

Series: G-R-O-W-I-N-G in Christ
Message Title: The Obedience of Hope
Date: Sunday, March 26, 2017
Scripture: 1 Peter 1:13-17
Speaker: David H. McKinley
Location: Warren Baptist Church, Augusta, GA

Introduction

If I encouraged you to make a list of “The Things I Need Most in My Life,” what would be on your list? Food? Coffee? Clothes? Sleep/rest? Wireless connectivity? Significance? Friendship? Love? Sex? Work? What about hope?

Have you ever considered how vital and valuable hope is to your life and existence?

“Hope is oxygen to the soul.”

“There is no medicine like hope, no incentive so great, and no tonic so powerful as expectation of something tomorrow.”

—Orison Swett Marden

“Lord save us all from old age and broken health and a hope tree that has lost the faculty of putting out blossoms.” —Mark Twain

“We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.”

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

Peter, apostle and disciple, would agree and offer hope as both an anchor for daily life and a motivation for daily obedience. Peter is known as *the apostle of hope*. Why?

“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with His blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen Him, you love Him. Though you do not now see Him, you believe in Him

and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls... Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.' And if you call on Him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile" (1 Peter 1:1-9, 13-17 ESV).

This passage is filled with the strength and sustenance of hope. Is hope just a feeling, a wish, or a nice idea that optimists talk about? No! Hope is so much more. Hope is a biblical principle and a strong spiritual force.

Growing in Christ leads to obedience to Christ.

Last week, we looked at the obedience of faith. There should be a difference in how we live when we have believed in Jesus—not just as Savior, but also as Lord. Authentic faith always leads to active obedience.

Today, we are looking at *The Obedience of Hope* = "A future hope that produces present focus and resolve".

When you are planning a big meal at your favorite restaurant, it is easy to adjust lunch in anticipation of dinner. So it is that our hope in Christ becomes a vital part of our pursuit of something better, something later.

"If we have any genuine Christian hope, it will have its effect in helping us, as children of obedience, to do and to accept all our Father's will... Just as strong hope will produce obedience, so true obedience will nourish and strengthen hope. A little sin will go much further towards obscuring and shatter a Christian man's hope than a great sorrow will... No Christian man's hope will last through sin. Therefore obedience and hope must co-exist and feed on another."

—Alexander Maclaren

I want to examine this text today in light of the obedience of hope.



1. The Obedience of Hope Fuels Passion in the Pursuit of Holiness

Read 1 Peter 1:13-17—obedient children. We are living in the time where we are righteous, but have not yet put on whole righteousness. We are counted holy, but not yet fully holy. We are to be “like Father, like son.”

We are living between the *now* and the *not yet*—between two worlds. “Set your hope” is a future focus—release the former passions. Better yet, exchange for a new passion—holiness! A future focus produces a present focus and resolve.

Sadly, our sinful actions [disobedience] are habits that we have created and given into since birth.

In the game of golf, I formed bad habits with my golf swing—with repetition. Through lessons, the golf instructor made adjustments with my swing that were uncomfortable, weird. However, using what I learned and with practice and repetition, my swing gradually became natural and powerful.

“New creation”. Toddlers learn how to walk stepping cautiously or ambitiously, stumbling, stammering and making mistakes, but all the while learning to walk. Likewise, the important thing for us is that we just keep working.

“Holiness is not a series of do’s and don’ts, but conformity to the character of God and obedience to the will of God.”

—Jerry Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness*

To know God and be known is to seek likeness to His character and desire for His character in your life.

“We can say just as accurately that the pursuit of holiness is a joint venture between God and the Christian. No one can attain any degree of holiness without God working in his life, but just as surely, no one will attain it without effort on his own part. God has made it possible for us to walk in holiness. But He has given to us the responsibility of doing the walking; He does not do that for us.”

—Jerry Bridges

Hope (in the life of a Christian) breeds, fuels and pursues holiness.

See 1 Timothy 4:7. Train yourself for godliness. This takes work and repetition.

