



CANYON HILLS

COMMUNITY CHURCH

Series: Ephesians

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Anchored Hope

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Good morning, everyone! My name is Koby. It's always a privilege to be able to share God's Word with you in this place. While those offering buckets are going around, I'm going to ask you to multitask and get your Bibles open to Ephesians, chapter 1. Today's message is all about hope. We all hope for something. Hope is what anchors us. Hope is what moves us. Anything we do is driven by hope.

If you are the kind of person who hopes for a good retirement, that hope will drive you to work hard and be diligent now to be able to secure that future. If you're the kind of person whose hope is in people liking you and being popular, that hope will drive you to behave in a certain way now in order to secure that kind of affection.

If you are like I once was, a young home-schooled man hoping to one day get married, that hope will drive you to do crazy things like buy the 18-passenger van early and start cruising fabric stores looking for eligible young ladies. That's not where my wife and I met, by the way. It was much cooler than that. It was a Christian theater group.

The point is that hope drives us. Every movie ever produced, every song ever written, and every life is centered around this idea of hope, and this would even include those who wear the label *hopeless*, wouldn't it? To be hopeless isn't to be without hope; it's to be failed by that in which your hope has been placed.

The question for us this morning is not whether or not we hope. The question is whether or not the anchor of our hope is sufficient to hold us and carry us through the ups and downs of life. So, I'll ask you, as we begin, and I'll ask you again at the end...*To what is your hope anchored?* As we go to the Word of God, we are going to see that Paul recognizes our need for truly anchored hope.

See, we've all been given an unshakable, immovable, and immeasurable hope. The question is whether or not we would take hold of that hope today or whether we'll continue to settle for the

cheap imitations this world has to offer. With that, I'm going to ask you all to get to your feet. Ephesians, chapter 1. We'll read this together, beginning in verse 15.

"For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all."

Father, we are grateful today for your Word and we are thankful today for the hope we have in you. I pray, Lord, that you would use this time to expose in our hearts where we have misplaced our hope and call us to re-anchor our souls on you. I just pray that today would make a difference. We love you and we give you this time. In Christ's name, amen.

Paul begins by recounting to the Ephesian church how he regularly prays for them and gives thanks for them. He says his prayer is that the eyes of their hearts would be enlightened so they would know what the hope is to which the Lord has called them. His prayer is that they would grow in the knowledge of God, specifically that they would grow in their knowledge of hope.

Why is this? Well, the book of Ephesians, as we're going to see, is incredibly practical for our daily lives. Ephesians calls us to live a godly life, but Paul knows true change isn't simply a matter of behavioral modification. No, he knows true change begins in the heart. It begins with thinking rightly.

Paul knows this to be true, so his desire for the church is that they would grow in their knowledge so their lives would be fully affected and conformed to the will of God. Paul's desire for the Ephesian church (and, I believe, God's desire for us here today) would be that they would know the hope to which we have been called and that our hope would be anchored in these truths.

1. *We are the inheritance of God.* This is the first element of truly anchored hope. Verse 18: **"...having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints..."** For the first 17 verses of this chapter, Paul is showing us where our hope lies. We have been blessed in an incredible way through Jesus Christ that every spiritual blessing has been given us.

Yet here in verse 18, he flips the language and points out that not only is our hope anchored in the truth that we have an inheritance, our hope is also anchored in the truth that we are in fact the

inheritance of almighty God. Think about that for a moment. You are the inheritance of God Almighty.

Jessica Ruble, you are the inheritance of God. I just scared her half to death. It's true of all of us. Jack, you are the inheritance of God. Every single one of us has been valued that highly. This speaks so highly to the value God has placed on each and every one of our lives. See, the problem is you and I are not inherently valuable in and of ourselves. In fact, we as sinners are uniquely gifted.

