

Advent 2024: Hope - 1 Timothy 4:9-10

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[0:00] Thank you, Ben. And thank you, Nathan, for such a great introduction to Advent. I can totally skip my introduction, so we'll save time.! So please turn with me to 1 Timothy chapter 4. 1 Timothy chapter 4.

We will be talking about hope, the hope candle. And with Advent, you have hope, joy, peace, love, and then Christ. But I'm going to change it a bit, and I'm going to change it to more of a hopefulness.

And as we go through the text, I hope that becomes more clear why that's the case. So hope, hopefulness, and being in a state of hopefulness during this season and in this life, this present life. So before you do, consider, and as you turn to 1 Timothy 4, we're going to be in just two verses. I'll be reading from 6 through 10, but we'll just be looking at 9 and 10 together this morning.

So as you turn there, I want you to consider, how would you define being hopeful right now? Would you see it as temporal? Do you see it as more temporary?

[1:14] What I mean by this is, is hope based upon your current circumstances? Or do you see it temporal as hope that can come and go depending on you or others?

Is it fleeting? Or do you see hope as more of something that's in the future? Maybe you say things like, I will be more hopeful when?

Fill in the blank. Or maybe it's something that feels distant. Do you feel hopeless in your situation? Well, I hope you are encouraged this morning with our text.

Because real hopefulness is something that is not distant. It is not based on your current circumstances or future circumstances or others around you.

But it is founded upon God for those who have faith. And that is real hopefulness. So please, look with me in the text to 1 Timothy chapter 4.

[2:22] I'll be reading 6 through 10. And I'll do a slower reading. I'm going to make some comments as we go through to catch us up to verses 9 and 10. So look with me.

If you put these things, that is, he's talking about in context, the sound doctrine and healthy teaching outlined above in the previous chapters. If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed.

This is Paul writing to Timothy. Have nothing to do with irreverent silly myths. This is classic Paul where he's saying, not that, but this.

So have nothing to do with irreverent silly myths. And here's the but this. Rather, train yourself for godliness.

For while bodily training is of some value, think limited, idea of limited, godliness is of value in every way, unlimited.

[3:32] As it, meaning godliness, holds promise. This is looking forward to our text in verse 10. As it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

Notice the contrast of not myths, but godliness. Limited value versus unlimited value. promise and hope in our text.

In this present life, the life to come. Verse 9. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance.

For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

So, the big idea here. Those who believe, or those who have faith, are hopeful people. Or are in a state of hopefulness.

[4:42] So, my outline, if you are a note taker, there's three points, and the second point has three points.

So, hopefully that makes sense. But there's three main points, and it's, the first one is hopeful word. I'm sorry. Fateful word.

The fateful word is first. Second is fateful hope. Hope. The third main point we'll be looking at is fateful assurance. So, those are the three main divisions I've divided this text up into.

And it's fateful word, fateful hope, and fateful assurance. Now, the second, fateful hope, I'm going to divide that into three.

And it's a how, what, and who. Three points. The fateful hope is going to be, we're going to divide that up. Into how, what, and who. So, I know what you're thinking.

[5:43] At the very end, what in the world does that mean? But please, don't be distracted. We'll get there. So, if that's what you're thinking, if you looked at the text during this week, you were like, I wonder what he's going to say.

But hold on. Let's have hope as the center. And so, look with me in the text. The first, first point is fateful word. The saying, or the word, is trustworthy.

Or we can say fateful. It's trustworthy, faithful. And deserving of full, or complete, acceptance.

That's, that's the fateful word.

So, in this, there are two things that the saying is. The saying is both trustworthy, and full, deserving of full, acceptance.

So, the first, trustworthy. So, the reason why I put fateful, fateful, fateful, is that, the faith language, is used in the first word.

[6:50] So, trustworthy, is faith. Trust, belief. It's that word. It's a small word, but has massive implications. It's a big, theme in scripture.

So, when you see faith, trust, belief, in, in, the Bible, think, of the, it's probably the same word.

So, for example, the first word is, it opens with, trustworthy, in our text, and it ends, the last word, those who believe, or, those of faith.

It's the same word. And so, it's two bookends. And in the middle, is hope. So, it works out perfect. Paul is very, very clear, and I really appreciate it.

So, faith, think, faith, belief, trust, they're all related. And I challenge you to, as you read scripture, look out for that small word.

[7:58] The second thing is, full, or deserving of full, and complete acceptance. This evokes a response to something perceived, to have value.

It has value, it deserves something, and it deserves an action, and that is acceptance. The saying, or the word, is trustworthy and faithful.

