

Christ: The Hope of the World

“Christ, the Hope of the World” – by Carl Mazzola

Presented to the Christian Nuclear Fellowship; Anaheim, CA; Wednesday, June 11, 2008

I Introduction

- All people need hope; especially in a fallen and dangerous world filled with despair and disappointment. All people naturally seek hope in their lives.
- But where can we find a sustaining hope that will carry us through even the most difficult of circumstances (i.e., loss of loved one; terminal cancer; unemployment; bankruptcy)? Is it something we can find by casually seeking it? Once we find it, can we purchase it?
- We soon find out that the world offers us many choices, but they all turn out to empty. We see that there are many counterfeits out there. **Nothing Satan offers us will satisfy our need for sustaining hope.**
- If we earnestly seek out the source of hope we can find it. We learn that the only way our hope need can be fulfilled is to know Jesus Christ and live your life under His loving authority (*Philippians 4:11-13*).

II Definition of hope

- **Verb intransitive:** To wish for something with expectation of its fulfillment.
- **Verb transitive:** (1) To look forward to with confidence or expectation: *We hope that our children will be successful*; (2) To expect and desire.
- **Noun:** (1) A wish or desire accompanied by confident expectation of its fulfillment; (2) **The theological virtue defined as the desire and search for a future good, difficult but not impossible to attain with God's help.**

This morning, I will be discussing the theological virtue of hope which is inextricably tied to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. In our meditation, we will clearly see that hope will be elusive unless you partner with God; preferably early in life (*Ecclesiastes 12:1*).

III How long we can live without hope

- We can live for **weeks** without food (7 weeks is the world record);
- We can live for **days** without water (18 days is the world record);
- We can live for **minutes** without air (17 minutes is the world record with oxygen boost);

However, we can't live a second without hope.

IV What the world has based its hope on for at least 6,000 years (I John 2:16)

Christ: The Hope of the World

- **Power:** Political (Federal, State, local government); military; industry (climb Corporate ladder); illegal (Mafia, Jim Jones cult, David Koresh cult); religious (world-driven churches).

Christ: The Hope of the World

- **Money:** Seeking “easy street” through get-rich-quick schemes (e.g., pyramids; Ponzi schemes; lotteries) stock market frenzies (e.g., day trading; hostile takeovers, market cornering [1987]); working too many hours; making money your God by loving it; being buried with your riches, as the Pharaoh’s were.
- **Sexual fulfillment:** Sexual gratification outside of God’s safe harbor boundaries to satisfy physical pleasure and lust; leads to STDs, AIDS, unwanted pregnancies, adultery, divorce.
- **Drug Usage:** Usage of hallucinogenic drugs to find a higher spiritual reality (e.g., Timothy Leary’s League of **Spiritual Discovery**).
- **Self-sufficiency:** The Satanic-driven myth that there is a possibility that you can be in control of all forces that affect your life. This has birthed concepts of utopia, socialism, Arianism, Scientology, and other empty philosophies.

The common flaw in all of the world-based approaches to satisfy our hope need is that these are **all directed at glorifying oneself**. Jesus told us that the greater will become lesser and the lesser will be exalted (see *Isaiah 57:15*). **The key is humility and servanthood.**

These approaches to obtain the hope we all desire are all based on lies as hope can never be obtained from any of these (*Psalms 73*). They may provide us temporary pleasure and may be sustainable for brief periods of time, but they will not satisfy the thirst of our spirit for truth & righteousness.

V The calamities the world faces

One lie that we have to overcome is that we can become self-sufficient.

One way that God cures us of our self-sufficiency delusion is by allowing calamities to come into our lives.

- For those who do not yet know him, these calamities are the result of God pouring out his wrath on a disobedient people; allowing the consequences of our sinful behavior to **not** be intercepted by His Grace (*John 3:36*).
- For those who know Jesus, T. W. Hunt, author of “The Mind of Christ” indicated that the only reason that God allows difficulties into the life of a Christian is to bring us closer to Him (*Romans 5:3-5; James 1:2-4*).

