



HG212: Our Hope Is Found In: **Our Souls Anchor**

Hebrews 6:13-20

Home Group Study Notes

10 January 2021 - Revd Paul A. Carr



PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN
ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION
BEFORE THE MEETING!

*Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group
with you, along with any previous notes and other
resources which might be helpful for your discussions.*



Welcome (10 mins) *Ice Breaker*

At the beginning of this new year, share your hopes, fears and ambitions for you personally and, if you have any, for Emmanuel for 2021.



Looking Upwards (10 mins) *Worship*

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs of Praise; listen to a Worship CD, as well as using Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers ...



HG212: Our Hope Is Found In: Our Souls Anchor

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Home Group Sermon

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Introduction. Our world has faced unprecedented levels of disruption these past ten months and it looks as though it will continue for some time to come now that we are in Lockdown #3. But as we seek to live our lives as best we can in these times of major disruption, and with many uncertainties still ahead, how can we experience spiritual hope? Where can we find the resources we need to face the future? If ever there was a time to be reminded about what gives us hope and sustains our faith it is now, which is why our new home group series: 'Our Hope Is Found In ...' which looks at some of the major themes of the Christian faith, is a timely one. We begin with our text for 2021 from Hebrews 6:19: "*We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.*" And we'll look at the context of that verse this morning where the writer tells us how Abraham clung to God's promise and, similarly, you might find the strength to hold onto promises you think God has personally made to you. If we understand the promise God made to Abraham, this will give us an anchor for our lives today.

1. God Made A Promise vs 13-14. God made this promise to Abraham: "*Surely I will bless you and give you many descendants.*" God was looking for someone to fulfill his plans and purposes to redeem humanity and He chose Abraham to be that person. Initially, God promised Abraham that all the families of the earth would be blessed in him (Genesis 12:2-3). Later, God reaffirmed his promise, telling Abraham his descendants would be as numerous as the stars (Genesis 15:5). After years without any children, Isaac was born - hardly a multitude. When an adult, God spoke to Abraham again, Genesis 22:17-18: "*I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.*"

God promised Abraham that he would have many descendants and he would bless all nations. Years later, Jesus descended from Abraham as a fulfillment of God's plan to bless the nations through his offspring. And God's promise to Abraham is the promise of a King with a forever kingdom, a saviour who would bless people of every nation. The one who would make new all things. This promise to Abraham is the promise to us. .

2. God's Promise Is Worth Waiting For vs15. "*And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised.*" It's good to be reminded how Abraham waited for the promise of God to unfold in his life. We are called to patiently endure just like he did. We hope in God as we wait for the fulfillment of his promise. As we wait, Abraham becomes a teacher for us on how to do it well (or not!).

a. *Waiting by faith.* Every single person lives by faith in something – even those who claim to be an atheist or agnostic. The issue is never whether people have faith, it's what they put their faith in. Many people in the independent, self-sufficient and comfortable society we live only come to the point of questioning what their own personal safety net might be when they are already free-falling in the midst of one of life's traumas.

Abraham waited by faith. Genesis 15:6: "*And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.*" Abraham heard the promise of God and believed God would do it. He thought the God of Scripture would keep his word. The Christian life is like this: it begins with faith, continues in faith and ends in faith. "*For we live by faith, not by sight*" (2 Corinthians 5:7). The Christian life is one of trust in the God whom, though he has given us evidence of himself, his word, and his gospel, we cannot see (we'll look at those three a little later).

b. *Waiting without faith.* Abraham wasn't perfect and he waited with lapses of faith. There were times he buckled in fear before foreign powers and kings. At other times he took matters into his own hands. His most significant lapse came when he made his servant, Hagar, pregnant - in an attempt to get God's promise going. God had promised him descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky, after all, and he and Sarah had not had any children. As they aged, Abraham's trust in God's promise waned, and he began to think he needed to jumpstart God's promise. It was a lapse of faith for the icon of faith. The Christian life will, inevitably, include moments where our faith is not as strong as it ought, or even used, to be. But have you ever thought that God won't save you from the storms in your life until you give up on looking for the solution yourself?

c. *Waiting a long time.* Abraham waited for a long time. When he and Sarah finally had a son, Abraham was 100 years old – 25 years after the initial promise. They named their son Isaac, and Isaac didn't have children until he was 62 years old, which means Abraham had to wait for 87 years from the time of the promise to the birth of his first grandchild. Another 15 years ticked by before he died. Abraham waited and endured for the promise God had made to him. The Christian life can be a life of waiting, and this sometimes includes long waits for the fulfillment of God's promises.

d. *Waiting while others prosper.* Abraham waited while others prospered. When Isaac was full grown, God tested Abraham's faith on Mount Moriah (Genesis 22). After passing God's test, God reaffirmed his promise to Abraham, but at that moment, all Abraham had was Isaac. Then, immediately after hearing God's promise afresh, a messenger came to Abraham and brought news that Nahor, Abraham's long-lost brother, had twelve sons! The timing could not have been more perfect. Right at the moment of the promise, Abraham had to witness someone else who didn't have to wait. The world will say to every Christian: You can have it now! You don't have to wait! The promise is here! But the Christian life often requires waiting while others prosper.

3. God's Promise Is Guaranteed vs16-17.

Society have always had ways in which people make meaningful agreements. Oaths, handshakes, contracts, witnesses, signatures, court systems all are designed to create a way to make promises and commitments as well as a way to honour that commitment.

You can't buy a car or take out a mortgage without signing a contract. An oath accompanies your promise to pay.