Therefore, the saying and word deserves to be accepted on its own terms. So, but what is the identity of this faithful saying?

What's the saying? Well, it's debated, but it could be talking about something previously, verse 8. It could be talking about just verse 10, or it could be both.

But I, I'm going to say verse 10, based, it could go either way, but I just couldn't preach verse 8 also. You'd be here for even longer. So, we'll just have to wait for that sermon in the future.

[8:57] But for, the reason I picked verse 10, so, I'm, I'm taking the faithful saying pointing to verse 10, is in chapter 1, you can flip there if you want, of 1 Timothy.

Chapter 1, 15, verse 15, he points forward in using the exact same phrase. So, look with me in verse 15, chapter 1.

The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. Sounds familiar. That, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the foremost.

So, this, he's pointing forward to that Christ Jesus came into the world. And he's using this faithful saying, this trustworthy saying in that way. And also, for verse 10 that we're about to launch into, he uses four, which is a direction.

So, that's why I'm taking these 9 and 10 together. So, let's think about this. With this verse, the saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance.

[10:06] In this small verse, we should, the text forces us to stop and to ask ourselves questions. So, as you read scripture, as an aside, when you are provoked by the spirit to stop, ask questions of text, please do.

So, here, we could say, we could ask ourselves, how often do you dwell on the faithfulness of God and his word? Do you see faith as when you just read it through and don't dwell on it?

Or do you see faith, trust, belief here as something that draws you closer to the Lord? Does it provoke a response of fear and awe that draws you closer to him?

Are there things in your life that are preventing you to connect both knowing that God's word is faithful and also evoking a response in your daily life?

Is there something that's preventing you that you know immediately when I ask that question? Ask yourself these questions. Ask them, answer them, and bring those things to the Lord.

[11:23] That's what the text forces us to do here. So, next, verse 10, faithful hope. That's the big point and this is the first of three points of faithful hope.

So, look with me. this is the how, the how of hope. For to this end, or we could say for this reason, we toil and labor.

Toil or labor. And strive. Or we could say engage and struggle. So, for to this end, we toil and strive.

Now, I'm going to give you an alternative translation here that I really like. I tend to use this for toward this, we work and compete.

For toward this, pointing to the next point of hope. For toward this, we work and we compete.

[12:30] And I like this because it captures the direction, the preposition for this. for this could be a direction moving forward to our next verse, or the next part of the verse.

For toward this, we work and compete. So, these two verbs, it's one idea, but there's two verbs. They have two different nuances, but the same idea.

So, let's look at both. Toil. Toil, we could say labor, we could say work. This is more of the idea of laboring to the point of exhaustion. And this has an emphasis, if you take notes, this is importance. You could say, you could write external above it if you would like. This has an external challenge to the nuance. So, let's think.

What's external challenge and struggle? Marriage, it could be, it could be parenting, it could be providing. the list could go on.

[13:34] Your workplace could be an external struggle and work for you. The next verb is strive. Strive could be struggle, engage in struggle, compete.

This is metaphorically used for athletic competition, but in context, this is more of a moral struggle. So, this is involving oneself, and this is, if you want to write, if you wrote external above the first verb, second verb, you could say internal.

This has an internal challenge to the nuance. So, think about fighting sin, repenting, godliness, sanctification.

These two verbs repeat for emphasis the idea that the Christian life is a work and struggle, whether due to internal or external challenges.

challenges. And we could stop and we could easily see some application here. So, toiling, external struggle, striving, internal struggle.

[14:42] And, ask yourself this question, do you over or under emphasize one or the other? Do you think more about your challenges that are external to you?

or do you think about the challenges that are more internal? We are called to balance both. I like the metaphor that Acts uses for the Christian life as the way or the road.

And if the Christian life is a road, there are two sides of every road. And there are two ditches to this road. And we could have good intentions, but we could overemphasize things to where we become more in one ditch than on our road of the Christian life.

So, we need to avoid toiling in our external, making our external life godly, but not emphasizing the internal struggle of our internal sin.

And vice versa. But, I want to be careful. We do not bring about hope ourselves. None of this toiling or striving is really only to us.

[16:07] We do not hope to this end because of our work. But Paul is pointing out the struggle in this present life. He's acknowledging that this is hard.

Hoping in God is difficult in this present life. But, be encouraged. Notice the, notice that I said that we work and we compete.

There's a we here, which means you are not alone. You are in community, and the church is a community of sinners, and we are both trying to walk that narrow way together.