Here are some recent instances of calamities that have been occurring for at least 6,000 years:

- **Natural phenomena:** 12/26/04 tsunami that killed almost 300,000 people; recent cyclone that killed more than 100,000 in Myanmar; recent earthquake in China that killed almost 100,000; tornado and hurricane deaths (Katrina) in the United States; possibility of meteoric strike annihilation. **When will next natural phenomena calamity strike?**
- **Disease and pestilence:** Epidemic of AIDS; ebola viruses; risk of bird flu; SARS, biological warfare (anthrax, smallpox). **Are we only years or even months away from a rogue disease that will infect the world?**

Christ: The Hope of the World

- **Famine:** Millions of people each day do not have enough to eat; WHO statistics on starvation; Joseph in Genesis. **Is world famine only a global climate change (El Nino-La Nina) away?**
- **Drought:** Threat to any agrarian society. Without sufficient rainfall, a green thumb will turn into a brown thumb. **Where will the next drought occur and how many people will be affected?**

An honest question can be asked: Why does God allow these? To show us that we are insufficient without Him (*II Corinthians 12:9*) and that He is our only real hope in this fallen and lost world. **If we store up our treasures on earthly solutions, we may come away empty-handed.**

We can now clearly conclude that when we see what the world has to offer us, we realize the offer is empty and unfulfilling.

VI **Why the world's approach is empty and unfulfilling**

Vanity and vexation: Solomon had wealth, wives, and wisdom, yet he concluded that all that he sought was vanity and vexation and nothing under the sun gave him true satisfaction (*Ecclesiastes 2:18-26; Ecclesiastes 3:18-22; Ecclesiastes 4:13-16*).

No inner peace: In my first 23 years of life, I tried to find peace in many places (e.g., sexual gratification, money, drugs, pleasure seeking) and came up empty. Suicide was a real option because life was meaningless, purposeless, and full of vanity and vexation.

VII **Why Christ is the only hope**

We have absolutely no hope from any other source in heaven or on earth.

Christ is our only hope in this world. He is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent and immutable (*Hebrews 13:8*). He spoke the Universe into existence and His resources have not diminished.

Without Christ in us, we have no good or well- grounded hope of glory. We have no stability, we have no sustainability.

But having Christ within us, ruling in our hearts and establishing His government over our **whole being**, provides us a hope that sets us free from the bondage of sin. Christ wants a full surrender so He can fully work with an empty vessel.

Christ in us, actually present, living, and reigning in us, is the only bedrock and only well-grounded hope a real Christian has (*Psalms 40:1-3*).

Christ: The Hope of the World

Psalm 39:7 "And now, LORD, what wait I for? my hope is in Thee."

Psalm 78:7 "That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments"

Psalm 147:11 "The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy."

John 5:44 "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?"

John 14:6 "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."

John 15:6 "Without Me you can do nothing" (Allegory of the Vine).

John 17:3 "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."

I John 5:12 "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

VIII What Jesus Christ is to each of us

JESUS CHRIST IS OUR PEACE

For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; (*Ephesians 2:14*).

JESUS CHRIST IS THE PRINCE OF PEACE

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. (*Isaiah 9:6*).

JESUS CHRIST IS THE LORD OF PEACE

Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all. (*// Thessalonians 3:16*).

JESUS CHRIST GUIDES INTO THE WAY OF PEACE

To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. (*Luke 1:79*).

PEACE THROUGH THE ATONEMENT OF JESUS CHRIST

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed (*Isaiah 53:5*).

Jesus Christ: The only hope of the world; don't leave earth without Him.

Christ: The Hope of the World

IX How Christians also bring hope to others

- Jesus Christ can multiply His hope for this lost and dying world by using the spiritual gifts of Christians who become His hands and feet to promote hope.
- Christians are exhorted by the Lord to become SALT and LIGHT (**Matthew 5:14-16**) and to let that light shine throughout the world.
- Christians, as motivated by God's love and compassion, take the lead in extending humanitarian assistance to the suffering people of this world.
- On a per capita basis, Christians give far more than any such group, and through this self-sacrifice and service, powered by the Holy Spirit, more hope is given to a hope-starved world.

X Closing

We must avoid the counterfeits that Satan puts before us as a means of hope and put all of our energy into our relationship with Jesus Christ (**Romans 12:1-2**), who is the only One who can only satisfy our need for sustainable hope.

“My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly lean on Jesus’ name

On Christ the solid rock I stand
All other ground is sinking sand
All other ground is sinking sand”