That You May Know Your Hope

SPEAKER	Matt Ryniker
DATE	Sunday, June 22, 2025
PASSAGES	Ephesians 1; Ephesians 2; Colossians 1; 1 Thessalonians 1; Hebrews 10
MESSAGE	Begins at 1:11:46 in the service

THE BIG IDEA

Paul runs a kind of health check on the churches he writes to — faith, love, hope — and when he looks at Ephesus he can tick off the first two. So he prays for the third: that the Spirit would open their eyes to an inheritance so large you need a miracle to take it in. Hope is not the thing left over when everything else has failed. It is something you actively hold.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The invitation is to be *in* Christ, not near him. Not in the splash zone of Christianity — related to Christians, married to one, raised by one — but joined to Jesus himself.
- God was never talked into loving you. He planned this before the foundation of the world and has been eager about it the whole time.
- Faith, love and hope show up together in Ephesians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians 13. Paul seems to use the three as a metric for a healthy church.
- All three are active. Paul writes of a *work* of faith, a *labor* of love, a *steadfastness* of hope. Hope has verbs in it.
- The Holy Spirit is not a power tool for getting more done. He is the presence of Jesus, everywhere at once, and the guarantee of the inheritance.
- Christ enthroned above every power is not a separate topic from your rescue. His victory over his enemies *is* your inheritance.

- God does not only love his enemies before they come in. He still loves you after years of walking with him — which, Matt said, is the harder thing to remember.
- The wedding supper, the redemption, the bride — all of it rests on his shoulders, not yours. That is why you can afford to dwell on it.

▶ 1:11:46

Matt opened somewhere other than the text. He asked the room to pray for Iran, and he was honest about why: “World leaders, especially presidents, never call me back. But I do talk to God, and he has a great deal of influence over the hearts of kings.” He prayed for de-escalation, for stable peace across Israel, Iran and their neighbors, and for the Persian church — “help them flourish as a vibrant branch in the body of Christ.”

Two challenges before the text

▶ 1:14:39

Two air conditioners, the small playground, and — after the hail — three roofs, all in a short stretch. The board’s habit of not spending money the moment it arrives is why none of it required a loan; the new pews they wanted are still waiting. His ask was about commitment rather than the balance sheet: it does not sit right with him that the same families always carry it. He noted that he does not know who gives and does not want to. Melinda prepares the statements and keeps a separate key.

▶ 1:17:20

The second challenge was to pray for the body. Matt described walking the empty sanctuary, pew by pew — we are creatures of habit and sit in the same places — blessing the people who belong to each one. If that is too many, start with whoever you greeted this morning. Why ask God for what he already knows people need? “He cares about my fellow man more than I do. I don’t know why, but he likes it. He asks us to do it.”

In him — not near him

▶ 1:18:19

Week two in Ephesians, and the phrase that keeps repeating is *in him*. Redemption in him. Inheritance in him. Matt’s way of putting it: we do not want to stand in the splash zone of Christianity. Being surrounded by Christian people, being the child of believing parents or married to a believer — none of that is nothing, and he did not want to disparage it, but it is not the thing on offer.

> "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth."
>
> EPHESIANS 1:7–10 ↗

Matt went after a particular distortion here — the idea that the cross twisted the Father's arm, that Jesus went so far out of his way the Father figured he might as well be nice to "these poor pathetic people on this rocky planet," or that mercy is a tax write-off. "He did that on purpose. He was premeditated. Even before you begged and asked and fasted and prayed over and over again, his desire was to bless you."

▶ 1:22:34

The inheritance of Ephesians 1:11–12 is unearned and enormous, and giving it brings God glory precisely because it is so over the top. Which is why Matt refused the smaller version of the offer: you are not invited to be Jesus' buddy or to study under him like a good student. "He's inviting you to follow him all the way to his cross, to join his death through faith, and to share in his resurrection. Christianity is not all about being a lot like Jesus — that's too small in scope."