We are universally Olympianly talented at one thing, and that is offending our holy God and living as if he doesn't exist. This God is all-sufficient. He's all-powerful. He needs nothing. He created all things, and he is not obligated to us at all. He's not obligated to save us, serve us, or keep us, and yet, in his loving mercy and grace, he has determined that we be this valuable, that we would be his inheritance.

Not only that, but this hope we have is secure. Ephesians 1:11 describes God as the one "**...who works all things according to the counsel of his will...**" All things conform to the will of God. Every atom in the universe submits to his design, which means our hope and our value is secure. It means there is nothing that can change it when the Lord determines you are his inheritance. It is done. It is finished.

Therefore, as Christians, our hope is not fragile, because it is rooted and anchored in the reality that we will spend our eternity in the presence of our loving God and this loving God will love us, not as the sinners that we are but as the treasure of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Church, if only we would live like this was true.

Imagine the unshakable hope that could be ours if we lived with our sights set on the affection of God as our source of hope and satisfaction rather than getting tunnel vision on the temporary and finite. I am so guilty of trading in regularly my eternal hope for the cheap imitation this world seems to be peddling. How many of us catch ourselves pursuing things that ultimately, we can't control, ultimately don't matter, and will inevitably fail us?

How many of us take our hope and place it in the hands of another person? This person could be our spouse. It could be our boss. It could be our friends. "If only I was happily married... If only I was popular... If only my boss liked me, then I would be happy." Our friends and family were meant to be a great source of joy in our lives, but they were never meant to anchor the hope of our souls.

Why? Because they're sinners. They're sinners who will ultimately fail us and betray us. Not only that, we will never live up to their impossible standards, nor is it fair to put that expectation on anybody. No, our friends and family are meant to be a blessing. They can never stand up to the weight of being the anchor of our hope.

What about our careers? How many of us grow up dreaming to be doctors, dentists, policemen, firemen, dancers, or, if you're super-nerdy, maybe even a pastor? Jobs are a good thing unless

your ultimate hope is tied to them. The reality is our profession is meant to be fulfilling, but every career is one scandal, reorganization, or financial crisis from being terminated. Our jobs were never meant to be the anchor for our hope.

What about retirement? Financial security? Why is it that in the two years following the financial collapse of 2008 there were 10,000 people who were so deeply affected by those events that they took their own lives? May I suggest that it's because their hope was directly tied to their wealth? Money is a good thing. Being smart and planning ahead is a good, godly, and even biblical principle. In and of itself, this is not a bad thing unless it becomes the anchor for our hope.

It does not matter how much money you amass in this life. You are one financial crisis or medical emergency from losing everything. Financial security is a blessing, for sure, but it cannot be the anchor for our hope. True anchored hope is in the truth that you and I are so loved and valued by God that he has declared us to be his inheritance.

No matter what happens on this earth, no matter the blessing or the trial, the prosperity or the poverty, the physical ecstasy or the debilitating pain, nothing can take away our hope when it is anchored in the value that God Almighty has placed on our lives. So, for any who would feel worthless, inadequate, or unloved, know that you are treasured at the highest level. This is the hope to which we have been called. This is the hope to which we are to anchor our lives. You are the inheritance of God.

2. The full measure of God's power is working in us and through us. God's immeasurable power has been directed toward us. Get this. There is no power we need that God has not already supplied. Verse 18-19: **"...having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe..."**

Here's what this verse does not mean. We constantly abuse verses like this. We've taken things like Philippians 4:13, **"I can do all things through [Christ] who strengthens me,"** as some sort of blank check from God, meaning, "I can step out and do the impossible." This isn't talking about the impossible things God calls and equips us for; this is just the impossible things like, "I would like to be able to grow a beard." Philippians 4:13 has nothing to do with that. It is not what this verse is talking about, unfortunately.

This verse is saying the very power of God, his great power, will carry us every day of our lives until we receive our ultimate inheritance and glory. This means anything God has called us to do, he will grant us the power to do it. Anything he has called us to be, he will grant us the power to be. It has already been given to us to accomplish these things. We lack nothing. This power encompasses both the power of God to save us and the power of God to sustain us every day of our lives.

