

**Psalm 71: 1-16; “But I will Hope Continually”, A Communion Sermon prepared  
by Pastor Paul Rendall for the Morning Worship Service on  
November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013.**

The word “hope” is used twice in these verses that I have just read to you. It is used in the language of both declaration and resolution; that is, this is something that David as a believer would most certainly do in times of trial and difficulty; he would hope in the Lord. Verse 5 says, “For You are my hope, O Lord God”. And verse 14 says, “But I will hope continually”. The Christian grace of hope, which God gives to every person who seeks Him for it through Jesus Christ our Lord, is the desire and the expectation that God will save them and that He will help them in the times of their greatest trials. The question that I want you to ask yourself this morning is this: “Am I experiencing and exercising the grace of hope in relation to my faith and my walk with my Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ?” Hope was one of the “sure mercies” which was bestowed in grace upon King David because of the future grace which would be purchased for him by our Lord’s obedience and His sufferings on David’s behalf. Hope is something every Christian must have and exercise in order to live their life to the glory of God. We read in Romans 3: 24 that the Christian is saved in hope. Here in these verses we find the declaration of what David believed with all of his heart; that God Himself was the basis of all of his hope. We will see as we go through this study, that this was also the resolution of David’s mind; what he determined that he would do in times of trouble; he would hope in God continually. So, this morning I want to bring these truths to your attention in relation to our partaking of the Lord’s Supper. Let me give you 3 truths which every Christian’s hope is founded upon. 1<sup>st</sup> of all, I would like to direct your attention to fact that the Christian’s hope is a sure hope because it is based upon their having found a strong refuge in the Lord Jesus Christ in whom they trust. (verses 1-5) 2<sup>nd</sup> – Let us observe that the Christian’s hope is a sure hope because it is based upon their firm belief that God is the One who upholds their physical frame and their spiritual strength. And 3<sup>rd</sup> –The Christian’s hope is a sure hope because they do not know the limits of Christ’s righteousness and His salvation.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – The Christian’s Sure Hope is based upon Christ’s being their Strong Refuge.**

Verse 5 says: “For You are my hope, O Lord; you are my trust from my youth.” Any Christian should know that when they are in times of trouble, times of discouragement, times of fear or dread of man, that they should look to the Lord in faith for the answer to whatever predicament that they are in. But sometimes they fail to do this. They rely upon their own strength and their own wisdom. And sometimes, then, when their faith grows low, they may even neglect their pursuit of God, and they may fall into greater discouragement yet because they were not remembering that God is their strong refuge. They thought that living the Christian life was living it according to their own understanding, and they were not thinking of their Christian life in terms of their having to seek God for wisdom and grace on a daily basis. They thought that Christ having died for them, that nothing would basically change in the way that they would address their problems. They would still live upon their own resources, and live by and according to the wisdom of this world. But I want you to see this morning that this is a recipe for deep discouragement, and one which could have been avoided if the truth of the Bible that we are studying here this morning is heeded. Let us learn this lesson from David, the man after God’s own heart. David only found his refuge in God when he prayed. This whole Psalm is a prayer by David to God, so that he might find his refuge in God. Even so, dear Christian, you will only find God to be your strong refuge when you pray and cry to God for help and deliverance for whatever difficulties that you face. “Men ought always to pray”, Jesus says in

Luke 18, verse 1, “and not to faint”. If we will pray, then we will not faint as much in the times of adversity.

