Hope for the Future of the Church sermon for 11-06-16

Hope is a word that expresses expectation of something good.

There can be true hope and false hope.

The expectation can either be appropriate and reliable or it can be improper and false.

*\*When I use the word “church” in this sermon, I am collectively referring to all*

 *the individuals around the world who have accepted Jesus as their Savior and Master*

 *no matter what local church organization they are members of.*

**Your expectations of the final outcome of the church will determine your beliefs of what the church should be about right now.**

And many people have wanted the church to become something it was never intended to be simply because their hope for the church was a false hope.

Their expectations for the good of the church came from the flesh instead of the Bible.

* There is no hope for the church to become accepted by the world.
* There is no hope for the church to transform the world into a utopia of goodwill and good morals.
* There is no hope for the church in compromise with humanity and their religions.
* There is no hope for the church in offering mankind a peaceful cohabitation and pleasant life.

**The hope for the church has never been found on earth; it has always been and always will be found in eternity.**

If you are setting your sights on us as the church experiencing all that God has for us while on this earth, you will sadly be disappointed.

Lift your eyes and look further down the way to the future beyond this mortal life!

The hope we cling to is that Jesus tells us the truth; so the afterlife as He described is what we are living for now.

The Bible tells the church what Jesus says we can expect in eternity.

# There is Hope for a glorious Rapture.

* Whether dead or alive, when Jesus returns our bodies will be transformed into immortal bodies; this event is called the Resurrection of the Dead.
* After the resurrection, we will all join Him in the air; and that is called the Rapture.

**1 Corinthians 15:51-53** (NLT)

**51**But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! **52**It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. **53**For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.

# 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

**15**We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Thess+4%3A15-17&version=NLT#fen-NLT-29579a)] **16**For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Thess+4%3A15-17&version=NLT#fen-NLT-29580b)]will rise from their graves. **17**Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever.

# There is Hope for righteous Judgment.

* Every believer will be judged by Jesus when He comes back—not to determine if you are saved from hell, but to determine what you deserve for your actions while alive on earth.

# Romans 14:10-12

**10**So why do you condemn another believer[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Rom+14%3A10-12&version=NLT#fen-NLT-28252a)]? Why do you look down on another believer? Remember, we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. **11**For the Scriptures say,

“‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord,
‘every knee will bend to me,
    and every tongue will declare allegiance to God.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Rom+14%3A10-12&version=NLT#fen-NLT-28253b)]’”

**12**Yes, each of us will give a personal account to God.

# 1 Corinthians 3:13

**13**But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person’s work has any value.

* This judgment determines if your life was profitable for God’s glory and future use.

# 2 Corinthians 5:10

**10**For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body.

# There is Hope for a Union.

* After a life of faithful service to Jesus, the believer will be rewarded with complete purity and an eternity in complete unity with Jesus Christ.
	+ Those who love Him will long for this.

# Ephesians 5:22-32

**22**For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. **23**For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. **24**As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.

**25**For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her **26**to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God’s word.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=eph+5%3A22-32&version=NLT#fen-NLT-29291a)] **27**He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault.**28**In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. **29**No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church.**30**And we are members of his body.

**31**As the Scriptures say, “A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.”[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=eph+5%3A22-32&version=NLT#fen-NLT-29296b)] **32**This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one.

# Revelation 19:7-8

**7**Let us be glad and rejoice,
    and let us give honor to him.
For the time has come for the wedding feast of the Lamb,
    and his bride has prepared herself.
**8**She has been given the finest of pure white linen to wear.”
    For the fine linen represents the good deeds of God’s holy people.

# There is Hope for Authority.

# The church may be looked down upon by the rulers and governments of this world, but after Jesus comes back, we will rule and reign with Jesus.

# We will be kings and administer God’s authority across the new world and we will be priests offering worship to God.

# Revelation 1:6

**6**He has made us a Kingdom of priests for God his Father. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.

# Revelation 3:21

**21**Those who are victorious will sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat with my Father on his throne.

# Revelation 20:6

**6**Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. For them the second death holds no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him a thousand years.

# There is Hope for a New Jerusalem.

# God is going to do away with the universe as we know it and recreate another one!

# New Jerusalem will be the center of God’s worship and His glory.

# Revelation 21:1-2

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. **2**And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

* This place and the people who are worthy to live there are a gift from God.

# Revelation 21:9-27

**9**Then one of the seven angels who held the seven bowls containing the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come with me! I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

* This city is both a place and a people—the church.

**10**So he took me in the Spirit[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=rev+21%3A9-27&version=NLT#fen-NLT-31026a)] to a great, high mountain, and he showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. **11**It shone with the glory of God and sparkled like a precious stone—like jasper as clear as crystal.**12**The city wall was broad and high, with twelve gates guarded by twelve angels. And the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were written on the gates. **13**There were three gates on each side—east, north, south, and west. **14**The wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were written the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

# I believe that the construction material for this city will be the profit of our holy lives lived while on earth. God is going to build this city with our lives.

# 1 Corinthians 3:12-13

**12**Anyone who builds on that foundation may use a variety of materials—gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. **13**But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person’s work has any value.

* **1 Peter 2:5**

**5**And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What’s more, you are his holy priests.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Peter+2:5&version=NLT#fen-NLT-30365a)] Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God.

# So…we will live in a city built with our good deeds and we are clothed in the linen that represents our good deeds…

# The good deeds that God has predestined for you to perform are crucial!

**15**The angel who talked to me held in his hand a gold measuring stick to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. **16**When he measured it, he found it was a square, as wide as it was long. In fact, its length and width and height were each 1,400 miles.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=rev+21%3A9-27&version=NLT#fen-NLT-31032b)] **17**Then he measured the walls and found them to be 216 feet thick[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=rev+21%3A9-27&version=NLT#fen-NLT-31033c)](according to the human standard used by the angel).

**18**The wall was made of jasper, and the city was pure gold, as clear as glass.**19**The wall of the city was built on foundation stones inlaid with twelve precious stones:[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=rev+21%3A9-27&version=NLT#fen-NLT-31035d)] the first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, **20**the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.

**21**The twelve gates were made of pearls—each gate from a single pearl! And the main street was pure gold, as clear as glass.

**22**I saw no temple in the city, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. **23**And the city has no need of sun or moon, for the glory of God illuminates the city, and the Lamb is its light. **24**The nations will walk in its light, and the kings of the world will enter the city in all their glory. **25**Its gates will never be closed at the end of day because there is no night there. **26**And all the nations will bring their glory and honor into the city. **27**Nothing evil[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=rev+21%3A9-27&version=NLT#fen-NLT-31043e)] will be allowed to enter, nor anyone who practices shameful idolatry and dishonesty—but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

# There is Hope for Glory.

# The purpose for our very existence to be glorious and therefore bring God glory.

# Only the church will accomplish the purpose for which they were created.

# Ephesians 1:6

**6**So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=eph+1%3A6&version=NLT#fen-NLT-29173a)]

# Ephesians 1:12

**12**God’s purpose was that we Jews who were the first to trust in Christ would bring praise and glory to God.

# Ephesians 2:1-7

Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. **2**You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=eph+2%3A1-7&version=NLT#fen-NLT-29192a)] He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. **3**All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God’s anger, just like everyone else.

**4**But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, **5**that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God’s grace that you have been saved!) **6**For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. **7**So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus.

# Ephesians 3:10

**10**God’s purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.