

THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE

LAMENTATIONS 3:21-26 • TV280B

A television broadcast sermon delivered
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7TH, 1986

by

HENRY T. MAHAN

Transcribed, edited and published
MARCH 31ST, 2010

HENRY T. MAHAN TAPE LIBRARY

Zebulon Baptist Church
6088 Zebulon Highway
Pikeville, KY 41501

Lamentations 3:21-26

“This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.”

Here is a passage of Scripture that I will be reading from the Old Testament. The passage is taken from the **Book of Lamentations, 3:21**. Actually, I am going to be speaking from verses **21 through 26**.

Let me just read **verse 21** to get your attention and to introduce my subject for today, **“THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE.”** Here is the text, from **Lamentations 3:21**: The prophet Jeremiah said, *“This I recall to mind, therefore, I have hope.”*

My friends; the prophet Jeremiah is speaking here of his hope of eternal life. He knows some things. He was called of God, inspired of God and sent of God. He knew that life on this earth is but a fleeting shadow. Life on this earth is like a flower that blooms for a moment and then it is gone. He knew that we would be here just a brief time.

THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE

LAMENTATIONS 3:21-26 • HENRY T. MAHAN

He knew that *“It was appointed unto men (all men), once to die.”* All of his friends and relatives had died. He knew that *“It was appointed unto men, once to die.”*

He knew this; He knew that after death there was a judgment of God in which an account will be given according to the things written in God’s Book; he knew that.

He knew that after death and the judgment, that there was an eternity, an eternal existence for all men, either in the presence of God, or either eternally separated from God. He knew that and you know that.

Job kept asking again and again, *“If a man dies, shall he live again?”* He is not like the tree that you cut down that falls and never grows again. No, man will live again.

Jeremiah, knowing these things, felt in his heart that he had a hope of eternal life and eternal glory in the presence of God. His hope to enjoy that glory and to share in that inheritance, was in his heart and therefore, he wrote this: *“When I call all of this to mind, I say to you, “therefore, I have hope.”*

It ought to be interesting to us, to you and me, to read what this man wrote concerning his hope. He tells us that he has a hope of eternal life. He gives us a reason for that hope. It ought to be interesting to you and me, especially, since we know that he wrote under divine inspiration.

You know, the apostle Peter exhorted us to *“be ready to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason for the hope that is in us and to do it with meekness and fear and to glorify God.”*

Jeremiah said, *“I have hope of eternal life.”* He is going to tell us the foundation of that hope. He is going to tell us why he had such a strong hope.

My friends, it is possible for you and me to have a strong hope of eternal life. Somewhere between proud presumption which I fear, and dead despair, which I flee, there is a blessed hope. There is blessed hope between proud presumption and dead despair.

Somewhere between this fleshly, proud presumption (familiarity with God) that we are seeing so much of today, there is hope. There is no real hope in this fleshly familiarity, where someone claims *“God tells me to do this and God tells me to do that,”* talking as if God lives next door and as if they have a private telephone line between two houses. Somewhere between that fleshly familiarity with God and slavish fear, there is a blessed hope.

Somewhere between modern decisions and cold fatalism (where a man makes a decision and decides he is going to heaven when he dies), there is a blessed hope. Jeremiah gives it to us here. This is one of the richest passages of Scripture on assurance and confidence to be found anywhere in the Word of God.

He said, “*When I call this to mind, I have hope.*” Let me show this to you. I want you to get your Bible and look at **Lamentations, Chapter 3:22**. What is the reason for your hope Jeremiah? What is the reason for your hope of eternal life and eternal joy?

First of all: In **verse 22**, it says; “*It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because His love and compassion fails not.*” In other words, when Jeremiah speaks of hope of eternal life, the first word he uses is the “*Lord’s mercies.*” “*My hope for eternal life,*” he said, is based on God’s mercy.

His hope was not based on his merit, but God’s mercy. My hope is not based on my morality but on His mercy. My hope is not based on my works, but on His mercy; that is my hope of eternal life. “*When I call this to mind, I have hope. It is the Lord’s mercy that I am not consumed.*”

You know, a man can build his hope of eternal life either on his merit or God’s mercy but not on both. You can’t do it. Paul said, “*Salvation is all of grace or all of works,*” but not both.

