

# Sermon Discussion Guide- Week of August 18, 2019

## Abounding in Hope: The Anchor of the Soul

Pastor Temple- 8, 9:30, 10:30 Selah, Pastor Hall 10:30 Sanctuary

### Getting Started- Life Updates, Prayer Requests & Opening Question (15-20 min)

- Anything to share about personal events since you last met?
- Are there any joys or concerns that you would like to share with the group for the closing prayer time or for group members to hold in prayer during the week? (please note them below for later)

Opener Question: How do you define hope? If Christian hope were more prevalent in the world today, what kind of impact do you think it would have?

### Review the Sermon (15 min)

Please read aloud the sermon scripture, Hebrews 6:13-20. Know that it is ok to skip some questions below in order to manage the time for discussions in each section.

**<sup>13</sup> When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, <sup>14</sup> saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants."  
<sup>15</sup> And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised.  
<sup>16</sup> People swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. <sup>17</sup> Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised,**

**he confirmed it with an oath.<sup>18</sup> God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. <sup>19</sup> We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, <sup>20</sup> where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.**

- If you had to give a one-minute summary of the sermon message this week, what would you say?
- How is Christian hope more than just wishful thinking?

- Abraham and Sarah had hoped to have children one day (verses 14-15). Because God had promised it, they waited 25 years for the promise to be fulfilled. Why would God issue a promise so far in advance (see verse 18)?
- What kind of time table do we normally give to our prayers and God's promises? What happens when things don't go according to our preferred timing?
- How is the metaphor of Christian hope as an anchor (agkura) for our souls (verse 19), an encouragement to you?
- If hope is the anchor, metaphorically speaking, what do you believe the chain represents?
- How do you respond to the quote by Thomas Aquinas, "...there is no stability in this present life in which the soul may find security and rest other than in God."?
- In verses 19-20, the name of Jesus is lifted up as a forerunner of hope and a high priest forever in the presence of God. How is this source of hope external to us and eternal?
- How is Jesus, the forerunner of our hope, a "firm and secure" (bebaian) steadying presence when storms strike in our lives?

### **Other Related Readings (10 min)**

- Would a volunteer please read out loud Luke 7:18-23.
- How would you describe the hope that John the Baptist and his followers were hanging onto in verses 18-20?
- How had Jesus already shown he was "the one" they were hoping for in verses 21-22?
- As Messiah, God's anointed one, what other scriptural promises may Christ's followers look forward to seeing fulfilled in Him?
- Why might John the Baptist have been unsure about if Jesus was the messiah?
- In the verses that follow, Jesus spoke well of John and his ministry as one who was even greater than a prophet. How is John the Baptist an example for us in expressing to Jesus Christ both his hopes and his questions about the identity and activity of God's messiah?
- How do you understand the message Jesus gives in verse 23, "Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."?

### **Personalizing and Applying The Message (15 min)**

- As you reflect upon the sermon and the additional reading above, what are points of encouragement or challenge for you personally?
- Who or what do you turn to in times of emotional distress?
- In addition to the people around us, how might hope in Christ be a source of support and an anchor for our souls in such times?
- What have you gained from this conversation that may help you when facing disappointments with life events or feelings of disappointment with God?

### **Witness & Closing Prayer (5-10 min)**

- How have you helped others find hope in troubled times?
- How might Christ Church grow more to be "a dispensary of hope" to people in this community?
- The group leader or another volunteer who took notes on the prayer requests shared earlier in the meeting, may now lead the group in closing prayer.