You should also understand, that the way that you will learn to pray and seek God, that He might be your refuge in the times when you are persecuted or oppressed in spirit, is when you see that this is God’s express intention and design in your sanctification; to allow you to go through certain trials and difficulties, and in the process, He is expecting that you will hope in Him. Your hope is built upon your faith, and your faith is upheld by Christ Himself. “In You, O Lord, I put my trust; let me never be put to shame.” And verse 5 – “For You are my hope, O Lord God, You are my trust from my youth.” As you trust in Christ, you will learn to totally rely upon Him as your wisdom and your strength. God is thereby glorified in your dependence upon Him, O Christian. He is not glorified in your independence or by your thinking that you are self-sufficient. Certainly you cannot come through your trials in a way which will bring glory to Him, if you have no hope in Him; if you do not see the Lord God as your rock and your fortress, or if you ignore the promises of His Word. Your salvation from beginning to end is based upon God’s promises. Your being delivered from sin is based upon a promise. Your growth in your Christian life is based upon your hoping in God continually that the work that He has begun in you, He will complete until the day of Christ. This is all your desire. This is all your expectation. Deliverance from the oppression of the Devil’s attacks and deliverance from the hand of wicked men will require that you exercise the grace of hope. And being righteous before God is based upon the promise that God will forgive and help you, the one who is trusting in Jesus. The person who comes to God, the true and the living God, comes to Him believing that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. One of the rewards of exercised faith, is the ability to hope in God, and to continually see Him as your hope. Notice the language of verse 2. “Deliver me in Your righteousness, and cause me to escape”. God delivers His people in His own righteousness and not their own righteousness. God’s righteousness is Jesus Christ and what He has done for sinners. Christ has come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Sinners we are, by nature and by practice before we were converted to Christ; before we were saved from our sins. But when we believe in Christ, He takes away our reproach in the sight of God. He has borne all of sins and our shame at the cross. He has risen from the dead to give us light and life.

The reason that David had hope was because he believed this great truth of God’s righteousness and lived it out as an Old Testament believer. He believed in God’s faithfulness. He believed that he would be delivered in God’s righteousness from all of his enemies. He believed that God was kind, and that He was wise in all of His dealings with His people. He believed that he would be delivered from all of his fears, and from all of his oppression of spirit. He could pray and entrust himself to God’s care. He believed that these good things would come based upon what God would do for him, in His (that is God’s) righteousness. Believing these great truths about his God, the only true and living God He trusted in, he exercised his faith and his hope. This leads me to ask whether you are exercising faith and hope in Christ day by day? Do you see him as the faithful covenant-keeping God, who watches over and cares very deeply and very personally for each one of His people? Then you will pray to him for deliverance from all of your sins and from the schemes of the Devil and from all wicked men. Psalm 57: 1 says – “Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me” “For my soul trusts in You; and in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, until these calamities have passed by.” “I will cry out to God Most High, to God who performs all things for me.” You see, all of David’s being able to engage in this spiritual activity of hope was based upon the grace of God which was given to him through the future work of redemption which would be performed by our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Rock of refuge for every believer, from the wrath of God against their sins. He is the strong tower that we run to and are safe. (Proverbs 18: 10) When the evil designs of Satan and

wicked men come against us, He is our strong refuge, and our rock of habitation to which we may continually resort as we go through all of our trials. “You are my hope, O Lord God; you are my trust from my youth.” Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all. (Psalm 34: 19) O those of you who have trusted the Lord from your youth, will you not praise Him this morning as you partake of the bread and drink of the wine, that He has shown such mercy to you as to save you? And will you not rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory that because He has given you the grace to save you, that He will not withhold from you any good thing. When you have the desire to walk with Him uprightly you can actually begin to do it by the power of Christ. Certainly you will need great grace at every point to sustain and nourish your soul. But that is what Jesus Christ died to bring to you, and therefore you can hope in Him.

**2nd – Let us observe that the Christian’s hope is a sure hope because it is based upon their firm belief that God is the One who upholds their physical frame and their spiritual strength.** (verses 6-13)

Verse 6 says – “By You I have been upheld from birth; You are He who took me from my mother’s womb.” “My praise shall be continually of You.” “I have become as a wonder to many, but You are my strong refuge.” “Let my mouth be filled with Your praise and with Your glory all the day.” I want you to notice the strength of David’s belief; that God not only created his physical being, He also says that God upheld him from his birth. This is something that bred hope and confidence in him. A part of our faith is believing that it is God who upholds us and keeps us in life; it is He who keeps our soul. It is He who keeps our mind in the strength which He wants for us. He gives us the strength which will enable you to do and accomplish all of His purpose. This includes the times when, as it says in verse 7, “I have become a wonder to many.” I think that sometimes we forget all the many trials that King David had to go through in his life. We remember that God gave him strength and faith to face the giant Goliath and slay him. But we are less likely to remember how he was hounded about the countryside; pursued by Saul and his men who were seeking his life after this great victory. Saul was a wicked man because he let his envy of David get the best of him. And he thought that David would try to take the kingdom away from him; when it was God who took it away from him and gave it to David. But God upheld David during that whole 10 year period of time when Saul was trying to kill him. And then we often do not remember that it was God who upheld David when his own son Absalom rose up in rebellion against him and even tried to kill him through Ahithophel’s counsel; he who had supposedly been a good friend to David.

