

Unemployment is at 8.1%, the highest national rate of unemployment in 25 years. The Dow Jones Industrial average closed at 6,600 points, losing half its value over the past 10 months. AIG, the titan insurance company just posted the largest corporate quarterly loss in history at 61 billion dollars after receiving billions in help from the federal government. The question today: What are you hoping for? Are we, as Christians, living our lives just like the rest of society, tossed to and fro by the shifting sands of economic success and failure? Are we living as if our hope is in this world, our efforts and struggle shackled tyrannically to the strength of the dollar and the thickness of our wallets? God has called us to hope in so much more, in the unshakeable, the immovable, the 100% secure, in Jesus Christ. In Him there is no shadow of change, no inkling of failure, no possibility of deceit. He is our Rock, or source of hope and comfort, and God is calling us to throw our idols down and look to Jesus Christ again. He is faithful to keep His promises, and He has called us to better things than this world offers. He has called us to the true riches, the glorious economy of salvation.

Christians are shaped by a glorious future, an extravagant and luminous eternity with Christ. It is this confident expectation of glory that leads us to be willing to relate to others when there is no benefit to us, willing to forgive when we have been sinned against and absorb all the costs of that sin, all because our hope is not in the benefits of this world or its relationships, its glory or swiftly changing affections. Our glory is held in heaven in the multi-faceted glory of the person of Jesus Christ. Our Enemy, the Devil, will try to deceive us into believing that we can hope in other things, or that we cannot hope in the salvation of our God, so we are instructed and warned to strap on our helmets, protect our minds from the doubts of the Devil, and to stand firm in the gospel of Hope.

1. Take Up the Helmet of Salvation

- a. "receive to your hand"
 - i. Have we wrapped up our minds in the salvation given to us by God
 1. protection for the head/mind
 2. last thing taken up before the sword
 - ii. Do we have that hope fixed before our eyes (1 Pet 1:13; 1 Tim 4:10; 5:5; 1 John 3:3), that our Savior will deliver us from these attacks of the enemy?
 1. **1 Peter 1:13** Therefore, preparing your minds for action,¹ and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
 2. **1 Timothy 4:10** For to this end we toil and strive,¹ because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.
- b. A soldier cannot go on in battle without hope. It is hope that there is an end to this war, a deliverance from this struggle, a joyful reprieve that the Savior is coming that enlightens and strengthens us to stand firm.
(Saving Private Ryan bridge scene)
- c. Salvation:
 - i. saving, rescue, deliverance, to make safe
 - ii. Eph 5:23 - Jesus is the Savior of the Body
 - iii. Eph 2:8 - we have been saved through faith by God's grace
 - iv. Eph 1:13 - having heard and believe the gospel of your salvation...
- d. eternal, ultimate salvation OR immediate deliverance from Satan's attacks
 - i. SALVATION: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace, (Dan 3:17-18) "If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king.¹⁸ But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."
- e. This "helmet" is the hope of our salvation
 - i. 1 Thess 5:8-10 - helmet is the hope of salvation
 - ii. Salvation linked with hope in Titus 2:11-14, Ps 62:5-8; 71:14-15; Lam 3:24-26; 1 Pet 1:3-5; 9-13; Rom 5:2
 1. **Titus 2:11-14** For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,¹³ waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

2. **Psalm 62:5-8** For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him. ⁶ He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken. ⁷ On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God. ⁸ Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. Selah
3. **Psalm 71:14-15** But I will hope continually and will praise you yet more and more. ¹⁵ My mouth will tell of your righteous acts, of your deeds of salvation all the day, for their number is past my knowledge.
4. **1 Peter 1:3-5** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
5. **Romans 5:1-2** Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we ¹ have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ² Through him we have also obtained access by faith ¹ into this grace in which we stand, and we ² rejoice ³ in hope of the glory of God.

