

West Coast Christian Conference  
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Christ is the Hope of Glory

I believe brothers and sisters are very clear on the theme of this conference, that is Christ is all and in all. The brothers have entrusted me to fellowship on the topic of Christ, the hope of glory. When we speak about hope, it seems as if it's a very common theme and the simplest among all the conference topics. Many brothers and sisters know this already, but these days while I have been meditating before the Lord, I believe that this theme is very important. All of us know that the Lord is our hope, but only a few live in the reality of this hope. So we need to mutually encourage one another before the Lord. Let's start with some Scripture.

*Colossians 1:27 to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

*Colossians 1:3-5, 23 We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel. ... if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.*

*Romans 4:17-21 (as it is written, "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU") in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE." Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.*

*Romans 5:3-5 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

*Romans 15:13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

*Philippians 1:20 according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.*

### *Our Own Hope Versus Christ as Our Hope*

Brothers and sisters, in our life we know that in order to live we have to have hope, or we can say that we live by hope. If one lives without hope, then one will have suffering and much negativity. If you are at the point of despair, you may even lose your will to live on. After the fall of man, this fallen world is without hope, so suicide is a severe problem in the world that we live in. Why has man come to this extent of hopelessness? It is because we are living in a fallen world. The more people have hope [in this world], the more hopeless it becomes.

We thank God He has rescued us and has brought to us the hope of glory. We know that after we are saved, we Christians have the hope of eternal life. Perhaps we know that Christ is our hope, but if we remain just in the knowledge of this hope, it is not enough. Paul in his epistles places hope, faith and love together. Many brothers and sisters are familiar with the passage in 1 Corinthians 13. *But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.* Even though the greatest is love, but hope and faith are likewise just as important. We know that these three matters are important in Paul's heart. Not only does he speak of these in 1 Corinthians, but he mentions it also in 1 Thessalonians 1. It speaks of the *work of faith, the labor of love and steadfastness of hope.* Chapter 5 also says that we need to *put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.* He also mentions this in Colossians 1 right from the beginning; he mentions faith, love and hope.

Of course the hope Paul talks about is not the hope that we often think about. It is not the hope that we place into our academics, career, marriage and families. This hope is concerned about the will of God being accomplished in our life. We know that this is the highest hope that God has for us and you can say that it surpasses all other hopes. If we cannot accomplish our own hopes in this world, but if we have this hope, we can still live a life of strength and joy. If our hope is only of this world and a selfish hope, then we easily fall into despair and hopelessness. Here on earth among God's people there are still many Christians who live in a hopeless and despairing condition. When we cannot live in this hope, then naturally we become cold in spiritual things. We naturally backslide, compromise and change even to the point of giving up. If these conditions happen to us today, it proves that we are not living in the hope that God has given to us. If you are living in the hope that God has given, then you will never be discouraged, always moving forward and being filled with joy. You will be like Jeremiah: sad, but not despairing. Today there are many Christians who are not only very sad but also very negative. This proves that we are not living in the reality of Christ as our hope.

### *Spiritual Hope*

Of course then, what is hope? We hope that things can be accomplished according to our expectations. In English, it's wishing for our "dreams to come true." That dream is a hope right? But as Christians, we have spiritual hope; this spiritual hope is different from this world's hope. This spiritual hope is an assurance even before

things happen. We have a guarantee so we can rejoice while waiting for the outcome. This hope is different from the hope that we typically talk about. The hope of this world is very uncertain, and even if dreams do come true, it is only temporary and empty. Only the hope that God has given to us who are saved is certain. The Lord shows us this hope of glory in many places in the Bible. We have the hope of resurrection and the hope of being transformed. We have the hope of the Lord's return, the hope of rapture, the hope of reigning together with the Lord on the throne, and even the hope of the Church reaching unity in Christ. The Bible tells us many things that will happen in the future and every one of them is assured. Our hope is not without certainty, it is assured and with conviction. The apostles exhort us to wait with hope and with patience so we can reach our goal.

