

Empire Church of the Brethren

## Sunday Service Sermons

**15 January 2023**

Our Hope is in Christ

In what do you hope?

Right now we might be hoping that the rain slows down enough to dry things out some.

We needed rain and we got rain.

I can't remember this much this quickly, how about any of you?

When this valley was being settled it flooded the Valley ten miles wide and one hundred miles long.

They used river paddle boats to pick people up from their roofs.

Then we built flood control and irrigation dams.

It is a good thing they were dangerously low when this came.

Do we always hope for the best?

Do all human beings have a hope deep inside of them?

That hope can be replaced with despair.

And life becomes difficult and often meaningless.

But you and I have a hope not built on worldly expectations.

We have this hope.

"We have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people, the faith and love that springs from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel that has come to you."

*Col. 1:4-6.*

This is the hope that gives life.

The key word for Christian living is hope.

And with that hope the conviction of the truth of God's love for his people.

The truth that God exists and his Son is our hope and salvation.

The year 2023 can be a good year if we live into this hope and truth.

The claim that Christ is the only hope is a bold claim because it eliminates all other claims to hope.

It is a timeless claim because it has been believed for centuries.

It is also a very serious claim because to believe it is to accept certain responsibilities.

Christ is the only hope for salvation.

A mine shaft collapsed and a rescue team was immediately organized to dig out the entombed men before their air supply was exhausted.

As the rescue team approached the doomed miners, they thought they heard a tapping on the rocks.

As they paused to listen, in Morse code came the question repeatedly: "Is there any hope? Is there any hope?"

People living under the weight of sin may ask, "Is there any hope for salvation?"

Christ is the only hope for a salvation desperately needed.

The Bible says that without Christ people have no hope and are without God in the world.

They are spiritually lost, condemned already.

Not tomorrow, not next year, not at age twenty-one, not at death, but now, already

condemned.

People are spiritually trapped in sin.

“The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, who can know it?” *Jeremiah. 17:9*

Out of the human heart proceeds all types of sin.

The nature of the human heart is to sin and rebel against God and spiritual authority.

People are trapped in the agonizing results of sin for the wages of sin is death.

People are trapped in human weakness and despair.

The cry of the apostle Paul was, “Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

Christ is the only hope!

Christ is the only hope for salvation divinely provided.

In answer to a seeking heart, “What must I do to be saved?” is the reply, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved”. *Acts 16:30*

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Savior.

There is much confusion at this point.

Salvation is not in a parent’s faith, in religious principles, in a church, in culture, in outward symbols, or in a good life.

Salvation is in a person, Jesus “The Christ”.

Jesus Christ is God’s provision, God’s deed, and God’s gift.

He is the living Savior and Lord.

Christ is the only hope for salvation personally received.

What are we to do?

How are we to respond?

Upon hearing the hope of the gospel, which is Christ, we are to believe in him.

We are to acknowledge the truth of Christ; accept the facts of his life, death, and resurrection, then trust ourselves to him in personal surrender.

*John 1:12* says, “But as many as received him, to them he gave power to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name.”

Several years ago an air force sergeant moved to Sherman, Texas.

He and his family were saved before they were transferred to another base.

He said, “We came to Sherman so poor; we are leaving so rich.”

Christ is the only hope!

Christ is the only hope for life’s needs.

Paul spoke of the hope of the gospel that has come to you and is bearing fruit and growing among you.

Christ touches lives and transforms them.

He gives power to live now, not just for heaven.

Many testify to what Christ is doing in their lives today.

J. B. Phillip’s book “God Our Contemporary” has a chapter titled “The Inadequacy of Humanism”, in which he described secular humanism as a bleak and cruel creed.

It denies the Christian faith and the need for any moral or spiritual authority outside humanity.

Humanism restricts life to this earth; it denies God and says there is no life beyond this one.

So it offers no hope to the severely handicapped, no power to guide and strengthen someone defeated by emotional conflicts.

It has nothing to offer for the crises of life.

Secular humanism has nothing to offer when in one week's time a pastor might minister to families who lost children, a person whose loved one died, a family who lost a child or a wife who lost her husband.

To such things secular humanism has nothing to say, it is cold and silent.

But Christ is present for all who trust and believe in him.

*Matthew 11:28* says, "Come unto me, all you who labor and are heavy laden".

*John 10:10* says, "I am come that they might have life; and have it more abundantly."

*Philippians 4:13* states, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Christ is the only hope.

Christ is the holy hope for eternity.

The hope of Christ is an eternal certainty by pointing beyond life now to life forever.

*Colossians 1:5* speaks of "The hope stored up for you in heaven".

The hope of Christ is the hope of his return.

He personally promised it, the angels divinely announced it and Paul the apostle victoriously described it.

Jesus personally, powerfully, and suddenly coming again is a certain hope.

The hope of Christ is the hope of the resurrection.

Christ has abolished death, and resurrection is promised in *1 Corinthians 15*.

Death is not the end for the believer because Christ is our hope.

The hope of Christ is the hope of deliverance from judgment.

*Hebrews 9:27* states, "People are destined to die once and after that to face judgment".

Christ bore our judgment on the cross.

Though judgment is certain, in Christ we need not fear for we have passed from death to life.

Christ is the only hope.

What an audacious yet wonderful claim.

Do we believe it?

Do we proclaim it, share it, and testify to it by the way we live our lives?

We should, we must and we will when we are His and surrendered to him in all we do, offering all we have to further His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.