2. Salvation is Our HOPE

- a. Hope = "confident expectation"
- b. We trust in what we place our hope in
 - i. Col 1:23; 1 Thess 5:8; 1 Pet 1:20-21; Gal 5:5
 1. **Colossians 1:23** if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation ¹ under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.
 2. **1 Peter 1:20-21** He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for your sake, ²¹ who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.
 3. **Galatians 5:5** For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.
- c. What we depend on is what we confidently expect
 - i. Our hope is only as secure as the object in which we place our hope for salvation (just like faith), the faithfulness of the Promise is directly related to the strength of our hope.
 - ii. Our hope is in Christ for our salvation, the "already" and the "not yet"
 1. Already accomplished and secured by Christ, proven by His risen life and Holy Spirit presently poured out
 2. Not Yet completed until our bodies are redeemed and all things are brought together under Him when death is destroyed
 - a. 1 Corinthians 15:26-28; "the last enemy to be abolished is death...that all things may be subjected to Him...that God may be all in all."
 - b. Heb 2:8ff "now we do not see everything in subjection to Him..."
- d. Faith and hope operate on what is not seen
 - i. Heb 11:1 – faith is the proof of what is hoped for
 - ii. 2 Cor 4:17-18 – we look to the things that are unseen, which are eternal
 1. **2 Corinthians 4:17-18** For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.
 - iii. Gal 5:5 – through the Spirit, by faith, we are waiting for the hope of righteousness

3. Hope that we are saved from what?

- a. Death – Heb 2:14-15
 - i. **Hebrews 2:14-15** Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.
- b. Condemnation – Rom 8:1
 - i. **Romans 8:1** Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
- c. God's Wrath – 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9
 - i. **1 Thessalonians 1:10** and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

- ii. **1 Thessalonians 5:9** For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,
- d. Satan's attacks – Phil 3:20-4:1; Eph 6:11
 - i. **Philippians 3:20-4:1** But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.
 - ii. **Ephesians 6:11** Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.
- e. Our own flesh/sin – 1 John 3:8; 1 Cor 15:53ff
 - i. **1 John 3:2** Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears¹ we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.
 - ii. **1 John 3:8** Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.
- f. Illness, suffering, pain – Is 25:8; Rev 21:5-6
 - i. **Isaiah 25:8** He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.
 - ii. **Revelation 7:17** For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."
- g. Hatred and Evil of the World (see psalms) – 1 John 3:8; Ps 5:6
 - i. **Psalms 5:6** You destroy those who speak lies; the LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.

4. How do Satan's lies attack our hope of salvation?

- a. "You're condemned, the Law says so!"
 - i. See your hope in Christ – Romans 8:1
- b. "God is angry with you and is going to pour out wrath on you."
 - i. See your hope in Christ – 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9
- c. "Your flesh will never be overcome. You'll never change."
 - i. See your hope in Christ – 1 John 3:2,8; 2 Cor 3:18
 - 1. **2 Corinthians 3:18** And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord,¹ are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.
- d. "Your suffering is because God doesn't care."
 - i. See your hope in Christ – Hebrews 12:1-13
- e. "God cannot do anything to rescue you."
 - i. See your hope in Christ – Col 1:13-14; Rom 5:9
 - 1. **Colossians 1:13-14** He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
 - 2. **Romans 5:9** - Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.
- f. "God doesn't care enough to rescue you."
 - i. See your hope in Christ – Rev 1:5-6; John 3:16
 - 1. **Revelation 1:5-6** and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood⁶ and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.
- g. "You don't need to be saved from anything. Just live life to its fullest."
 - i. Eph 5:6; Romans 2:5-8
 - 1. **Romans 2:5-8** But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.⁶ He will render to each one according to his works:⁷ to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life;⁸ but for those who are self-seeking¹ and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.
 - 2. **Ephesians 5:6** Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

5. Our Salvation is Already and Not Yet

Romans 8:23-24 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees?