The Bible speaks of Christ, our hope of glory. There are two important foundations concerning this matter. Through Christ, we see that God Himself is our hope. Secondly, God's works are our hope. I have two sessions, so I will fellowship with brothers and sisters in these two aspects. This morning we will talk about God is our hope, how God has become our hope through Jesus Christ or in other words, how God has made Christ to be our hope.

We thank God, Paul wrote in Romans 15 telling us that our God is called a God of hope, so whenever we come to know Him, we have hope. The epistles also tell us that this is a hope that we can boast about; how did God become our hope? We need to know three aspects. You may already know about this, but we want to emphasize these points.

#### *God of Hope: Omniscient*

First, we need to know that God is all-wise, all-knowing (omniscient); His wisdom is perfect. For us on earth, no matter how smart we are, our wisdom is not complete, but God's wisdom is complete and perfect. In His wisdom, He has determined a glorious will and according to this glorious will, He has made a complete plan. From the Bible, we know that this plan is perfect and absolutely complete. Brothers and sisters, we need to understand this. If we do not understand that our God's plan is perfect and is planned out by His omniscience, then we fall into the trap of the enemy because Satan often deceives us with his lies. He wants us to doubt God's plan. Whenever we begin to doubt God's plan, we will fall into despair. If we do not come to know more of God's omniscience, we can also make another mistake. We feel that we also are very wise and need to add something to the Lord or take something away from the Lord. We see from the Old Testament to the New, man always make such mistakes. Anytime we want to adjust God's plan through our own wisdom, it will lead us into hopelessness and despair. We must come to know that our God is an all-wise God. Not only does He have this perfect plan in His council, but He is all-knowing and omniscient. The Bible says that even all the intentions of our hearts are laid-bare before Him. We thank God that He knows everything! In Revelation 2 and 3, our Lord spoke to the churches on earth saying, *I know your deeds*. Nothing can be hidden from God and He knows all the conditions of our hearts. This is a very important foundation of our hope.

### *God of Hope: Omnipotent*

The second aspect is that we need to understand that our God is all-powerful, omnipotent. God accomplishes His own plan with His own power. Even though we know this, but many times we still make mistakes. History has proven that man loves to accomplish God's plan with his own strength. The results bring in hopelessness. But we thank God, He is omnipotent, and His work doesn't depend on our strength. He is able to accomplish His own work by His own power. Our elderly brothers advise us that in order to accomplish God's will, we must abandon our own strength. We see in the church today so many people are striving to use their own strength to accomplish God's plan. The end result of all their work is disappointment. God wants to use His own power to accomplish His own plan.

### *God of Hope: Love*

The third aspect is that God is love. Thank God, this love is an eternal and everlasting love. God has loved us and will love us to the end. Because of His love, He will accomplish His will in our lives and for sure it will be accomplished. We thank Him because of our many weaknesses, He is so very considerate of us. He has given all kinds of promises. There's a brother who looked for the promises given in the Bible. He tells us that there are 32,000 promises in the Bible. This is such a promise! Not only God has promised us, but He also established a covenant with us to guarantee that His promises will be fulfilled, and to such an extent that He used His own Son's blood to guarantee His covenant. This is God's love. Because God has chosen us for His own glorious will, He will accomplish this for us. So from the beginning to the end, it is all love. This is a God of hope.

### *Hope is Our Experience*

We thank God for we know that God's work does not stop here. Not only is He all-wise, all-powerful and all-love, but He wants to bring all this upon man. We read in Romans 5 that *perseverance produces character, and character produces hope*. But in the original text, this *character* can be translated as *experience*. When you have experience, it will produce hope in you. God is all-wise, all-powerful and all-loving, so how can He become our experience? If we do not experience Him, we cannot obtain this hope. We thank God for God has made Christ to be our hope. God sent His own Son to earth, and the Word became flesh to fulfill the meaning of Christ. That is why Peter says that God has established Him as Christ the Lord. This is not only for God, but also for us. If the Son of God does not become Christ, then there's no way for God to be our experience. We thank God for God has given us experience in Christ. Now the God of hope has become our God of hope.