See 1 Corinthians 6:18-20. "Flee from sexual immorality..."

Bottom line: Holiness is obedience to God's commands, but it is not drudgery; it is joy!

See 1 Peter 1:13. "set your hope fully" Give your life over to the wait and work necessary. You cannot microwave holiness. Holiness is not behavior modification; it is capturing our thought life and intentions—a hope with a heart fully set upon delights in discipline and delay that will bring joy and satisfaction.

2. The Obedience of Hope Empowers Persistence in the Face of Opposition

One of the secondary themes of 1 Peter is that of facing resistance and oppression because of our faith yet enduring through hope.

See 1 Peter 1:6-7; 3:14-17; 4:19. To follow Christ and live out obedience to His teaching is to face oppression and opposition in direct attack on our faith.

“The holiness described in the Bible calls us to do more than separate ourselves from the moral pollution of the world around us. It calls us to obey God even when that obedience is costly, when it requires deliberate sacrifice and even exposure to danger.” —Jerry Bridges

Offence vs. Defense. You can be great at defense, but unless you can do something positive on the offensive end, you will never win.

We do not experience joy when we are simply holding off the temptation that so closely ensnares us to so many sins. We experience joy when we begin to pursue and live for the glory of God in our lives.

It is amazing what happens when we get on mission—when we are burdened for those far from God, when we begin to communicate the gospel, when we love and serve others, and give generously. All of the sudden, we

look up after living our lives for others and realize that thing that used to “eat” at us is not there anymore.

3. The Obedience of Hope Embraces Purpose in the Place of Pain

Peter does a great job in this little book describing and alluding to the struggles of life for all of us.

See 1 Peter 1:6-9—“testing” with a proven outcome. This has to do with things unseen and yet, unknown.

How many times do we struggle with the agitation, frustration, limitation and devastation that trials and injuries bring to us and wish we just knew why? God moves us to something much deeper than a sentimental or romanticized future.

When we experience pain and face hardship in life, we have two common responses: anger and anxiety. See 1 Peter 5:6-10.

There is much we cannot know and understand in the spirit world, but we

experience it in this world. It is yet to be seen, known and understood.

Listen to these words of promise and protection:

Restore. Have you faced losses? Are you standing in brokenness? Has a devastating wind of adversity come across your life, family, business? “He restores my soul” (Psalm 23:3a ESV).

Confirm. This is the opposite of doubt, suspicion and fear. “...perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:18a ESV).

Strengthen. In pain, we feel weakness and vulnerability. We are down and wonder if we can ever get up. But in God’s promise, our hope is strength, not defeat.

Establish—you! I love the fact that this is a personal promise to each and every believer as we continue in the obedience of hope.

All four of these words reflect the active work of God in our lives, through our hardships and always, by His grace for our good.

4. The Obedience of Hope Envisions Glory in the Light of Eternity

Look one more time at 1 Peter 1:8-9. There is so much we are yet to see; we have only seen but a small part. Our world is marked by suffering, shame and tragedy, but in the midst of these, God brings promise of glory and victory.

“Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.” —Corrie ten Boom

In the call to obedience, we set our hope fully on the revelation of Jesus Christ. We will see Jesus and then all of the struggles, losses, injuries and unresolved questions will be past.

If you look at the sun and gaze on it for a few minutes—its beauty, fire, brightness—and then suddenly turn your head and try to see other things, you will find they have a glare on them. They are in the shadows because you have spent so much time focusing on the light.

It is when we are so enthralled with heaven, so amazed at who He is and who we will become, that then we are willing to give up petty sins, sacrifice, and live unto God.

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1-2 ESV).

“If God can bring blessing from the broken body of Jesus and glory from something as obscene as the cross, He can bring blessing from my problems and my pain and my unanswered prayer. I just have to trust Him.”
—Anne Graham Lotz

Here is the confidence and assurance of the obedience of my hope: Christ is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. *So Lord, let Your kingdom come, let Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*