I just want you to notice here, Paul doesn't pray that the Ephesian church would receive this power. No, his prayer is that they would receive a divine awareness of the power that has already

been given to them. This is good news. This means if God has placed a call on your life to be a godly wife and mother, then you can be confident that God has given you everything you need to approach that task with the grace and patience that is necessary to fulfill that call.

This means if God has called you to be a missionary on the front lines for the gospel, then you can be confident that he has already given you the power to be bold and courageous as you pursue that end. This means if you've been called to be a light in the factories at Boeing, then God has already given you everything you need to be courageous and self-controlled as you burn brightly in a place that needs the light of Christ.

The power of God will bring to completion the work he has begun in each and every one of us. He will ultimately save us. In between now and the day when we stand with him in glory, he will work in us and through us to accomplish all he has called us to accomplish. If there was ever any doubt as to whether or not our God can and will do the things he says he will do, Paul says, "Look to Jesus."

That's the whole point of verses 20-23. He says, "If you doubt, look to Jesus. The same power is at work in you. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead and seated him on high, at the right hand of power beside God, reigning over all of creation. This is the power that is at work in you today."

For any of you here today who feel helpless or overwhelmed, here is your hope. The Lord has directed the full measure of his power toward you, which is more than you will ever need. It is in this truth that we anchor our hope. Church, if only we would live like this were true we would stop placing our hope in our own abilities, talents, and wisdom. We would stop living as if we were the ones responsible to make this whole thing work.

See, the problem for us is not that we don't have enough of the power of God. The problem for us is that most of us go about our daily lives ignoring this truth completely. It just leads to frustration and defeat. It's like trying to row across Lake Washington in a windstorm with a perfectly gassed-up engine turned off beside us. It's stupid, but it's how we live our lives.

Not only that, but for many of us, we live our lives so wrapped up in our own agendas and desires that we completely miss out on the call and power of God. Here's the thing. Ephesians 1 is not a blank check from God for us to just go about accomplishing whatever it is we feel like accomplishing. He has created us to do good works for his glory. I think many of us don't recognize the power of God in our lives because we aren't even working on the things he has asked us to work on.

I mean, if we would just stop for a moment, look at our lives, and ask the questions, "Do we make time for the priorities of God? Do we disciple our families? Do we serve in his church? Do we live generously with our finances? Do we go out on that mission trip, or are we the ones who never have the time...?"

"My job is just too demanding. My kid's sports are on the weekends. How could I possibly do that?" I want you all to look at me for a moment. Nobody ever naturally feels like they have the time or the resources for the things of God. Nobody. The godly person is the one who makes the time and sacrifices the resources for the things of God.

Could it be that we are so consumed with the way we look, for that bigger house, car, or boat, or that next promotion, or that bigger 401k that we totally miss out on God's true desire for our lives? Could it be that we are destined for a gut-level, low grade hopelessness in this life because we are pursuing happiness and hope in places that were never meant to bear that expectation?

If we do not make time or sacrifice for the things of God in this life, then our hope has been misplaced. We're missing it. God has not called us and equipped us so we can pursue our own health, wealth, and happiness. This life we've been given is not about us. I want you to look for a moment at Ephesians 1:4. We haven't been in it for a few weeks, but I want us to see what this says.

"...even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world..." Why? That we could accomplish everything our selfish hearts desire? No. **"...that we should be holy and blameless before him."** He didn't save us so we could go about building our own kingdoms and pursuing our own dreams. He saved us so we would be holy and blameless before him.

So, a question for all of us today is...*Are we pursuing the things of God in the promised power of God, or are we just going about our lives, hoping the power of God will help us achieve our own purposes?* It's an honest question that demands an honest answer.

Our hope is anchored in the truths that we are the inheritance of God and the full measure of God's power is working in us and through us and will carry us from this day forward into glory, but we forfeit that hope when we are so consumed with doing our own thing that we find ourselves ignoring the very call and desire of God.