The Lord Jesus is called the Mediator. A mediator is also called the middle-man. This word is very meaningful, because through Christ we can see that God is our hope. Through Christ, God has become our hope; He is the middle person between these two beings. So all our experiences of God has to be through Christ. If it's not through Christ, then God cannot be our hope. If not through Christ, there's no way we can go to God. We thank God, He has brought heavenly hope to earth. This is why there are

some great sayings in the book of Colossians, and these are indeed great Words: *God has placed all the fullness in Him and all wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Him; the fullness of God dwells in Him in bodily form.* Because God wants to give Himself to us, He must go through Christ. He first places all of Himself into Christ Jesus and then He gives His Son Jesus to us. So when we have Christ, we have obtained the glorious fullness of God. For this reason, Christ has become the hope of glory for us. For His sake we have true experience and for His sake our hope can be a real hope. Paul in 2 Thessalonians tells us that He is the better hope that the Father has given unto us. We thank our Lord Jesus Christ; it is He Who has brought this hope into our midst. Hebrews emphasizes this point, that it is fitting for Him to come in the flesh and accomplish all things for us. Not only so, but in chapter 4, he tells us that He is related to us. If the Lord Jesus did not come, if the meaning of Christ was not accomplished, then God has nothing to do with us. But today, because of the Lord we now are closely related to God. What a grace this is, and hence Paul says, *Christ in us, the hope of glory.*

These past days when I meditate on this verse, it reminds me of a deep memory. In 1965, this verse was a great encouragement to me. This was something that happened 47 years ago. But when I think back, it's as if it had just happened. In 1965, there was a great difficulty that arose in our church. There was a great division and sorrow filled the whole congregation at that time. There was no one whose heart was joyful and we often saw brothers and sisters weeping in the meeting. What we thought was the most beautiful home was broken overnight. I was still young at that time and of course this matter happened among the adults. As a young person, I did not understand what was going on, but the atmosphere was very oppressive. I had been saved for several years and so in my heart, I really loved this home. I indeed had great hope and all of my hope in serving the Lord was in this home. Many brothers and sisters were willing to consecrate themselves, but without realizing it, everything had turned upside down overnight. I believe that there were several hundred young brothers and sisters who had determined that they were going to give their lives to serve God, but because of this event, many brothers and sisters backslid. Everyone went from hopeful to hopeless, from hopelessness to despair. It was at that time that I believe God had mercy upon my life. In this very common young man, God did something. God gave me a little revelation into my heart, even though I didn't really understand what it was. But today I am very clear that the Lord had appeared to me and I had started to understand the meaning of Christ. Colossians 1:27 came suddenly into my heart: *Christ in you, the hope of glory.* Outwardly, everything was darkness and downward, but inside of me, there was an attraction of glory. Once again, the Lord called me to come out and serve Him. This was completely contradictory and conflicting. When you opened your eyes, all you saw was darkness and corruption. However as soon as you closed your eyes, it was all glory. It was at that time that I resolved to give my life to serve the Lord. My father loved me very much and one day he wanted to talk to me. He asked, "Aren't you afraid? When difficulties arise in the church, the way they treat each other is even worse than politics in this world. Do you still want to give yourself to the Lord? Aren't you afraid?" Brothers and sisters, outwardly speaking, there was no hope. I

did not know how to serve and I did not know where to place myself. But the inner feeling was very strong and compelled me to move forward to follow the Lord. That is why I told my father, "I have no other way and no other choice. I know the situation is very difficult, but the Lord wants me to follow Him and I have to obey." In those times of darkness and chaos, I could still feel that Christ in me was the hope of glory. Even when many people were retreating, the Lord was still leading me forward. It was during that time that I consecrated myself to the work of God.

