allowed to go there except the high priest. And he could only go once a year on the day of the Passover with the blood of the atoning sacrifice so that he could obtain forgiveness for God's people.

[11 : 42] Jesus is the ultimate high priest who secured complete forgiveness by his blood, by offering himself as a sinless sacrifice.

The forgiveness that Jesus gives us, the forgiveness that we enjoy from God, brings us peace with God. To know that he is our God and our Father, our Friend and our Saviour.

And it's not just forgiveness for a day or a week or for a month or even for a lifetime, but for all time. Later on in Hebrews in chapter 10, the writer writes this, we have all been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus once for all.

And because he lives forever, because he's been raised from the dead and is alive today, we have confidence in him that we too shall live and never die. As the writer again, later in chapter 7, reminds the believers of this wonderful truth.

Therefore, Jesus is able to save completely those who come to God through him because he always lives to intercede for them. Our hope is the promise of life eternal.

[12 : 59] Whatever happens in this world, whatever happens to our bodies, whatever the future may bring, we have something which is certain that cannot be taken away or removed or diminished or undermined.

We have an anchor, a hope, a hope in who Jesus is, in the accomplishments that he gained through his life and death and his resurrection.

These are historic facts, not myths or legends or hopes or dreams. They are completed achievements, accomplishments. That's why from the cross he was able to declare, it is finished. I've done the job. I've completed the way of salvation, the way of eternal life for all for whom I died. The writer tells us that God has set this hope before us in verse 18.

God made a promise, an oath, a declaration. God did this so that by two unchangeable things in which it's impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged.

[14 : 11] God has set before us in the sense that it's something future, something to look forward to. It's ahead of us. We can be sure of that. But also Jesus, also the writer tells us it's set before us.

God offers it to us. God, as a word, displays it before us and says, here it is. Here is the hope. Here is the promise. And we must take hold of it.

Notice he speaks of those who have fled to take hold of it. Those who've run away, run towards this wonderful hope, run to take hold of. Men and women are running here and there all over the place. We see them in the supermarkets fighting and arguing with one another. They are pushing and shoving. They're doing everything to get what they think they need. But people aren't pushing and shoving and fleeing to grab hold of hope.

Not real hope. Not Jesus' hope. I wonder if you've done that. See, this assurance of a hope as an anchor is for those who've taken hold of that hope.

[15 : 15] Those who fled. Fled to God. Fled to Jesus. Have you done that? Remember when I was talking about the Whitby Rock boy? The anchor that held the boy in place was connected to the boy

by a strong chain.

That chain is like faith. Faith is what secures us to Jesus. Faith is what attaches us to Jesus. We're not attached to Jesus through being good people or living in England or being baptized or going to church or any of those things.

Faith is the chain. Faith is the only thing that can secure us to Him. To take hold of Him by faith is an action of our will, of our mind.

It's not just a wish or a nice thought. It's not just believing certain things about Him. It is something we must do for ourselves. If you want to have this anchor, if you want to have this hope, then you also must put your faith in Jesus Christ, the anchor.

How do we do that? Well, by faith, we turn to Jesus. We give up trusting in ourselves to save ourselves or to give us eternal life or to be the way to heaven.

[16:34] We repent of our sins, those sins that have separated us from God in the first place, those sins that have spoiled our world. Our world. We turn to Him and place our trust and our hope in Him entirely as our Saviour and our Lord.

Will you do that? Have you done that? Do you know that anchor? Perhaps it's something that you've never done before.

Let me urge you, encourage you. In these days of great storm with winds and waves battering, perhaps even you, let me urge you to take hold of the anchor which is hope, certain and secure in Jesus Christ.

I'm going to pray now and I'm going to give opportunity for those of you who want to, to pray a very simple prayer too. Taking hold of Jesus as your hope.

Father God, we thank you that in a world of hopelessness, in a world of empty hope and vain hope, God, where people are trusting and hoping and wishing and dreaming that this whole coronavirus would go away.

[18:00] We thank you that you've given us a real hope, an eternal hope, a strong hope, a certain and secure and firm hope. That hope, Lord, of being with you.

That hope and assurance that this world will pass but Lord, we shall live forever with you. We thank you that that hope that you give to us is grounded rooted in Jesus Christ, the Son of God who lived and died for us.

Thank you that he's gone to heaven now. He's there as it were in the holiest place in the presence of God and because he's gone there as our forerunner, as it were, the one who leads the way. We who follow him shall be there also one day.

There's no doubt of that. Pray, Lord, for those here who are listening and watching that they might have that same confidence and hope and that hope would dispel their fears and anxieties for this present time and give them great encouragement to know, Lord, that you will never leave nor forsake and that it isn't just in heaven that we have this hope.

That's hope realised but that hope of heaven gives us the confidence to know that we can talk and share and speak and enjoy your presence even now.

[19:24] For those who've never known that hope but want to know that hope, Lord, I ask that you give them that faith that would unite them to Jesus, their anchor.

And if you want to do that, then please pray along in your own heart, sincerely to God, in words like these. Oh Lord, my God, I need you.

I feel myself to be adrift, lost, struggling. And I pray, Lord God, that you would come and take hold of my life.

That you would give me that secure hope in Jesus, your Son. Thank you that he came to rescue and to make me safe. Thank you that he came and suffered and died and laid down his life so that I could be forgiven for my many sins and I ask you to forgive me for them.

Thank you that he is alive, risen from the dead, the evidence, the proof that he really is the person he said he was, God the Son.

[20:40] I ask that that resurrection life would be my life and that Jesus would become the very real part of me and I one with him.

Lord, take my life and in all the days ahead keep me close to yourself. Help me to grow in faith. Help me, oh Lord, to enjoy.

the confidence of hope in Jesus. And Father, I want to pray for each one of us while we're apart as a fellowship that you would keep us safe, keep us loving one another, keep us caring for one

another and as we seek to be a witness for you in this town, we pray again, oh Lord, that the people of Whitby may seek you and find in you real hope for we ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. There's one more link and that is the hymn, Will Your Anchor Hold in the Storms of Life? And we have an anchor that keeps us old.

So if you want to sing along with that hymn or just listen to it, the words I'm sure would be a great help to you. Please keep looking to the website, that's whitbyec.com and there will be more news there this past semester download as well if they helped you while you're on your own.

[22 : 10] And you can contact us through the website or leave a message on the church phone number as well. That's checked regularly. May the Lord bless you and keep you and may you know his presence day by day.

Until we see one another soon, I hope. God bless.