I want to call us all today to honestly stop and evaluate where we've placed our hope. See, for anyone sitting in this room right now who would wear the name *Christian*, we are very quick to acknowledge that our hope should come from these places, but if we're honest with ourselves (and I will put myself at the front of that line), we will admit that our hope often wanders. We will admit that we are constantly in need of re-anchoring our hope in the place it should be anchored.

Let's just talk a moment about the symptoms of misplaced hope, some ways to hopefully help you identify whether or not your hope has been misplaced. For the person who has entrusted their hope and happiness to something other than these anchors that Ephesians 1 provides, here are some emotions I think commonly rise to the surface. Now, emotions are not necessarily bad things, but they are liars, and oftentimes God will use these emotions as kind of a check engine light. It'll blink in front of us and tell us something is wrong under the hood.

A couple of the common ones, at least my sin of choice, is *anxiety*. This is the emotion that most commonly plays out. It's the thing the Lord uses to shine the spotlight into my misplaced hope. See, I am a control freak. I like to have a plan and a process for everything. The moment my plan is threatened, *boom*. Anxiety sets in. Now I've learned, time and time again, that when I see anxiety, when I feel that low-grade anxiety just existing in my heart, the Lord is calling me to rethink where my hope has been placed.

Maybe for you, maybe you're not like me. Maybe you're not an anxious person, but maybe *discontentment* is your thing. If you're discontent, then you are my son, Declan. He's 6 years old, and the sad thing about a sinful heart is we learn to misplace our hope at a very young age, don't we? I want to just share with you a small snapshot of one of the more frustrating experiences I've had as a father.

Declan and I used to have this kind of tradition, this thing we would go do. When he was good or if he did something he was supposed to do, for kind of a father-son date, we would go to the dollar store and he could pick out whatever he wanted. Because I'm a benevolent and generous father, we went to the dollar store.

He'd get so excited about what's right in front of him. We walk into the store, and it's like one of those *The Lion King* moments, right? "Anything the fluorescent light touches can be yours. One thing." So, he runs off into the toy aisle and he starts digging through what will be his next treasure. Inevitably, he comes out with like two or three things. "Dad, can I have all of these things?"

"No, son. That would be \$3. We're only spending \$1." So, he starts asking questions. "Dad, if you were me, what would you buy?" We kind of go through this process till he finally nails it down to what this one treasure is. We get up to the front of the store and he is so excited. We pay for it and he can't wait.

We get to the car. He makes me open the toy for him before he even gets in the back seat because he wants to play with on the way home. Yet then, inevitably, what happens, which is why we do not do this anymore... By the time we get to the stoplight outside the parking lot, he's rethinking his decision. "Dad, did I get the right toy? I think maybe I was supposed to get the other toy."

"No, son. We already paid for it. That's the one." By the time we get to the entrance to our neighborhood, he's saying, "Dad, I know this isn't the right toy. If I just box this up, if I package it up, can we take it back to the dollar store? Maybe they'll let me exchange it."

"No, son. This is the dollar store, not Nordstrom. All sales are final." By the time we pull in our driveway, he's disgusted with the toy in front of him. He wants nothing to do with it. He is so sure that he should have gotten the other toy. He won't play with it. He won't look at it. His attitude is sour, and as a father, that drives me through the wall.

Yet, as I was thinking about that this week, I thought, "How often is that the way we act toward God?" We get so fixated on the thing we think we deserve, the thing we should have, or the thing we don't have that we totally miss out on all the blessings that have already been given us. I'm not even talking about the material blessings of just living in America and living in this kind of affluence.

I'm talking about the eternal blessings, the things we have been talking about, that we are the inheritance of God Almighty, and that he has made his power available to us each and every day to work in us and through us and to carry us to glory. We miss that completely because we are so focused on the other things we think we, as a 6-year-old boy, should have. The minute that discontentment sets in, that's a warning light. Our hope has been misplaced.