Brothers and sisters, the hope that we talk about is not a doctrine, but a real experience. When you have this true experience, you have great hope. Thank God, how abundant is His grace. We have so many young people at this conference, so I'd like to give some exhortation to the young people. Do not feel that these messages are all for the adults, as if you young people need to listen to another type of message. If you always have these thoughts, you will suffer great loss. From Old Testament through New Testament history we see that God had revealed His glorious will to many young people. I remember that I was only a little past 20 years old when the Lord began to do some work in me, I was young. Since that time, I believe young people can understand God's will. I want to tell you another interesting thing. I had only come out to serve the Lord for about two years and I was only twenty-seven years old when I met an elderly co-worker who served in Hong Kong. When he came to visit Taiwan, I went to see him. When he saw me, he asked, "How old are you?" I said, "I'm twenty-seven." I thought in my heart that he must say, "Oh, you're still so young. You have much potential, you need to pursue the Lord." But much to my surprise, he didn't say that. He said, "Oh, you're not young anymore." I was stunned. He said, "Do you know that Brother Watchman Nee came to our village to preach the Gospel when he was twenty-three years old and our entire school stopped classes to go listen to him." That's why he said to me, "You are not young." So brothers and sisters, don't think that because you are young you cannot understand; you can understand. If you have a desire and love, then say to the Lord, "Lord, in these meetings, open my heart, help me to understand Your will."

#### *Only Hope, Greatest Hope, Living Hope, Better Hope*

Dear brothers and sisters, we thank our God. God has given Christ to us and because of Him, we have within us this hope of glory. Not only is He our hope, we also ought to know that He is our *only* hope. Apart from Christ, we have no other hope. Just like what Peter said, *Apart from the Name of Christ, there is no other salvation*. Brothers and sisters, if today we live on this earth and we still have other hopes outside of Christ, sooner or later we will find that we end up in hopelessness or despair. Not only is He our only hope, He is our *greatest* hope. We thank our God, He is in us and this hope is far beyond our imagination. Paul tells us that this is our hope of salvation. Our salvation depends on Him and no one on this earth can save us. Only the Lord can save us. This is the helmet that we put on our heads, as from Him we receive the hope of salvation.

Peter also tells us that this is a *living* hope. Why would Peter call it a living hope? If you read Peter's story, you'll know that he had encountered great failure. He had

fallen into a great despair. When the Lord went up to the cross, he thought that he was so brave. He even told the Lord that he will die with Him. But the Lord told him that before the rooster crows twice, he will deny Him three times. And Peter indeed denied the Lord with cursing. In the end, when the Lord turned around to look at him, he went out crying bitterly. He probably thought to himself, "I'm done. There's no more hope for me. I have done such a miserable and dreadful thing." In church history there are few who have failed to such an extent. He denied the Lord even with cursing and not just once, but three times. Wasn't Peter living in such a condition of despair? But thank the Lord, in the last chapter of John, we see the Lord recovered him. Our Lord is forever our hope, so to Peter, he calls our Lord the Living Hope. If you are still alive, you still have this hope. Even if you are under the threat of death, He can still bring you back to life. Thank God, Peter was restored from his despair. Brothers and sisters, no matter what is your condition right now, if some of you feel that you are weak to the extreme, if you can return to the Lord and touch Christ, Christ can still be your living hope. In the entire New Testament, only Peter calls the blood of Christ, the *precious* blood of Christ. He uses this word: precious. Why? It's because he had this experience. Because of his experience, he called the blood the *precious* blood of our Lord. Our Lord is our hope of glory, our living hope.

