The Hope Salvation Brings - Pt. 2

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Preacher: Dr. Michael Staton

[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us.! First Baptist Church of Piedmont, not far from here.

In August, they'll have been there at that church for six years. Great church. His father is doing a great job of preaching and leadership there at that congregation. And so we are blessed to be able to have Brady with us this summer.
In the next hour, Jerry Cherian will be reading with us. He's teaching Sunday school right now. Jerry is one of our own, who is a member here. He's been away at Master's Seminary.
He's finished his first year of study there at TMS and is back here for the summer. And we are so thankful for their role and what the Lord is doing in their life.
And the Lord will use us to do that. We've also had, throughout the entire school year, Nathan Anderson, who I think is probably in Sunday school right now, but has been helping.
[1:25] Actually, he's right there. I didn't see you right there. I'm sorry. Has been interning with me this school year as well, learning some things with pastoral care and teaching and preaching. And I'm just really excited to be able to invest in these young men, some of them younger than others.

But that was a knock on you, Nathan, but that's all right. But we are excited to be able to minister in that way. We want to be a church that raises up leaders, sends out leaders, and equip saints, however the Lord would allow us to do that.
I don't know what you were doing 29 years ago today, but I do know what I was doing. I was getting dressed and getting ready to get married. This is our 29th anniversary.
And if you were with us, thank you. Since you couldn't be with us, I thought I would just take you back for a minute, let you know what you missed here. This would have been May 18th, 1996.
10-year-olds getting married there. Look at that. Look at that. Go back to the first picture. I'll tell you a little insider deal here. So my wife was upset with me on our wedding day because she thought my glasses were too big.
[2:43] Now, these were my small ones. I had really large ones. This was a downsize. But that was May 18th, 1996, 29 years ago today.

How about that? That's crazy. Happy anniversary. As is fitting, we'll be at church all day with a few things in the middle that we've got to cheer on and watch, which is our life, church, and cheering on our favorite team.
So we'll have a great anniversary. 2 Thessalonians 3. We are looking at this.
We're walking through the letter here verse by verse, but specifically last week and this week looking at verses 1-5 under the heading of the hope that salvation brings.
Because salvation not only rescues us from hell, but salvation only secures our future home in heaven, but also provides us with hope, a hope with which we live today.
[3:52] And this is one of the things I just want to encourage you to think about with me this morning, that we as God's people are not only called to be people of hope, but we are able to be people of hope because of the work of Christ on the cross for us.

That salvation, it doesn't just simply allow us to escape judgment, though that's true. It doesn't simply allow us to have the promise of heaven when we die, though that's true.
It also provides for us the ability to be able to live this life for the glory of Christ with great hope.
I just want to encourage you with that today. Because I know that the world can be wearisome, and it can tend to beat you down, and there are real challenges and some real hard things that we have to go through.
None of us are immune from that. And yet, in spite of those realities, because of our salvation, we can live with great hope.

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[5:03] This is what the Bible means in Philippians when it says, to live is Christ. Yes, to die is gain. We believe that. And so we look forward to our eternal reward in heaven.

But to live is Christ. Every day, a gift from the Lord because of the work of Christ. And we don't simply want to be believers and collectively a congregation that is only waiting for heaven.
We are eagerly anticipating His coming. We do recognize that our great reward is in heaven. We do recognize that earth is not our home.
We're just passing through. We affirm, as Hebrews says, that here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come. With all of our hearts, we long for that.
And yet, while the Lord has us here, we are to be hopeful and to be living life on purpose.
[6:06] We believe in the sovereignty of God, and because we do, we recognize and affirm that every single one of us, we are here on purpose. You're not alive by accident.

You're not living in this day and time by accident. God has you here by sovereign purpose.
If that's true, then while we eagerly anticipate being with the Lord in heaven, we should make much of every day we have to live for Christ.
Let us affirm, not just with our words, but with our lives, that we really do believe to die is gain, and yet while we wait, we proclaim to live as Christ.
To have the gift of life and breath every day is a mercy of Christ, a gift of Christ, and an opportunity to make much of Christ. And so we live with hope.
[7:17] We live with joy. For sure, sometimes with a broken heart. But hope, because of what salvation has purchased for us.