Maybe it's not anxiety. Maybe it's not discontentment. Maybe it's *anger*. Are you an angry person? Do you find yourself prone to outbursts? As you evaluate yourself, do you find yourself oftentimes justifying in your head why you're angry or why this is somebody else's fault? If so, your hope has been misplaced.

This is the parent at the end of the night who is secretly embarrassed at the way they've spoken to their children, realizing in that moment that our hope was not set on Christ; our hope was set on our children perfectly meeting our unfair expectations.

On the flipside, let's look at the symptoms of truly anchored hope. First, *peace*. Where the person with misplaced hope is anxious, the person whose hope is truly anchored is at peace. This is the person who has lost their job and somehow isn't stressed out about it. This is the person who receives the scary diagnosis and yet is still joyful and is encouraging the people coming to visit them.

Why is this? Their hope is anchored in the knowledge that they live in the temporary and their circumstances do not affect or change the love and the value their God has placed on them. They do not lose sight of the eternity that has been promised.

Secondly, *contentment*. Where the person with misplaced hope is discontent, the person whose hope is truly anchored is always content. This person is driven not by what they stand to gain or what this world can offer them in this life but by a desire to honor the Lord and be obedient to him. They recognize that God will provide them with everything they need.

Philippians 4:19 is one of my favorite verses. "**And my God will supply every need of yours...**" This means if I don't have it, that means I don't have it, because if I needed it, God would have given it. Ultimately, their joy is rooted in their desire to spend eternity with Christ, and this end cannot be stolen from them. Everything else is secondary; therefore, they are content.

Thirdly, *kindness*. Where the person with misplaced hope is often angry, the person whose hope is truly anchored is kind. When people sin against them or fail to meet their expectations, rather

than getting angry about it, they fall back on the power the Lord has already given them to show kindness, even in the face of hardship.

Which one are you? If you were to honestly evaluate, is your life anchored and marked by peace, contentment, and kindness, or are you most often described by the other words? Is your life marked by the pursuit of holiness and godliness or the pursuit of temporary things that ultimately don't matter?

If you find that your hope has been misplaced, then it's time to hit the reset button. It's time to re-anchor your life to the hope of Ephesians 1. You are the inheritance of God. He loves you, he values you, and he has secured you. Nothing can take that away. The full measure of God's power is working in you and through you to accomplish all he has called you to do and to become all he has called you to be.

If we would believe this, if we would live like this was true, if we would take our eyes for a moment off the temporary and set them back on the eternal, our hope would be unshakable. Our hope would be immovably anchored. So, the question for all of us as we sit here today is... *To what will you anchor your hope?* Let's pray.

Father, we thank you for your Word. We thank you for your truth, and Lord, we thank you for the hope that is only made available through your Son, Jesus. God, I pray for every person in this room who is a follower of you, that you would remind us of where our hope belongs. If any of us have wandered or set our affections on anything other than you, I pray, God, that you would expose that and that we would humbly repent of it and focus our hearts back on the immeasurable blessings we have been given from you.

Father, for the ones who have walked in this room and have anchored their lives to you and are walking in that good place, may this just be an encouragement and a blessing to them as they go. Lord, may we be humble enough to recognize that this is something we will be dealing with every day of our lives until we meet you in glory. Father, when we wander, may we turn back to you.

God, for anyone in this room who does not yet know you as their Lord and Savior, I pray that today would be the day in which they anchor their hope in you and find true hope. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

If you're here today and you do not have a relationship with Jesus, then you have to know that this hope is not for you. This hope is only for those who have put their faith in Christ. The good news is the only thing standing between you and stepping into that hope today is you. There are people down front here who would love the opportunity to talk with you and share with you what this hope looks like, so please don't put it off.

Don't walk out of here without giving them a chance to talk to you. If you're here today and you just need someone to pray with you, they would love the opportunity to do that as well. Have a great rest of your week. We'll see you back here next Sunday.