This is what is being talked about in this particular Psalm that we are studying this morning. It is described in verse 9 and following. David had become a wonder to many because He had sinned with Bathsheba and had Uriah her husband killed to cover it up. And because of it, he had fallen under the discipline of God. These wicked men who were pursuing him to take his life thought that since David had fallen into sin that God was no longer for him, He was against him. And they therefore thought that their own wicked schemes would prevail, to try and take the kingdom away from him. But they forgot, or they never understood, the doctrine of Election. David was one of God’s Elect people. And as such, he rested himself in faith, upon the promises of God; even when everything was against him. And is what you should do as well, dear Christian. It says in Proverbs 24: 15 – “Do not lie in wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; do not plunder his resting place; for a righteous man may fall seven times and rise again, but the wicked shall fall by calamity.” And in Micah 7: 8 it says, “Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; when I fall, I will arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me.” “I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him, until He pleads my case and executes justice for me” “He will bring me forth to the light; I will see His righteousness.” This is the same thing that David is saying in these verses. This is why he prays in verse 9, “Do

not cast me off in the time of old age; do not forsake me when my strength fails.” “For my enemies speak against me; and those who lie in wait for my life take counsel together, saying, ‘God has forsaken him; pursue and take him for there is none to deliver him.’”

David recounts his troubles to the Lord in his prayer, but he doesn’t stop there. He says in verse 12 – “O God, do not be far from me; O my God, make haste to help me!” And in verse 14 he says, “But I will hope continually, and will praise You yet more and more.” He hopes continually because He knows how God had faithfully watched over his life. He knew that it was God who had preserved him and upheld him from his mother’s womb. God would not stop upholding him now, even in the worst of situations where he had failed God miserably. God would still persevere in patiently teaching him what he needed to learn. God had brought him to repentance, as is evidenced in his prayers of Psalm 51 and Psalm 32 and many other Psalms. Wicked men always forget that “those whom God loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son that He receives”. They sometimes mistake discipline for wrath, when in the case of God’s Elect, His discipline is love. They forget that He will correct His own sometimes, even with “the stripes of men”. This was why David could hope in God, and still call God, “his strong refuge”. And this was the reason that he could pray, “Let my mouth be filled with Your praise and with Your glory all the day.” He knew, and He believed in the lovingkindness and faithfulness of God. W.S. Plumer in his commentary says this: “There are no depths of earthly woe, from which the arm and mercy of God cannot rescue his suffering children.” And John Calvin says: “We must be brought down even to the gates of death before God can be seen to be our deliverer.”

Those who come to a thorough repentance over their sins have every reason to hope in God, and they have every right to receive the comfort of the promises of God. Proverbs 28: 13 – “He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.” Sometimes the Christian runs into trouble with their Lord because they will not confess their sins, and perhaps they aren’t really willing to forsake some particular sin. Turn with me over to Psalm 32, verse 3. Here David says, “When I kept silent (about my sin), my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long.” “For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer.” “I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden.” “I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.’” “For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You in a time when You may be found; surely in a flood of great waters they shall not come near him.” “You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance.” Did God’s giving David these sure mercies mean that David did not have many things to learn about himself, and living the life of faith and obedience? No, not at all. In verse 8 God says to him, “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.” “Do not be like the horse or like the mule, which have no understanding, which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, else they will not come near you.”

Will you not remember, dear Christian, that God knows your heart better than you do yourself, and that He has many spiritual lessons to teach you? He can tell what you have really learned and what you have not really learned. Do not be proud and think that you know it all; that somehow you have God and the Christian life all figured out. God’s ways are higher than your ways, and His thoughts are higher than your thoughts. He is sovereign and He orders all things after the counsel of His own will. Christ had to die in order to purchase for you the grace that you would need to live the Christian life. Christ had to die for all of your smallest sins as well as the greatest ones. And so, receive His teaching to you; receive His providential ordering, His leading of you, with the grace of hope in exercise. And pray that you might really change to become a person who is pleasing to Him in every respect; a person who can be useful to Him and to His church. It glorifies God when you hope in Him continually in this way; when you fear not, and when you have made the Lord your strong confidence.