- a. **Objective Salvation:** “we were saved” ALREADY
- b. **Subjective Salvation:** “we wait eagerly...for the redemption of our bodies” NOT YET
 - i. Hope of Salvation from Gods’ Wrath:
 1. **Romans 5:9** - Since, therefore, we **have now been justified** by his blood, much more **shall we be saved** by him from the wrath of God. (emphasis added)
 2. **1 Thess 1:10** - and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.
 - ii. Hope of Salvation from Present Brokenness:
 1. **Phil 3:20-21** - But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.
 2. **1 Cor 15:42-44, 49** - “So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body...Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall¹ also bear the image of the man of heaven”
 - a. Imperishable – no longer subject to death, illness, weakness; completely strong and healthy, complete...Humanity as God intends it to be in all its glory...without sin
 - b. In Glory – contrasted with “dishonor”, glory is the overwhelming goodness...so good that it shines (Matt 13:43; Dan 12:3; Ex 34:35; Matt 17:2) because we will be remade into the image of the heavenly one, i.e. Jesus. This the hope of our salvation from this corrupt body, mind, and soul: we will be remade on the day of the Lord into a glorious community which is honoring to our Redeemer.
 - c. In Power – contrasted to weakness, that is the power to believe and do the will of God...no corruption or “flesh” with which to battle against the Spirit, therefore perfectly and completely desiring the glory and worship of the Lord in all things...finally to be brought perfectly in line with the glorious God and Savior!!
 - d. Spiritual – not “unphysical” but rather superphysical, even more “consistent with the character and work of the Holy Spirit” (see Rom 1:11; 7:14; 1 Cor 2:13,15; Gal 6:1; Eph 5:19)
 - a. Like Christ – (v49) “bear the image of the heavenly man” Jesus is the first fruits (v20) of the resurrection, the signifying reality that God is bringing “all things together under Jesus” (Eph 1:10) and this gives us great hope of salvation from ourselves!
 3. **1 John 3:2** - Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears¹ we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

6. How Do We Stand Firm With This Hope of Our Salvation

a. Remember the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

- i. The blood of the eternal sacrifice, Jesus the Lamb of God, was offered once for all time and He has risen from the dead to sit at the right hand of the Father, forever securing our salvation:
- ii. **Colossians 3:1-4** If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your ¹life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

b. Hebrews 10:12-25

- i. Perfected for all time those who are being set apart by the Spirit
- ii. Writes His desires and law upon our hearts by the Spirit (righteous)
- iii. Forgives us of our sins by His blood (forgiven)
- iv. His substitutionary sacrifice opened the way to God through His blood, we have confidence to enter into the presence of God:
 1. Draw near with a true heart
 2. With full assurance of faith
 3. Hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience
 4. Bodies purified by clean water (the Holy Spirit)
- v. Hold fast to this hope, because THE ONE WHO PROMISED IT IS FAITHFUL
- vi. Continue meeting together to spur one another on to love and good deeds as you see the Day drawing near

Conclusion: "Life is not a riddle, but a romance." - Timothy Stoner, *The God Who Smokes*

Ultimately, our hope IS Jesus Christ. He is our desire and our expectation, for heaven is not a place but a Person. Lamentations 3:24-26: "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." ²⁵ The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. ²⁶ It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

We live between the promise and the fulfillment, the engagement period of our eternal romance with our Savior, Jesus Christ. He has given us the ring, paid up the dowry, and is on His way to pick us up. This is the romance, the real, the hope of the Gospel. Your Savior is returning to complete what is certain and we can have hope! That is the confident expectation that He will complete what He has started with His own resurrection: freedom from God's wrath, freedom from sin's grasp, and freedom from this sin-broken world. "Behold, I make all things new!" is the promise He has given to His church (Rev 21:5), "these words are faithful and true."

Don't let the Enemy's attacks on your hope lead us to lose our confident expectation that Jesus Christ is more than enough, or that His promises will fail. Stand firm in His promise, work with joy to what He has called us to do right now, and be ever vigilant as we wait for the hope of our salvation, our Savior, our Redeemer, our King.