



HOPE — BEYOND — THIS LIFE

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in Christ, we are of all men
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— 1 CORINTHIANS 15:19 (KJV)

WRITTEN BY ELDER GARY MARTIN

AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE FOR A
FAITHFUL AND SOLD-OUT LIFE

A MESSAGE OF HOPE AND
VICTORY IN JESUS CHRIST

TO THE CHURCH



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Introduction

The Christian faith is not built on comfort alone, and it is not sustained by this present world. The true child of God does not live only for what can be seen, touched, counted, purchased, or enjoyed in this life. Our hope reaches beyond the grave. Our faith reaches beyond the funeral. Our salvation reaches beyond time into eternity.

The apostle Paul makes a bold statement in 1 Corinthians 15:19. He does not say that hope in Christ is a small thing. He says that if our hope is limited to this life only, then we are “of all men most miserable.” Why? Because the life of a believer includes sacrifice, holiness, separation, obedience, trials, persecution, denial of self, and sometimes suffering that the world does not understand. If there is no resurrection, no coming glory, no eternal kingdom, and no reward beyond this age, then the Christian life would indeed be tragic. But Paul is not speaking as a doubter. He is speaking as a man who knows that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead, and because He lives, the

believer's future is secure.

From a Oneness Pentecostal perspective, this hope is not vague religious optimism. It is rooted in the one true God revealed in Jesus Christ, made effective in the new birth, and sealed by the power of the Holy Ghost. The hope of the believer is not merely that we die and float away somewhere. Our hope is resurrection, transformation, glorification, reunion with the Lord, and eternal dwelling in the presence of God.

This message is for the sold-out child of God who has counted the cost and still says, "Jesus is worth it." This message is for the saint who has walked through tears but kept on praying. This message is for the believer who has buried loved ones but still clings to the promise that death does not get the final word. This message is for the church that must remember that we are pilgrims and strangers here. This world is not our home.

The Reality of Paul's Statement

Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 15 are not isolated. He is arguing for the resurrection of the dead. Some in Corinth were saying there is no resurrection. Paul answers that if there is no resurrection, then Christ is

not risen, preaching is vain, faith is vain, believers are still in sin, and those who have died in Christ are lost. But then he declares the glorious truth of the gospel:

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.” — 1 Corinthians 15:20 (KJV)

The resurrection of Jesus Christ changes everything. It proves that death is not final. It proves that the grave can be emptied. It proves that the righteous have a future. It proves that sacrifice is not wasted. It proves that the gospel is not merely for present blessing but for eternal victory.

Paul continues:

“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” — 1 Corinthians 15:21-22 (KJV)

Adam brought death; Christ brought resurrection. Adam introduced the curse; Christ introduced the cure. Adam opened the door to mortality; Jesus opened the door to immortality. And that is why the believer can suffer without despair, weep without hopelessness, and bury loved ones without surrendering to the darkness of unbelief.

The Hope of the Believer Is Not Limited to This World

The world measures life by wealth, influence, pleasure, and achievement. But the kingdom of God measures life by faithfulness, holiness, obedience, and eternal reward. There are people who live as if this present life is all there is. They build, they accumulate, they boast, they pursue pleasure, and they try to make earth into heaven. But all earthly things are temporary.

Jesus said:

**“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” —
Matthew 6:19-21 (KJV)**

That is the difference between the church and the world. The world says, “Gather all you can, keep all you get, and enjoy what you can while you can.” The church says, “I am laying up treasure where time cannot touch it.” The world says, “Live for now.” The church says, “I am living for the world to come.”

Paul said it another way:

**“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.” —
Philippians 3:20-21 (KJV)**

The believer’s citizenship is in heaven. We are not just waiting to escape hell; we are waiting to see our King. We are waiting for transformation. We are waiting for the redemption of the body. We are waiting for the full manifestation of the salvation that was begun in us.

The Hope of the Church Is The Resurrection

One of the strongest truths in the gospel is that resurrection is not a side doctrine. It is central. If Christ did not rise, the church is preaching fantasy. If Christ did rise, then every promise He made stands firm.

Paul writes:

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he

was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:” — 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 (KJV)

Christian hope begins at Calvary, passes through the tomb, and triumphs in resurrection. Jesus did not merely die as a martyr. He conquered death. He did not merely inspire followers. He purchased a people. He did not merely leave us with memories. He gave us life eternal.

And because He rose, the saints will rise.

“But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.” — 1 Corinthians 15:23 (KJV)

That means the grave is not the end for the child of God. The cemetery is not the final chapter. The body sown in corruption shall be raised in incorruption. The body sown in weakness shall be raised in power. The body sown in dishonor shall be raised in glory.

Paul says:

“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” — 1 Corinthians 15:51-58 (KJV)

This is not wishful thinking. This is apostolic certainty. This is the hope of the church.