So, be encouraged you are not alone in this struggle. We have our hope set on the living God.

And here's our central, if we're going to be in the middle, this is our middle. because we have our hope set on the living God.

[17:20] Another translation can be because we have hope based in God who lives. And then the one I like, just to mix things up, is that we are hopeful upon the living God.

That we are hopeful upon the living God. And this is the middle central of our text here. And there are four sections to this, and we'll take one by one.

So, let's look at because. I like that more of because. Think of less of because, but more of the idea of that.

And when I say that, small nuance, but it's important. We are to be working and competing toward this objective, that we are hopeful upon the living God.

And that right there is that. And then second, we are hopeful. That's the second division here. We are hopeful. And here is the verb that's in the middle. We are hopeful is in a form that is more of a state.

[18:36] It's a state of hopefulness with regard to expectation. So, think of state of hopefulness. The point is not that we have hoped and continue to hope, but that we who have faith are in a hopeful state.

As hopeful people in our orientation toward God. You see the state of being hopeful. And then you see toward God.

We are hopeful. The verb suggests an existing state of hope in God based upon the promise of life. And remember the promise in earlier verse that I pointed out.

And think of a more complete hope, state of hopefulness, than an ongoing hope. And that's where hope is not fleeting.

Hope is not depending on your circumstances, but it is always there in God. So, the third, look at me, set on, set on, based in, upon, the living God.

[19:53] So, set on is metaphorically applied to the placing of hope upon God, or set on the living God.

And this, the fourth and final, the living God, is kind of odd. We don't normally say the living God, but I believe that Paul adds a small detail to remind us that God is who both is life and gives life to his followers.

followers, and he is a God who is involved in our lives, and he brings life. Small word that we could easily pass through, that he is the living God in our daily lives.

So, it might be summarized like this, the what and the content of our hope. Might be summarized like this, the content of our working and competing is a hopefulness toward God, that God will do what he has promised.

And God will do what he has promised because he is the living God. Do you see the Christian life, your life, if you have faith, as marked by being in a state of hopefulness?

[21:22] Do you see hope as something only in the future, like we asked before? This text teaches that it is a perpetual state of hope that is in the present, that is now.

I hope that's encouraging to you. As you know and see the work of the living God in your daily life, let this text remind you that we who have faith and trust in God are a hopeful people today, no matter what our circumstances.

So, how would this might be applied to our life? We actually have a concrete example of applying this teaching, this saying, to a specific situation in 1 Timothy.

So, turn with me to the end of 1 Timothy, chapter 5, Real quick. 1 Timothy, chapter 5, and we'll be reading verses 3 and 6.

And this is specific instructions from Paul to Timothy in the church. And that notice, he applies this text, or, well, we could say, the women in the church have already applied this in their life.

[22:48] So, read with me. Chapter 5, verse 3, honor widows who are truly widows. But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness in their own household, and to make some return to their parents.

For this is pleasing in the sight of God. She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God, and continues in supplications and prayers, night and day.

But she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives. Notice, she who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God.

This is an application of what Paul has already taught Timothy in the previous chapter. Are you in a life circumstance that leaves you feeling alone?

Be encouraged. Hopefulness toward the triune God leads to continuous supplication and prayer for God's glory, even in the midst of loneliness.

[24:03] Be encouraged. You can have a state of hopefulness that is outside your circumstances, but only upon the living God.

hope. Now for the third and final point of the second of the fateful hope point.

So, who? The who? Who is the Savior of all people? Who is the Savior of all people?

God? You might have some questions about the very end of verse 10 when it says, especially of those who believe or even of all people. And to understand this correctly, we'll have to ask, who is the Savior in this verse?

And what does the Savior mean? And we'll do this right now. So, Savior in this context is God.

Pretty simple. But, he actually repeats this.

[25:07] So, if you flip over to chapter 1, verse 1, the very first verse of this book, 1 Timothy, if you flip there, it says, Paul writes, Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, by command of God, our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, our hope.

Notice, Paul is connecting Jesus with hope as well as God is our Savior. If you turn to chapter 2, flip over, chapter 2, verses 3 and 4, he writes, this is good and it is pleasing in the sight of God, our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

And you don't have to turn here, but in John, you can write this down, John, chapter 4, 39 and 42.

This is Jesus and the woman of Samaria.

I'll read this for you. Many Samaritans came from that town, believed in him because of the woman's testimony. He told me all that I ever did.

So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with him, and he stayed there two days, and many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, it is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.