**3<sup>rd</sup> - We need to take notice of the truth that the Christian's hope is a sure hope because they do not know the limits of Christ's righteousness and His salvation.**

When you come to this place where you are willing to be taught by the Lord remember that He has much more to give you in truth and grace than you are ready or willing to receive at any given time. But as you remember Christ, remember that He suffered and died not only so that all of your sins would be forgiven, but in order that you might grow and become fruitful in service to Him. He expects you to use all the grace that He is giving you. Before we partake of the Supper I would like to read to you a short section from Spurgeon's sermon on Psalm 71, verse 16 – "I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of Your righteousness, of Yours only." Spurgeon says: "Do you not think that large numbers of God's people are contented with a very poor form of spiritual life, because they do not think it possible to advance further? They have little joy, and little strength, because they are content with the joy and strength they have, and do not aspire to more. We make a great mistake, dear friends, some of us, as to the whole style of our life. I met with a story, which seemed to me a rather pretty one. There was a young woman, fair to look upon, who was seen by a very wealthy man, who determined to make her his wife. She had been brought up to habits of rigid economy, for the family was straitened in circumstances. Her father was not of the very poorest, certainly, but still poor enough; and on her marriage-day he gave her all that he could afford, namely, five pounds, and that was put into the bank. Her husband, on that day, told her that he had placed money in the bank in her name, and he handed her a checkbook, that she might draw out whatever money she desired. Well, having been properly brought up, she spent her money very, very carefully. Five pounds was an enormous sum to her, and she felt frightened at running through so vast a sum. She found, however, that in the circle in which she was called to move, her five pounds was at last gone; and so she even ventured to draw a check for ten pounds. In considerable fear she went down in the carriage to the bank, to see whether they really would give her ten pounds all at a time. And when she got it she was surprised and overjoyed. She drew again, until at last she had actually spent fifty pounds! One day her husband said to her, "Don't you know how to manage a checkbook, my dear? I scarcely understand your account at the bank." "She modestly replied, "I hope I have not been extravagant". "You little goose," he said, "I put a thousand pounds in the bank for you, and I thought that you would soon expend it." "Most women would. "But instead of that, you have only spent fifty pounds, and you cannot behave yourself as my wife on such a pittance." "Remember, you may be a poor man's daughter, but you are a rich man's wife; so just begin to spend according to my riches, and not according to your father's economy." Spurgeon then says: "This is our case in reference to our Lord Jesus." "We know we are a poor man's children." "My original father "broke" long ago." "There was nothing left of all the family estate." "When father Adam was in business, he became a bankrupt, and he left us nothing but a sea of debt." "But then we are married to King Jesus, who is heir of all things, and he puts the checkbook of the promises into our hands, that we may draw from the riches of divine grace." "Do not let us live according to our natural quality, but let us live according to our supernatural elevation, and begin to spend according to the wealth of our Husband." "Very few women need encouragement to spend money; but very many Christian women and Christian men need very great encouragement to draw upon the goodness of God, and to live at that high and noble rate of grace to which they are entitled by the election of God, by the call of the Holy Spirit, and by their heavenly union with the Lord Jesus Christ." "I wish that we could pluck up courage, and say, "I will go in for great grace, and eminent holiness, and close conformity to Christ." "I will draw upon His riches in glory, and spend at a royal rate." "Why should I not show forth all that grace can do? Is there any reason why I should be weak and wavering?" "I would be as David, yea, as my Lord." "Yes, I will rouse myself, the Holy Spirit helping me, and I will seek the highest and best things that that a Christian man can know." "I will go."

Dear Brethren: As you have come down front to partake of the Lord's Supper, remember that the Lord Jesus Christ purchased your salvation at great cost to Himself. He suffered and bled and died, and the cost of redeeming you was very great to Himself. No other person could ever have purchased you, and paid the great price for your salvation; but Jesus could, and He did. Therefore, as it says in 1 Corinthians 6: 19 – "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?" "For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's." But remember also the words of the 15<sup>th</sup> verse of our text. "My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness and Your salvation all the day, for I do not know their limits." Just as that woman that Spurgeon mentioned did not really know how rich her husband was; neither do you and I know just how rich our Lord Jesus Christ is in His grace. We do not know the limits, we cannot count the numbers of blessings which have come to us, and will come to us through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore hope continually and praise Christ yet more and more. Right now we are declaring that His righteousness and His blood are the basis of our salvation. When we leave the table today, we will go out to do His will in the strength of the Lord God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.