We're looking at three main headings. The first one we looked at last week. And the last week we looked at just this one thing. We learned from this text a bit of how to pray.
Finally, brothers, pray for us. And here's how he taught them of what to pray for. That the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you, and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not all have faith.
So two specific things he teaches them of how to pray. Number one was pray for God's word to be treasured and to be obeyed. That the word would speed ahead of them.
It means that the word would do its preparatory work. That the word of God would flow through them. And that the word of God would pave the way for them. That their lives, their ministries, would all of it be completely saturated with the word of God.
[8:34] And that while the word of God was doing a work in them, and the word of God was doing a work in the places they were going, also he says pray that it would be honored. That it would be obeyed.

That we would treasure the word and that we would obey the word. Verse 2 he says, also pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men.
We understand that there are times in God's providence where those who are faithful suffer. The Bible doesn't hide that.
In those moments we trust in the Lord. But we pray that the word of God would prosper.
That the ministry would move forward. We pray that those who are faithful and righteous would be delivered. That's how we pray unto the Lord. That's our desire. Are for those who are faithful to be able to do what God has called and gifted them to do.
[9:35] And while we trust in the providence of God, we are also aware that God has given us the powerful weapon of prayer. And we affirm and believe that God moves on behalf of the prayers of his people.

We do rest in the sovereignty of God. But the sovereign God has called his people to work.
And to use their gifts. And to pray. And the Lord, as only he can do, works all of that together. And we want to be found faithful to live in hope.
So we do believe the Lord at one point will bring history to a close. And that will be his way, his will, his word, his timing.
But until that day, or until we're called home, we want to be people who live in hope. People who pray for the word of God to be doing its work.
[10:38] And pray for God's people to be able to do his will. That's how to pray. Picking up on that today, let's look secondly, how to live.

How to live. He says in the end of verse 3, not all have faith. Verse 3, but the Lord is faithful.

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There's a purposeful contrast here. The very end of verse 2, not all have faith. The first of verse 3, but the Lord is faithful. And so how do we live?
Well, number one, we remember his faithfulness. You've got to live every day of your life aware of, thinking of, remembering his faithfulness.
As you remember that the Lord is faithful, remember, when you study the Bible, all of these truths are related. They're in a context. These aren't just random thoughts dropped in a vacuum.
[11:42] It's all together in an argument under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. So when he says in verse 3, the Lord is faithful, that is in part answering the question from verse 1 of how should we pray.

How do we pray? We pray the word of God would be treasured and obeyed. How do we live? We live by remembering his faithfulness. But here's the connection.
As you remember his faithfulness and live like that, that provides energy and motivation and strength as you pray. Why would you pray to a God who wasn't faithful?
So he's reminding you that as you live, remember his faithfulness, which will enable you to continue to be faithful in prayerfulness, which is what we looked at last week.
The Lord is faithful. The old hymn says, Great is thy faithfulness, taken from Lamentations chapter 3.
[12:52] All I have needed, thy hand has provided. Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, to me. The Lord is faithful.

If you think about what all that means for us, to declare the Lord is faithful, what is he faithful to do? There's a long list of things that the Bible gives us. I want to just highlight a few things, because there's a lot of biblical truth that we could let our minds meditate on in the faithfulness of God, but let's think of just a few things that as we declare the Lord is faithful, I want our minds to be active of what that means for us.
The Lord is faithful to us. We know that. 1 John 1.9, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins.
He's faithful not just to forgive us, he's faithful to cleanse us. That's the second part of 1 John 1.9, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
[14:06] So the Bible affirms that our Lord is faithful to forgive us, and he's faithful to cleanse us. Now, if you just kind of let your mind follow the train of thought here, if we are sinners, and we are, and if sin deserves judgment and death, which it does, then the greatest news we could have is that God has provided a way for us to find salvation, and he has.

