

By Beale Wilbon

Sunday School Lesson



INTRODUCTION

The New Testament idea of hope is strong. Favorable and confident is one way of defining the Biblical word for hope. That confidence distinguishes Christian hope from mere thinking or wishing.

In our text today the apostle Peter sets forth the basis for the Christian's confident expectation of ultimate victory and eternal good. That basis is the established fact of Jesus' triumph over sin, death, and Hell. That fact having been established, the promises and expectations based upon it are secure.

THE LESSON

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 1:3-7).

In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope. Hope is found, not in our deserving, but in God's gift, infinitely better than we deserve. The idea of new birth echoes what Jesus said to Nicodemus (John 3:3-7). Except for the new birth, of water and of the Spirit, Nicodemus was without hope, and so are we all. The living hope is the hope of living, but it is also a hope with a vital, growing quality.

Believers are protected from the enemies that would remove their ultimate blessing. The keeping power is God's, and that is sufficient for them. The keeping process is faith, and that is theirs. The keeping goal is salvation, and that is eternal. In this present life one's salvation is seen most clearly when things are at their worst. Beyond this life one's salvation will be seen completely when time gives way to eternity at Christ's coming again.

One's salvation in Christ is so great a blessing that it creates a glad spirit even in the midst of affliction. Thus Paul and Silas sang hymns at midnight in a dungeon, despite the beating they had endured and the chains they wore. Just as great thanksgiving arises more often from a great spirit than from a great supply of material blessings, so Christian rejoicing reflects a great faith rather than pleasant surroundings.

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Peter 1:8). "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance. But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by traditions from your fathers. But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you. Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and faith might be in God." (1 Peter 1:13-21).

As children by rebirth into God's family, we are not to limit our obedience to the "primary obedience" of believer's baptism into Christ, but are to go in daily obedience, so that we come to resemble our Father. The life style we followed before we became the children of God is no longer to be our goal nor our guide.

People today stand in almost desperate need of confident assurance concerning life here and hereafter. They yearn to hear good news for a change. Tomorrow - however you define it - is filled with an uncertainty that spills over into a worried today. Two short letters written by the apostle Peter contain the antidote for that worry. Although they were written long ago to Christians in circumstances quite different from ours, they addressed the same basic perplexities and worries and provided God's answer to the same human needs. They underline the good news that changes our dread of an uncertain tomorrow into that glad anticipation which says, "I can hardly wait!"

A confident, living hope springs from confidence in the living Lord.

Election Office Relocates

The Election Office of Mecklenburg County completed its move to new quarters this week and is now serving the public at 741 Kenilworth Avenue, Suite 202.

The move from the cramped space in a County Office Building annex on East Fourth Street to the 6,000 square foot new facility took place over a period of several days, with no interruption in service. The area now occupied by the Election Office was purchased by the County for \$570,000 in bond funds.

The telephone number, 336-2133,

remains the same, as do the locations for voter registration - all branches of the public library; the branches of Mechanics and Farmers Bank; the town halls of Cornelius, Matthews, and Pineville; and the N.C. Department of Motor Vehicles offices where drivers' licenses are issued; and the Election Office.

The Election Office is responsible for conducting all elections and voter registration in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

Plaza United Methodist Men Plan A Barbecue

Continued From Page 6A
to 4 p.m., weekdays, to order.
Barbecue plates will be sold for \$4.50 each. Also three sandwiches or 10 oz. of bulk barbecue for \$4.50 will be available.
The church is located at 5600 The Plaza.

FAITH

"Fashion Inspirations" will be presented by the women of Faith CME Church on Sunday, March 9, 6 p.m., at McDonald's Cafeteria on Beatties Ford Rd.

Sponsored by the Faith CME Church, the show will express the theme: "Whatsoever You do, do all to the Glory of God."

Models from Faith and other churches will participate.

Donations are \$5. For ticket information, call the church office, 597-8249, or Lisa's House of Beauty, 376-6815. Ask for Elese Davis.

TEMPLE CHAPEL

Temple Chapel Baptist Church will hold its Pre-Spring Crusade, beginning Sunday, March 9, lasting through Friday, March 14.

Dr. Abraham E. Campbell, a qualified gospel preacher, will be special guest speaker for the event.