The Hope of the Believer Is Anchored in the Lord Jesus Christ

A Oneness Pentecostal understanding of this hope begins with the revelation that Jesus is the fullness of God revealed in flesh. The hope beyond this life is not grounded in a distant deity who is disconnected from human suffering. Our hope is rooted in the God who came near, walked among us, died for us, rose again

for us, and now intercedes for us.

Paul declares:

“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” — Colossians 2:9 (KJV)

That means everything God is, is revealed in Jesus Christ. The hope we preach is not a religious philosophy. It is the living Christ. It is the victorious Christ. It is the crucified, buried, risen, and exalted Christ. And because He is who He is, His promises are sure.

Jesus said:

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” — John 14:1-3 (KJV)

Notice the personal language of hope: “I go,” “I prepare,” “I will come again,” “I will receive you unto myself.” Our hope is not merely a place. Our hope is a Person. Heaven is wonderful, but the greatest glory of heaven is that Jesus will be there.

The Hope Beyond This Life Gives Meaning to Present Suffering

The apostle Paul understood suffering. He knew what it was to be imprisoned, beaten, shipwrecked, rejected, misunderstood, hungry, and afflicted. Yet he never concluded that the Christian life was pointless. Instead, he wrote:

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” — Romans 8:18 (KJV)

That is perspective. That is spiritual vision. That is what hope does. Hope does not deny suffering; it interprets suffering. Hope does not pretend pain is not real; it declares that pain is not permanent. Hope does not deny the tears of today; it proclaims the glory of tomorrow.

Paul continues:

“For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.” — Romans 8:24-25 (KJV)

There is a patience connected to hope. The believer

learns to wait. The believer learns to endure. The believer learns to keep serving God even when the answer has not arrived yet. Hope teaches the saint how to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.

And Romans 8 does not stop there. It lifts our eyes beyond present weakness:

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

That glory is not a mere emotional high. It is not a passing revival moment. It is the unveiled weight of eternity. It is the fullness of redemption. It is resurrection life. It is the manifestation of the sons of God.

The Hope Beyond This Life Produces Holiness Now

A genuine hope in eternity always affects how we live in the present. If a person truly believes that Christ is coming, that resurrection is real, that judgment is coming, and that holiness matters, then that person will not continue living carelessly.

John wrote:

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it

doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” — 1 John 3:2-3 (KJV)

Hope purifies. Hope separates. Hope makes a man or woman clean in heart, clean in conduct, clean in speech, clean in motive, clean in devotion. The child of God who truly expects to see Jesus lives differently.

That is why Titus says:

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” — Titus 2:11-14 (KJV)

The hope beyond this life is not an excuse for laziness. It is motivation for holiness. It is not an invitation to spiritual passivity. It is a call to be

steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

The Hope Beyond This Life Is
Why the Apostles Endured

The apostles did not preach a message of convenience. They preached a message worth dying for. Why did they endure hardship? Why did they keep preaching? Why did they refuse to deny the name of Jesus? Because they knew this life was not all there is.

Paul said:

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” — 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 (KJV)

That is the apostolic mindset. Seen things are temporal. Unseen things are eternal. What can be seen can be shaken. What is unseen in the kingdom of God is unshakeable.

Hebrews gives us a great list of the faithful:

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.” — Hebrews 11:13-16 (KJV)

That is the language of hope. Stranger. Pilgrim. Better country. Heavenly city. Prepared place. The sold-out child of God knows this world is not the destination. We are moving toward a city whose builder and maker is God.

**The Hope Beyond This Life
Comforts the Bereaved**

Paul wrote to believers who were grieving and said:
“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose

again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” — 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 (KJV)

Notice he does not say there will be no sorrow. He says we do not sorrow as others which have no hope. The child of God does not grieve like someone who believes the grave won. We grieve, but we grieve with hope. We cry, but we cry with promise. We miss our loved ones, but we know that in Christ there is reunion.

Paul continues:

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” — 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 (KJV)

There is comfort in this doctrine. There is strength in this hope. There is joy in this promise. Death may separate for a season, but resurrection will gather forever.

The Hope Beyond This Life Is Strength for Daily Faithfulness

The hope of eternity helps us stay faithful in ordinary life. It helps us remain patient when prayers seem delayed. It helps us stay holy when the world pressures us to compromise. It helps us keep serving when nobody applauds. It helps us forgive when we have been hurt. It helps us keep giving when we feel empty. It helps us keep worshiping when the body is weak and the soul is tired.

Paul said:

“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” — Galatians 6:9 (KJV)

The problem with many believers is not that they no longer believe in God. It is that they have lost sight of due season. They have forgotten that labor in the Lord is never wasted. They have forgotten that obedience has eternal value. They have forgotten that every sacrifice made in faith is recorded in heaven.