The Spirit is presence, not a power tool

▶ 1:23:49

Belief, in Ephesians 1:13–14, is not a deed — it is receiving a gift — and it comes with a seal. Here Matt took a deliberate detour aimed at his own tribe. As a charismatic he believes the gifts are distributed today; the correction charismatics need is that the Spirit is not equipment. "It's like we have a lot to do, and we understand that what we need is power tools to get more done." The point of Pentecost is that Jesus is no longer confined to whichever town he happens to be standing in. He is present everywhere at once — with us, among us, in us. "His goal and his purposes from the beginning of time revolve around this topic of intimacy. He wants to be our God. He wants us to be his people. And he wants to dwell in our midst."

Faith, love, hope — Paul's checklist

▶ 1:26:39

When a passage confuses him, Matt looks for the seams. Verse 15 opens *for this reason*, which is a good phrase to underline.

> "For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints."
>
> EPHESIANS 1:15–18 ↗

Faith, check. Love toward the saints, check. What Ephesus still needs is the Spirit coming in power to open their eyes to their hope — because it is too big to simply be described to someone. You will need a miracle to get your head around it.

▶ 1:29:07

That trio is a pattern, not a coincidence. It is the famous ending of 1 Corinthians 13:13, and it opens Colossians too — faith in Christ Jesus, love for all the saints, "because of the hope laid up for you in heaven" (Colossians 1:3–5). Matt credited Steve for pointing the pattern out, then admitted he was "just blatantly plagiarizing," and used the moment to nudge anyone thinking about the Perspectives course to actually sign up — himself included. "It's a spiritual gift, RSVPing."

▶ 1:30:39

> "Remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ."
>
> 1 THESSALONIANS 1:2–3 ↗

A *work* of faith — Abraham's faith was something he showed. A *labor* of love, because love is not a passive vibe; Galatians 5:6 has faith working itself out through love, and John 15:13 puts the greatest love in a deed. And a *steadfastness* of hope, which means hope takes choices and some longsuffering.

Matt spent a minute on how badly the culture handles the middle term. Romantic infatuation gets treated as love's summit, and feelings come and go — "Oh, it's Wednesday, I feel like I'm married to you today. But Thursdays are rough, I'll see you Friday." The other counterfeit is love as self-expression, which he named plainly as including the sexuality and gender debates but said is bigger than them: it makes love about indulging me. "The Bible's view is more profound and enduring. It's not a feeling and it's not all about me. It's an action, and it's about you." Which reaches back to God himself — when we say God is love, we do not mean a detached well-wishing. His love is sacrificial and active.

So how do you actively hope?

▶ 1:34:37

> "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith… Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another."
>
> HEBREWS 10:22–25 ↗

All three again, and hope has a verb attached: hold fast. Matt allowed himself one clickbait line — the Bible never actually says anything about going to church — and then made the real point. The command is to fellowship, not to occupy a building. "Christianity is not like a low-budget podcast. We're not just here to listen to a speech. We minister to one another. We're a body — we don't express that like an archipelago of separate brains that just think the right things."

▶ 1:36:30

And the object of the hope is not fragile. 1 Peter 1:4–5 calls the inheritance imperishable, undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven and guarded by God's power. It is secure, so you can anticipate it, hold it, and let it shape what you do.

▶ 1:37:30

"Hope is only dumb when it's in something dumb," Matt said — pushing back on the usage where hope is what is left after defeat, the dynamic equivalent of go home. Real hope is trust in a promised satisfaction that has not arrived yet. He noted, with some pleasure, that this is a fitting thing for a church called Hope Chapel to take on itself.

Why the enthronement and the graveyard are the same paragraph

▶ 1:39:35

Paul goes from immeasurable power to Christ raised, seated far above all rule and authority, all things under his feet (Ephesians 1:19–23) — and then, without a breath, "you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked" (Ephesians 2:1–3). It reads like changing the subject. It is not.