There will also be old-fashioned praying, visiting ministers and leacons, and the best in singing as local and out-of-town choirs along with the Temple Chapel Hymn, Musical and Mass Choirs render music.

An invitation is extended to the entire Charlotte community.

Temple Chapel is located at 900 September Ln. Dr. Gene F. Gilmore is pastor.

FAITH

The Faith Memorial Baptist Church Prison Fellowship Ministries will present a film entitled, "Honey, Your Mama's in Prison," on Sunday, March 2, at 6:30 p.m.

The public is urged to attend.

The church is located at 211 Lakewood Ave. Rev. W. H. Caldwell is pastor.

JONESVILLE

The Spirituallers of Jonesville AME Zion Church will be in concert on Sunday, March 9, at 6 p.m. Joanne Williams will be the pianist. Everyone is invited.

The church is located at 5527 Providence Rd. West in Matthews, N.C. Rev. James R. Phifer is minister.

AME ZION

The AME Zion Ministers' Wives Fellowship held their first meeting of the New Year at the home of Mrs. Bennie Waddell, 1333 Tom Hunter Road.

The focus of the meeting was the installation of new officers for 1986-87. This ceremony was presided over by Mrs. Allie S. Clark. The following officers were installed: president, Mrs. Iris Battle; vice president, Mrs. Ella Asbury; recording secretary, Mrs. Frankie White; corresponding secretary, Mrs. Betty Graham; treasurer, Mrs. Theodora Jackson; chaplain, Mrs. Ada Gaston; reporter, Mrs. Evelena Thompson; and parliamentarian, Mrs. Allie Clark.

The purpose of this fellowship organization is to foster closer relationships among AME Zion Ministers' Wives. The organization is always open to new members who desire to share in this purpose. Other members present for the meeting were Mrs. Lillie Daniels, Mrs. Mary Gladden, Mrs. Myrtle Henderson, Mrs. Lillie Price, Mrs. Marie Tann, Mrs. Lucille Turner and Mrs. Hattie Mann.

PARKWOOD

The first annual missionary society banquet and fashion show sponsored by the Missionary Society of Parkwood Institutional CME Church was held recently at McDonald's Cafeteria.

While enjoying a deliciously prepared meal, the program got under way with a fashion show. Commentated by Mrs. Geneal Frazier, the display of clothing for the old as well as for the young was handsomely modeled by friends of Parkwood, Faith CME Church, and Langford Chapel CME Church. There were fashions for evening wear, casual wear, and outfits for nine to five.

As one segment of the program ended, toastmistress, Barbara Mitchell was there to keep the evening progressing. Before the speaker for the evening came to the podium, John and Nay Howell rendered moving spiritual selections, including "No Other One" and "Here And Now For Me."

Given an introduction by Mrs. Carrie Bradley, president of the Missionary Society of Parkwood, Wilma Collins commenced to speak.

Mrs. Collins is an educator-writing consultant in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System. Her efforts in the space program has led to her receiving the NASA Space Shuttle Award in '81, being appointed to the Space Program Advisory Board and speaking at the Educators Conference STS-4, J.F. Kennedy Space Center.



Dr. Gene F. Gilmore
.....To host crusade



Rev. W. H. Caldwell
.....Presents film

In her speech, Mrs. Collins, who is also a member of Parkwood, kindly informed her audience that everyone there that night was a missionary. She added that since February was the month Black History and Valentine's Day were observed that it was indeed good

that the missionary society's banquet was held then, too.

Continuing, the polished speaker warned the audience of one type of missionary, the wolf in sheep's clothing and encouraged the listening audience to embrace the second type of missionary, the true,

sincere one.

"The missionary who is only a wolf in sheep's clothing gives superficial help, but in the end the wolf is the only beneficiary," commented Mrs. Collins.

Her charge that night was for the audience to adopt the belief that "loving hands can conquer missions impossible."

"Accept human beings as they are and work patiently for improvement. Recognize ability in others and encourage it. Be hard to anger and hard to discourage. But most of all a loving missionary must have the hide of an elephant and the patience of Job," voiced Mrs. Collins.

Her speech brought a responsive audience to its feet.

After another selection, remarks and the benediction given by Rev. Rayfield Medcalf, pastor of Parkwood, the evening came to a close.

Chairperson of the banquet committee was Mrs. Erma Medcalf.

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