In the book of Hebrews, the apostle tells us that this is the better hope. The apostle also tells us in Hebrews that Jesus established the new covenant and the old covenant is fading away. This tells us that in the Old Testament time, few men were filled with hope. I have examined and searched for the word *hope* in the Old Testament and it appears only 23 times. This speaks of how when we live under the law, we don't have much hope. But we thank God for today our Lord Jesus Christ has become our hope. This is a better hope and a hope for everyone. So brothers and sisters, Christ becomes our hope and God wants Him to be our only hope, and this is at the same time a great hope. But how do we obtain Christ as our hope? Paul in the book of Colossians tells us that Christ is the hope of the gospel. Why did he say that He is the hope of the gospel? We know that we have obtained Christ because we heard the gospel. When we believed in the gospel, we entered into the hope of Christ. So when we speak the gospel, this gospel can be passed on and is to help people to enter into this hope. But sadly, we often have a very narrow understanding of this gospel. We think that the gospel is meant only for those people who do not believe so that they can go to heaven. But if we read the epistles carefully, we find that the gospel includes all of Christ. That redemption is only the first step. The gospel includes all of God's will and council. Today not only unbelievers need to hear the gospel, but all of us who are saved by grace also need the gospel. Even in this conference we are preaching the Gospel, but we are sharing a higher meaning of the Gospel. Thank God, Christ is the hope of the Gospel; that is to say that through the Gospel, we obtain Him as our hope of the Gospel. Indeed this is a great grace from God.

### *The Source of Hope*

Brothers and sisters, we ought to be very clear, God Himself is the source of our hope. God has given us this hope through Christ and because of the Gospel, we

believe in Christ and accept Him as our hope. In everything that God is doing, He is doing it within our hearts and it will become our true experience. We know that this hope is truly precious. In Romans 4, Paul uses the testimony of Abraham to explain to us the meaning of hope. Abraham is the father of faith, but he's also one who lived in hope because of his faith. In the Old Testament time, when we read the story of Abraham, we cannot see his relationship with Christ. But in John 8, the Lord revealed this secret to us, "*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.*" We understand now that Abraham, though he was in the Old Testament time, he had much to do with Christ. Because of Christ, he had that hope. Let's read over the story of Abraham, then we can understand what a great hope this is. Ephesians 1:18 says, "*what is the hope of His calling*". We can see this hope through Abraham's experience; the Bible tells us that hope against hope, he believed. He was in a hopeless situation, but inside of him, he was still full of hope. Romans tell us that Abraham "*believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.*" Giving life to the dead, because he believed that God is the God of life. True hope means that God can bring the dead back to life. We know that in our experience, death means hopelessness; if you die, you cannot come back to life again. But the hope that Christ brings into us can bring life to the dead.

In John 11 when we see that Lazarus died and the entire family in Bethany had utter hopelessness, they sent for the Lord. The Lord tarried for two days and so when He arrived, Lazarus had already been dead for four days. Even Mary, who loved the Lord the most, had despaired. Martha was completely disappointed. So they complained to the Lord, *Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.* Brothers and sisters, even our Lord Himself sighed. We know that the Lord then raised Lazarus from the dead. Wherever Christ is, there is hope. Not only does He give life to the dead, but He calls into being that which does not exist, which means that He is the Creator. When you are without, He can create it. Today when we follow the Lord, we must depend on faith and not on our sight. Sight easily discourages us, but faith gives us hope.

Brothers and sisters, this is a very precious example the Bible gives us. Paul especially mentions the birth of Isaac. God promised Abraham a son, but after He spoke, He didn't do anything until Abraham was about 99 years old and Sarah's womb was dead. From this story, we know that God did this on purpose. God wants to take away all the hope that we place on man so that God Himself becomes our hope. God allows many people to come to the end of their selves. If we still hold on to a little bit of our own hope, God will not act. When we reach the end of our selves, become entirely hopeless in our selves, then God will begin His work. God has never changed this principle. Today in the churches on earth, many people cannot accept this fact. Our brothers have been emphasizing that God doesn't want man's wisdom, man's strength, and there is no hope on the human side. I know that among God's children, many cannot accept this. Many think, "I am smart, I am capable, I have knowledge, I have abilities, why should we lay aside all these things?" That is why the church on earth is filled with human activity. I believe this is not just something that the brothers have been sharing, but this is what the Bible says.