And he forgives us, and he cleanses us. But the obvious fear is, if he has forgiven me, and if he has cleansed me from unrighteousness, is it possible that I could fall?
Fall out of his hand, fall out of his protection, fall out of his salvation. And we know the Bible says, the Lord is faithful not just to forgive us and to cleanse us, but the Lord is faithful to keep us.
He's faithful to keep us. Jude 24, now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy.
The same grace that forgives and cleanses is the same grace that keeps us. Jude 25 rightly says, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time, and now, and forever.
[15:55] In other words, the glory and the praise for your salvation today belongs only to the Lord, and for all time will belong only to the Lord.

Because he is faithful to forgive us, to cleanse us, and to keep us. And if he's faithful to forgive us, and to hold us, to keep us, we can affirm a fourth truth, and that is that he is faithful to get us safely home.
Philippians 1.6 says, I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.
The Lord is faithful. Now let's not get lost in the context here. Let's remember the context. How do we pray?
We pray for the word of God to be treasured and obeyed. How do we live? Well, the first thing is we remember his faithfulness.
[17:04] So, on those days where you're struggling for joy, remember his faithfulness. On those days where you find it hard to pray, remember his faithfulness.

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If we've got a bunch of people who just graduated high school, getting ready to go to college, getting ready to go off to the workforce, getting ready to go off to whatever the Lord has next, when that excitement and joy turns to frustration and fear, remember his faithfulness.
Let your mind dwell on the faithfulness of God. This is how we live. This isn't just theology we affirm. This is also how we live. Everything we know to be true about God is intended not only to shape how you think, but to affect how you live.
And this is where people get messed up. Because there's a lot of people in the world who love to study theology, but it never penetrates to their life.
[18:22] To be clear, to know God absolutely includes the mind. It absolutely includes what you know. But the way you know if what you think has reached your heart is the question of does it impact how you live?

And so it makes sense that the argument here is first how to pray, that's our submission to the Lord, and then how to live. But even as we think about how to live, the very first thing we are to consider is His faithfulness.
There's an argument there that is airtight in the text. That you live first by thinking of how He lives. That you are faithful first by remembering He is faithful. And when you're tempted to say something like, well, I don't need the church or I don't go to church because it's filled with sinners.
Remember, the Bible doesn't hide this. The end of verse 2, for not all have faith. But that's not how we base our life upon what we do.
[19:55] The unfaithful are not our standard. Who is? Christ, verse 3, but the Lord is faithful. So, when we're tempted or when others are tempted to say that I'm going to return evil with evil because that's what they did to me, remind yourself, they're not your standard.

Or, even when those in the church let you down and you're tempted to say, what do I do with that? Remind yourself, even in the church, leaders, while incredibly important in the Bible, are not ultimately your standard.
They are to be your example. Let's be crystal clear, 1 Peter 5. Leaders in the church, pastors in the church, servant leaders in the church are absolutely to be a faithful example, but the only one who is our standard is Christ.
So, for you to understand how to live demands that your first thought is not about you, but about Christ.
But the Lord is faithful. When you think of your life, your plans, your giftedness, your ministry, let your first thought be the faithfulness of God.
[21:39] How do we live? We remember His faithfulness. There's a second thing we are to remember and that's that He guards His people.

He guards His people. Verse 3, but the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one. Now, I want you to notice that this short promise here, that He will establish you and guard you, does not change a single circumstance of your life.
It does, however, provide a lens through which you interpret all events that happen to you. He will keep you and He will guard you.
Remember His faithfulness and remember that He guards His people. Now, lest we take this to an unbiblical application, let's make sure we are honest with ourselves, honest with each other.
Paul is writing this letter. Paul will be put to death for his faith. And in that moment, it was the Lord who established him and guarded him in such a way that in that moment he would be able to say what he had written in Philippians 1, to live as Christ, to die as gain.
[23:26] the Lord was with Paul every bit as much when he faced death as he was when he preached and saw conversions.

Remember the faithfulness of God. There's a third thing He gives us of how to live. Remember His faithfulness, remember He guards His people, thirdly, remember to obey the Lord.
Remember to obey the Lord. Verse 4, and we have confidence in the Lord about you that you are doing and will do the things that we command. This is how we're to live.
We think of His faithfulness, we think of His nearness, now we go obey Him. people have is if someone's not converted, if they don't truly know Christ, the Holy Spirit's not within them, their first thought is what can I do?
How can I live? What action should I try to put into motion? But even in the Christian life, we remember the words of Galatians, I am crucified with Christ, Christ.