The end of the matter is this: what is done for Christ will last. What is done in the flesh will burn. What is done for the kingdom will endure. What is done in the Spirit will be rewarded.

The Hope Beyond This Life Brings Courage
in the Face of Death

The world fears death because it has no answer for death. But the church has a testimony. Jesus said:

“I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?” — John 11:25-26 (KJV)

That question still stands. “Believest thou this?” The believer answers yes, not because we are strong in ourselves, but because Christ is mighty to save.

The Scripture declares:

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” — 1 Corinthians 15:55 (KJV)

The sting of death is sin, but Christ dealt with sin. The strength of sin is the law, but Christ fulfilled the law. The grave seemed to be the end, but Christ broke the seal of the tomb. The final enemy will be destroyed.

The Hope Beyond This Life Belongs
to the New Birth People

This hope is not for casual religion. It is for those who have been born again of water and of the Spirit. Jesus said:

**“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”
— John 3:5 (KJV)**

That means salvation is not merely church attendance, and it is not merely moral behavior. It is a new birth experience.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter preached the gospel plainly:

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” — Acts 2:38 (KJV)

And he added:

“For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” — Acts 2:39 (KJV)

The hope beyond this life belongs to those who have obeyed the gospel, been washed in the name of Jesus,

and been filled with the Spirit. It belongs to those who are walking in newness of life. It belongs to those who are not just waiting to leave here, but who are living now as citizens of heaven.

The Hope Beyond This Life Is Not Escape;
It Is Completion

Sometimes people think the Christian hope is merely escaping this world. But biblical hope is richer than escape. It is completion. It is the fulfillment of God's purpose. It is the redemption of the whole person—spirit, soul, and body.

Paul says:

“And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” — Romans 8:23 (KJV)

We are already born again, yet we still wait. We are already saved, yet salvation is still unfolding. We are already sealed, yet we still long for full redemption. The Spirit in us is the firstfruits, the down payment, the guarantee that more is coming.

That is why the saint can groan and still hope. That

is why the saint can labor and still smile. That is why the saint can bury a loved one and still testify. Something better is coming.

The Hope Beyond This Life Will Be Fulfilled in the Return of Christ

The Bible's grand climax is not human progress. It is the return of Christ. Not the rise of human power, but the appearing of the King. Not the triumph of worldly systems, but the reign of Jesus.

John saw the holy city coming down:

“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” — Revelation 21:2-4 (KJV)

That is our destination. No more death. No more crying. No more pain. No more sin. No more tears.

No more night. No more curse.

Then John says:

“And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.” — Revelation 22:3-4 (KJV)

This is the hope beyond this life: to see His face, to serve Him forever, to dwell where His glory fills all in all.

What This Hope Demands of Us

If we truly believe in eternal life, then we must live like people who believe it.

We must be steadfast, not shifting with every wind of doctrine. We must be faithful, not half-hearted. We must be holy, not worldly. We must be obedient, not rebellious. We must be committed, not casual. We must be ready, not presumptuous.

Paul said:

“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the

faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.” — 2 Timothy 4:6-8 (KJV)

That is how a sold-out child of God finishes. Not bitter. Not defeated. Not confused. Ready. Faithful. Expectant. Loving His appearing.

Conclusion

So what does Paul mean when he says, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable”? He means that if Christ only helps us in this age, then we have nothing lasting. If there is no resurrection, no eternal kingdom, no transformed body, no coming glory, and no everlasting fellowship with God, then the sacrifices of the saints would be tragic.

But Christ has risen.
The tomb is empty.
The grave is defeated.
The Spirit has been poured out.
The church is alive.

The saints will be caught up.

The dead in Christ will rise.
The King is coming.
And eternity is real.

Therefore, the child of God can suffer without despair, labor without regret, and die without fear.

Our hope is not in this life only.
Our hope is in Jesus Christ.
Our hope is in resurrection.
Our hope is in glory.
Our hope is in the world to come.

And because of that, we can say with confidence:
“Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” — 1 Corinthians 15:57 (KJV)

If a person has only earthly hope, they will be disappointed. Money fails. Health fails. Relationships fail. Time fails. Death comes. But Jesus never fails.

The real question is not whether you have religious language. The question is whether you have eternal hope. Have you been born again? Have you repented? Have you been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins? Have you received the gift of the Holy Ghost? Are you living a holy, surrendered, sold-out life before God?

The hope beyond this life is for those who are in Christ. And to be in Christ means to obey His gospel, walk in His truth, and endure unto the end.

May the Lord make us steadfast.

May the Lord keep our lamps burning.

May the Lord help us live like pilgrims.

May the Lord help us love His appearing.

And may we all be found faithful when this life is over.