Here we read that God also made an oath to confirm his promise. He wanted to show more convincingly that his promise would never change, that his plan would unfold. God made the promise to us, but how did he confirm it? 3 ways:

a. By His Word. God confirmed his promise with the oath of his word. Jesus said, *"Truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished"* (Matthew 5:18).

I like the way Eugene Peterson interprets 2 Timothy 3:16 in ***The Message***: *Every part of scripture is God breathed and useful one way or another – showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God’s way. Through the Word we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us.*

b. By the Cross. God confirmed his promise with the gospel message. The blood of his only Son was a high price to pay for a Saviour. If Jesus came once and paid such a dear price to secure a people, we can rest assured he will keep his promise and come again as the Lord of the nations. The resurrection account is one of the most easily verifiable facts of human history, making the gospel message itself a strong way God has confirmed his oath towards us.

c. By His Spirit. God confirmed his promise with the indwelling presence of his Spirit in every believer. When someone becomes a Christian, they are born again, born of the Spirit (John 3). Paul described this deposit of the Holy Spirit as God putting *"His Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come"* (2 Corinthians 1:22, 5:5).

4. We Should Hold Fast To God's Promise vs18. God's promise is guaranteed, and two unchangeable things confirm it. His oath (the word, the cross, and the Spirit), but also his nature. He cannot lie. Some things God cannot do, and one of them is to violate his nature; therefore, he cannot lie. God's promise will come to pass.

In light of God's oath and nature, we should, be bold and confident about His future for us. In the face of trials, sicknesses, temptations, and personal weaknesses, life is not easy for anyone. Hardships abound. But the believer has a reason for confidence and hope. We know this life is not all there is. We know God is making all things new. We know he is uniting all things to himself (Ephesians 1:10). We know he will bring his kingdom, his new heavens and earth, to his people.

5. God's Promise Should Anchor Our Lives Today vs19-20. Though only used as an emblem for hope once in Scripture, anchors were common figures of hope in the ancient world.

a. Anchors are helpful only when unseen. An anchor does not serve to steady a boat when on the deck. But when cast into the sea, beyond what the passengers can see, the anchor steadies the ship. Our promise and our Lord, though unseen, are in the perfect place to steady our lives today. In fact, it is only because Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father, we have such a steady influence.

b. Anchors keep us from drifting. It is not toughness or willpower that makes a Christian endure and last. Instead, it is a deep trust in the promise of God and hope in his future kingdom which enable us to steadfastly follow Jesus.

Rock climbers protect themselves on a climb with ropes (unless you go bouldering – climbing without ropes), but those ropes need anchor points to provide protection from a fall. And when a climber finds a secure anchor point, I would imagine it changes the way they feel about climbing! In continuing their climb, they exercise their faith in the ability of that anchor to hold fast in the event of a fall and this gives them the assurance and confidence to move onwards and upwards!

c. Anchors normally go down, but our anchor goes up. For this reason, it says *"It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf."* Jesus has entered the throne room of heaven. He went as our forerunner, the first to go, so that we could follow. When the writer says we have an "anchor of the soul" it means that the anchor is firmly anchored in heaven.

Abraham was an anchored man who endured because he believed God's promise for his life. He was able to put his hope on all God said would occur, and believers today strive for the same faith and fortitude. Fears and worries and stresses and pains are sure to come. You don't need me to tell you that life is filled with many problems, but perhaps they should point us upwards, into God's throne room, connecting us to God's promises and His kingdom.

d. Melchizedek. After all the hope and anchors and faithfulness and Jesus, a guy named Melchizedek is compared to Christ, an eternal Royal Priest. Who is he? Despite being one of the least mentioned and most obscure figures in the Old Testament, Melchizedek, the king-priest of Salem, is foundational for understanding how Jesus occupies the offices of king and priest - a dual honour that finds little to no precedent among Israelite kings. You can read more about this in Hebrews 7. Vs26 says: *"Such a high priest truly meets our need - one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens."*

We have an anchor for our souls in these challenging times. Our anchor is sure and steadfast. It is God's promise to Abraham and to us. Hebrews 6:19: *"We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure."*

A Prayer

Lord Jesus, Hope overcomes. Hope heals. Hope restores. Hope inspires. Hope conquers. Hope frees. Hope is your gift to the world. Thank you. *Amen.*

Emmanuel Church Text for 2021

*"We have this hope as an anchor for the soul,
firm and secure."*

Hebrews 6:19



Looking Upwards (40 mins)

Bible Study

Read the text for this study, and any references given, then answer the following questions. You may find it helpful to listen to the sermon and/or read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss some, or all, your answers with your Home Group and, remember, these questions are only a guide to start your discussions.

1. Have you ever felt as though God made a promise to you, specifically? How did you wait (see section 2): by faith, without faith, a long time or whilst others prospered?

2. This passage shares that the practice of giving an oath puts an end to all arguments. Have you experienced a time when you could not determine the truth in a situation? Have any of you served as a juror? What was your experience?

3. What ways do the promises of God give you the most encouragement (see section 3): Word, Cross or Spirit?

4. Are you going through a situation in which you need to be encouraged? Would you be willing to share this situation? How can we support one another while waiting patiently for God to answer our prayers?

5. Where and how are your hopes anchored firm and secure? How does this anchor hold you secure during the storms of your lives? Are you currently facing a storm?

6. Jesus is a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. What does it mean to have a high priest forever? You may want to read Hebrews 7 to answer this question.



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



Looking Inwards (15 mins) *Caring For Each Other*

Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an opportunity to share, not something you have to do, however, 'It's the sharing that enables the caring!') for:

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?



Looking Outwards (15 mins) *Concern For Others*

Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours or church, which you would like to share (please be sure not pass on anything that is confidential or which you think the person concerned would not wish to be shared) for:

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?

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