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[24:50] Yet it's no longer I who live, it's Christ who lives in me. Even in your Christian life, your first thought is not yourself, it's Christ. But once you think of His faithfulness, and once you remember His nearness, now you are set free to go do the things that Scripture commands us to do.

We are to obey His word. Now again, I just want to point out to you the strand of logic that runs all throughout this passage. Verse 4, do the things that you're commanded to do.
Obey the word. Which just so happens to be the exact answer to the prayer of verse 1, pray for us that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored.
So we pray for each other and for ourselves to honor and obey the word. And as we obey the word, verse 4, that becomes the purpose for our prayers.
That we would obey His word. Which helps us to see, I think, if we evaluate our prayer life, if our prayer life tends to focus on our convenience or does it focus on His glory.
[26:22] Because our prayers in verse 1 and 2 are supposed to be about the word being honored. and in verse 4, our lives are supposed to be about doing what we've been commanded, which means to make that add up, we must be praying for spiritual obedience and our lives marked by spiritual fruit.

But if we're only praying for things to be convenient for us, not only will we not pray like verse 1, we won't live like verse 4.
Which shows us the connection between your theology, your prayers, and your life. This is why as a congregation here, we take such great effort to try to train and equip people in the word.
Because we long to live lives that are marked with obedience and submission to the Lord and to live in such a way that the only explanation for it is this is the grace of Jesus Christ.
We don't want to just live like the world and hope for heaven at the end. We don't want to just pray like the world and hope for heaven at the end. We want to live like Christians who have been changed by God's grace, who pray for things that we otherwise wouldn't pray for, who hope in things we otherwise wouldn't hope in, not because we're going to waste 80 years of our life and slide into heaven, but we want to make the most of every single day to live for Christ.
[28:10] And when the end comes, the Lord will guard you and establish you, and in that moment you'll understand to die is gain. So how do we pray?

pray, we pray for God's word to be treasured and obeyed. How do we live? We remember his faithfulness, we remember his promises, and we follow his word, which leads us to a third reality and that is how to love.
I love the way the Holy Spirit unfolds this. Verse 5, May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and the steadfastness of Christ.
That the Christian life is not simply about doing things, it's about having even your affections changed because you've been transformed from the inside out.
We talk about how to help someone to know if they're in Christ, 1 John gives several tests biblically to look at to see if someone is in Christ.
[29:26] The way you've heard me phrase that before would be to say what do you believe, how do you live, and who do you love?

That salvation impacts your mind, what do you believe, your life, how do you live, and your affections, who do you love?
That one of the ways you can know whether or not you're truly in the faith, truly in Christ, is simply asking yourself, does the love of God impact you, and has God's love changed you, and does your heart now love the God that before salvation, your heart was against.
How can I know if I love God? Well, here's one of the ways. Are you willing to rejoice in anything the Lord does that brings Him glory? Will your heart rejoice in anything the Lord does that brings Him glory?
How do we love? Well, first, we live in the love of God. Verse 5, may the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God. Just thinking about the language and the text here, may the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God.
[30:59] It's talking about moving you along. It's taking you on a path. May the Lord get your heart to a place where it's focused on the love of God.

It's talking about removing obstacles that would cause you to miss that. Let me just show you how this same idea is used. Turn back just a page or two to 1 Thessalonians 3.

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Let's show you how it uses the same thing here. In 1 Thessalonians 3, verse 11, Now may our God and Father himself, our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you.
Same idea. May he direct us to you. Verse 5, chapter 3. 2 Thessalonians, May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God.
So in 1 Thessalonians he says, May the Lord direct us to you. May he get us to you. May he move us from where we are to be able to get to you, to be with you. Same idea in chapter 3 verse 5, May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of Christ.
[32:10] May the Lord remove any obstacle of this world that would hinder you from dwelling on his love for you. This is why what you think impacts how you live.