"His victory is our inheritance," Matt said. Christ stepped into our darkness; we killed him in our ignorance and hatred; the Father judged him worthy and raised him. Now the enemies going under his feet are the prince of the power of the air, the forces that hijack and tempt us, mankind frothing in its

hatred of God, and death. Everything that preys on you, isolates you, discourages you, kills you. His victory over them is your rescue — "much like the damsel in distress in a movie where the hero saves the day."

▶ 1:42:20

Then a warning aimed at evangelicals. We are practiced at praying *God loves you so much* over the atheist or the pagan, and we forget it applies to the person who has been walking with Jesus for twenty years. "He's not just after people who don't like him. He loves his enemies. He also loves you. And that's hard to remember."

> "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ — by grace you have been saved — and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."
>
> EPHESIANS 2:4–7 ↗

What he plans to show is not a grudging "that was fine, thanks, others did better, you can sit in the back." Grace is a gift, not a wage (Ephesians 2:8–10) — we are his workmanship, and even the good works were prepared in advance for us to walk in.

The waiting room with one angel

▶ 1:46:46

Matt closed with the ache everyone in the room already knows. Psalm 16:11 promises fullness of joy in God's presence, and we spend our lives chasing a thinner version of it: the beach photo on the principal's wall, and then you are at the beach and your stomach hurts; the party down the street where you will finally have deep and abiding peace, and then you get there and do not know who to talk to. Even the genuinely good times run out. "There's a peace that's deeper that you still haven't tapped into. You've been designed for these things."

His picture for what is coming was deliberately small and then not: if you were parked in a heavenly waiting room with a fake ficus and exactly one angel, you would never want to leave — and that is before you see the place Jesus built with you specifically in mind, and long before the fiery blaze of his presence.

▶ 1:49:33

So hope actively: think about these things, decide by them, say them out loud, let yourself be encouraged. It is not indulgent, because the whole project — the bride, the wedding supper, the redemption — sits on his shoulders and not on yours. This is too important a job to be yours. And God is not the kind of well-wisher who says go in peace, be warmed and filled, and does nothing; he chastises humans for that. He intends to satisfy the desires he gave you. Matt ended by praying Paul's own prayer back — for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, for enlightened eyes, that we would know the hope to which we have been called and revel in it.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

SCRIPTURE IN THIS MESSAGE

- Ephesians 1:7–10
- Ephesians 1:11–12
- Ephesians 1:13–14
- Ephesians 1:15–18
- 1 Corinthians 13:13
- Colossians 1:3–5
- 1 Thessalonians 1:2–3
- Galatians 5:6
- John 15:13
- Hebrews 10:22–25
- 1 Peter 1:4–5
- Ephesians 1:19–23
- Ephesians 2:1–3
- Ephesians 2:4–7
- Ephesians 2:8–10
- Psalm 16:11

FOR YOUR HOPE GROUP

1. Matt described the “splash zone” — near Christianity without being in Christ. Where have you settled for proximity, and what would being in him look like instead?
2. Run Paul’s checklist on yourself: faith, love, hope. Which one is thinnest right now, and what has worn it down?
3. If hope is something you hold fast rather than something you feel, what would holding fast look like on a bad week?
4. Matt said it is hardest to believe God still loves you after years of walking with him. Does that land, and where does the doubt show up?
5. The whole thing rests on his shoulders, not yours. Name one worry you have been carrying as though it were yours to secure — what changes this week if it isn’t?

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Matt Ryniker is Hope Chapel’s senior pastor — his own description of the job — and reports to the church’s governing board, who he cheerfully calls his boss. He and his wife Mandy have been held up from Hope’s own pulpit as an example to the congregation. He spent a stretch of his working life as a public school teacher, and he still teaches the parent dedication classes where families commit to raising their children to follow Jesus — a theme that runs straight into this message.

Watch the full message:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5eOaWAyOE80&t=4306s

These notes summarise a message preached at Hope Chapel in Austin, Texas. They are a reader's aid, not a transcript — scripture references link to the full passage so you can read it in context.