### *Believe and Be Fully Persuaded*

Indeed in front of God, we are useless unless God wants to use us. That is why God allowed Abraham to be barren until he was 100 years old, in order to prove that only God is our hope. Thank God, today Abraham has become a wonderful testimony and example. How could Abraham accept this? The Bible says that he was *fully assured that God will accomplish His promise*. In the Greek original text, this “fully assured” is translated as “fully persuaded.” Wonderfully, God had persuaded Abraham with His own Word. That’s why today it’s so important to read God’s Word and listen to God’s Word. We need to ask ourselves, after reading and hearing God’s Word, are we convinced and persuaded? We all know that it’s important to read the Bible. We encourage each other to read the Bible, and of course this is very precious. But the preciousness of believing the Word of God far surpasses the preciousness of just reading the Word of God. Today many read the Bible and even study and analyze the Bible. So many Bible scholars spend their whole lives studying the Bible, but they do not believe in the Word of God. Not only do we need to read the Word of God, not only should we listen to the Word, but we also need to be persuaded and convinced by the Word of God. So this time as we come to this conference and if God speaks to you through the Holy Spirit in these messages, we pray that we will surrender ourselves to Him. Brothers and sisters when you are willing to surrender to God and are fully assured of God’s promises, then no matter what hopeless situations you are in, Christ in you is the hope of glory.

We thank our God, He created man and also respects our free will. He never forces us in any spiritual matters. God never forces anything on us. We only need to willingly accept. If we reject and refuse, we will only lose grace. So when we read the Word of God, we need to have faith to accept the Word of God. This is a very important matter. We thank God because of Abraham’s belief in God’s Word, God credited it to him as righteousness. Simply put, God said, “You have done right. This is right.” The Bible says that this is not only for Abraham, but for all of God’s children. Today if we believe in the Word of God and are fully persuaded by His Words, then we have done right.

Thank God for He indeed is considerate of our weaknesses. He understands that when we stand before Him even with good intentions, we cannot do it. That is why God sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in us, and the Holy Spirit in us can help us accept His Word. Romans 15 says that *you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit*. It is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth which leads us into reality. If you only hear the word of the message and think it’s good, you still need the Holy Spirit to lead you into it. Christians need to live in the anointing. When we are full of the anointing, then we prove that the Holy Spirit is indeed leading us. When we are living in this hope, we will be full of joy and peace. Peace and joy is an inner confirmation of our Christian experience. It is also a testimony of our life on earth. Thank God, He indeed is gracious to us. Each and every person who has believed in Christ and has Christ in us has this hope. May the Lord help us to know how to live in this hope. Christ is our hope of glory and this hope starts from our individual

experience. If we do not have this experience of God in us, then it's very difficult for the whole church to have this hope. We thank God as Paul tells us, *according to my earnest expectation and hope, there is nothing that I am ashamed of*. There is nothing that we need to be ashamed of if only we live in this hope, so we strive for our Lord. Brothers and sisters, by God's grace, allow Him to give Himself to us through Christ. When you have Christ in you, you have the hope of glory. This is the grace that we have received from God. May the Lord help us in these last days to live lives full of hope. And because of this hope, we are filled with joy and then are able to follow the Lord forward so that God can accomplish His wonderful purpose in our lives.

*Beloved Lord we are full of thanksgiving. We live in a world without hope and have no hope in ourselves. But because of Your salvation, You have become the hope in us. You have brought God into us to be our hope, so we are now people of hope. We thank You for everything You promised will be accomplished. Give us endurance as we wait before You until one day this hope becomes reality. May this hope encourage and compel us so that we can all live for Your will. Lord, may Your Word come to pass in our lives. With one accord we give You all praise, glory and adoration. Please hear our prayer. In the precious Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, amen.*