And how you live gives evidence of who you love. We live in the love of God.
Second way that we are to love is we focus on Christ. May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.
Did you catch that? May the Lord God get your mind to dwell on the love of God and get your mind to focus on the steadfastness of Christ.
Don't miss the argument here. How do you live? How do you live? You live by seeing to it that you love Christ.
[33:34] And you live by loving the steadfastness of Christ. How was Christ steadfast?

Christ he endured the cross despising its shame and was obedient even to the point of death on a cross.
You see the argument? You live by loving the right things and the things your heart loves the most are the things Christ has done.
The world focuses on self. The gospel focuses on Christ. The world is happy to use Christ if they think that will help them fulfill themselves and their own agenda that's not conversion.
Conversion is I've died to self and everything that's good in me is owed to the steadfastness of Christ.
[35:02] How do you pray? You pray for the word of God to be treasured. How do you live? By remembering his faithfulness his promises obeying his word.

What motivates you to do that? Well, that's how we love. We let our minds get to the love of God and let our minds rest in the steadfastness of Christ.
Christ. If you are a believer, this is how we're to pray. This is how we're to live.
And these are the things that we love. God if you're not a believer, this is why it makes no sense to spend your time trying to earn salvation because you can't do it.
You just fall upon the grace and mercy of Christ. you call unto the Lord and receive by grace through faith the gift that He has purchased.
[36:27] You'll never be good enough to make it to heaven on your own. You've got to get your mind away from your works and let it rest and settle on His work.

His steadfastness. His faithfulness and His love. So whatever you're experiencing today, whatever joys, whatever pain, whatever questions and uncertainties, whatever frustrations and annoyances, whatever burdens or anxieties you have in your life today, 2 Thessalonians 3, 3, but the Lord is faithful.
This is where the believer finds rest. The Lord is faithful. The Lord is good. The Lord is sufficient. He is enough. So you want to flood your home with the continual truth that our hope is in the faithfulness of God.
And when your children say, but what if I, but what if you, but what if we, but what if that, you remind everyone who dwells in your home, the Lord is faithful.
[38:15] And with that truth, we have something to pray for, something to live for, and someone to love.

so that whatever circumstances come our way, we may be shaken, but we will not be crushed.
We may be tearful, but we will not despair. Because while others do not have faith, verse 2, the Lord is faithful.
He is our hope. He is our standard. He is the one who has forgiven us, cleansed us, secures us, and will get us safely home.
For all of the what about questions that come into your mind, part of that is what it is to be human. We think about circumstances, we think about possibilities, but we rest in the truth.

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[39:34] Our God is faithful. Our Father, we thank you today for your word and pray that your spirit would use it to bring us hope, to bring us obedience, to help us to live as you've called us to live.

Lord, we pray even this moment for any who may not know Christ as their Savior, we pray that even this moment they would confess their sin, that even in their heart this moment they would turn their hope and their heart to you, that through your grace you would grant them the faith to believe and to respond in obedience.
Even this moment may they call upon the name of the Lord and be saved. And Lord, for any believer in the sanctuary this morning who has a faith that is struggling, that perhaps they've become too consumed with their own weaknesses or the pains of the world, may they pray as you've taught us, live how you've shown us, and love because you have first loved us.
We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Before you're dismissed, I want to take a moment and invite you back this evening. We have our final evening service of the semester.
We take June and July off and then start evening service back up in August, but this is our last evening service for a few weeks. We're going to sing together, take the Lord's Supper together.
[41:12] We'll be in the Word together this evening from 5 to 6. We also will have a brief church conference. You've got the details from that in your email Tuesday and Thursday. We'll begin our service by looking at those things.

It's going to be a great time of worship, a great time of remembering the Lord's sacrifice. That will be at 5 until 6. Hope you can come back and be part of that tonight. God bless you. Love you, church family. You're dismissed.
Thank you so much for joining us via live stream this morning. If you have any questions whatsoever about our church or the ministries that our church provides, please visit us at fbcmustang.org.
We would love to follow up with you and get to know you better. As always, we try to emphasize if at all possible, if you could be here physically present with us, we would love that and that'd be a joy to serve you in that way.
But thank you again for joining us via live stream today. Have a great day. God bless you.
[42:42] God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you.

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