[26:44] This is just one of many examples we could come up with. But notice, Paul uses the same title for God in 1 Timothy as John uses for Jesus.

So you see this Trinitarian means here. So what does Savior mean? This requires a close reading of scripture, so let us be close readers now.

So it may sound universal, especially all people, but God can mean two things in this verse.

It can either be God can be the preserver and sustainer and giver of life. This is good, and it is true, and it is biblical, but not from this text, not in the context of this letter.

So the actual context, if we think about it, Paul is speaking to those who are rejecting the good doctrine from God to the apostles, and in turn, he's talking to Timothy and those rejecting the gospel message.

[27:54] So this forces us, Savior, I propose, means one who saves or saves or potentially saves all people.

So you see this actuality and potentiality concept here. He is actually the Savior for those who believe, and he is potentially Savior for those who have yet to believe.

And that's how he can say, God, who is the Savior of all people. So, of all people, or humanity, let's look at that.

This cannot mean not each and every human within humanity. It cannot mean that. Now, I don't know why I did this to myself, because last time I did an Advent sermon, it was John 3.16, and this same concept came up.

So, this is straight from my sermon two years ago. But, all is a very important word in scripture. We have to be careful, because all does not mean all, and that's all all means, if you've heard that.

[29:10] It's actually not true in the biblical sense. So, we have to be careful with this, because that could lead us down some interesting roads. So, all without exception, or does it mean all without distinction?

So, all without exception would be each and every individual human. But, I think that Paul and John and a lot of other texts, when it says all in this universal language that's being used, it's more of an all without distinction.

And that is the gospel message. Think about it. In this context, Jew, Gentile. Gentiles coming to know the Lord.

This is the whole book of the message of the book of Acts that they're dealing with. Massive. That's why the Great Commission is such great news to the nations. And we'll continue.

We'll go straight into the next section, because it's made even more clear by those who believe. So, the third and final point is faithful assurance.

[30:22] So, this is especially those who believe. I'm going to take this. Especially is totally fine. But, when you see especially here, if you write in your Bible or you take notes, put particularly.

that's more of the ideal. It's to be precise, or namely, I mean. That's, I would have rather seen particularly those of faith.

That makes more sense. Especially, it's okay. You can trust your Bibles. But, being close readers of Scripture, we can say particularly. So, particularly captures Paul's one, it's Paul's desire that all humanity be saved, his desire, and we see that in chapter 2, we just read.

And also, Paul's recognition that it is those of faith who will be saved. This is the work and competition we've seen earlier, that Paul directs Timothy and potentially others of faith to be engaged with.

So, to those of faith, if you have trust in the Lord, this is a reminder of the Lord's grace and his patience towards us in this present life.

[31:43] Remember that the Lord has been patient towards you. But, if you do not have trust in the Lord, if you do not have faith, do you believe that God is Savior?

Do you believe that God is the living God? This is calling you to believe and trust in the only Savior. This text today.

And you can do this by turning from yourself repentance and turn to the triune, living God who saves with your whole heart, with your thoughts, your desires, and your choices.

So we could summarize this, this way. The faithful statement, the faithful saying, is this, that our struggle is to be as those who are hopeful.

That our struggle is to be those who are hopeful that the living God is not just the potential Savior of all, but actually the Savior of those who believe.

[32:59] See how this belief, trust, faith language is so central to hope. So let's conclude. The main idea, as we've said before, are those who have faith, those who believe, are a hopeful people, and we are in a state of hopefulness.

We have seen through the faithful word, the faithful hope, the how, what, and who, and now the faithful assurance. Now, one last place I want you to turn.

We actually have an example of this played out again in 2 Timothy chapter 4. So turn with me. 2 Timothy chapter 4 is at the very end of Paul's life, in Paul's last days.

He knows he will be killed soon. and he writes to Timothy this letter. And at the very end, in 2 Timothy chapter 4 verses 6 through 8, I'll read.

For I am ready, for I am already being poured out as a drink offering. Think toiling and striving all his life. And the time of my departure has come.

[34:19] I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day.

Think hopefulness in the living God. And not only to me, but also to all who have loved his appearing. Think to those who have faith and belief and trust.

Look at that. There's three verbs here in verse 7. Fought, finished, kept. We toil or work and strive or fight today so that we can say with Paul, I have fought the good fight.

I have finished the race. faith, we as with Paul can only do this by having faith, belief, trust in the living God who saves and is the only source of our hopefulness in this life as well as to the life to come.

He's the only source of our hopefulness in this life as well as the life to come. Pray with me.

[35:48] Pray with me. Pray with me.