If you will look back at **verse 19** of this **third chapter of Lamentations**, the prophet said, “*I remember my affliction; I remember my misery; I remember the wormwood and the gall.*”

In other words, he knew himself to be a sinner in need of God’s mercy. I would like for you to listen to David’s prayer. David is saying the same thing. He said, “*Have mercy upon me O Lord, according to Thy loving kindness, according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies; blot out my transgressions.*”

My friend, this is what the Publican, the one who was justified, prayed in the temple. He said, “*Lord, be merciful to me a sinner.*” So, when Jeremiah says, “*When I call this to mind; I have hope;*” what is the source of your hope? What do you call to mind?

What he called to mind was God’s mercy. “*God delights to show mercy. God is plenteous in mercy. This is a faithful saying that Christ came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief.*” Christ said, “*The Son of man came to seek and to save the lost.*”

In **Romans 5:8**, the Scripture says, “*But God commended His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*” Christ said, “*I didn’t come to call the righteous; I came to call sinners to repentance.*”

When you ask a truly inspired person (a person who knows God), what is your hope of eternal life? When you ask this of a person who knows himself to be a sinner, who knows that he has “*sinned and come short of God’s glory.*” The first thing he will reply is, “*It is the mercies of the Lord. It is the Lord’s mercies that I am not consumed.*”

There was an old preacher in Richmond, Va., a black man, named John Jasper. During the Civil War he preached to huge audiences. People came from everywhere to hear this man preach. He was a great preacher of the Gospel. Someone asked him one time, “When you get to heaven and they stop you at the door, and someone says, “John Jasper, what right do you have to be here in

this celestial city, in the abode of God, in the majestic Heavens, what right have you got to be here?"

John Jasper said, "I ain't got no right to be here at all. I'm not here on my rights; I am here on the Righteousness of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour. I am here on His righteousness. I am here on the mercies of another." My friends; that is the foundation of hope, the hope of eternal life; "*it is the Lord's mercies.*"

All right, look if you will at **verse 23**. In **verse 22**, Jeremiah said "*it is the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed.*" In **verse 21**, he said; "*When I call this to mind, I have hope.*" My hope is in the Lord's mercies. In **verse 23**, listen to this: Jeremiah had hope of eternal life because "*God's love is new every morning. God's compassion fails not; it is new every morning. Great is His faithfulness.*"

My friends; God's love is everlasting. God's love is infinite. God's love is as old as the beginning. Those whom He loves now, He has always loved. His love is as old as the hills, the morning stars and the everlasting Covenant. "*His love is new every morning.*" Do you see that? "*God is faithful.*"

Jeremiah did not boast of his own faithfulness. When he talked about his hope of eternal life, he did not say, "I've been faithful." He said, "*God is faithful. Great is Thy faithfulness.*" I will tell you this friend, if our hope of eternal life is based on our faithfulness, we have great cause to doubt and fear.

People always say, "I'm just full of doubts and fears." You have every reason to be full of doubts and fears if you are basing your hope of eternal life on your faithfulness.

I will tell you this, God is faithful. That is what Jeremiah said, "*I have hope because God is faithful and great is His faithfulness.*" He said, in **Malachi 3:6**, "*I am the Lord, I change not.*" Everything about us changes. God does not change.

**"Change and decay, all around I see
O Thou, that changest not, abide with me."**

Romans 11:29 says, "*The gifts and calling of God are without change.*" **Hebrews 13:8** says, "*Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever.*" God is faithful! Jeremiah, what is your hope of eternal life? "My hope is God's mercies and God's faithfulness."

God is faithful to His Word. In **Numbers 23:19** says, "*God is not a man that He should lie, neither the Son of man that he should repent. Hath He said, and shall He not do it? Hath He spoken? Shall He not make it good? Hath God said, Shall He not do it? Hath God spoken? Shall He not make it good? God is faithful. Great is His faithfulness!*"

God is faithful to His purpose. He has a purpose. In **Romans 8:29**, it says; "*Whom He foreknew, He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son. Whom He predestinated, He also*

THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE

LAMENTATIONS 3:21-26 • HENRY T. MAHAN

called, and whom He called, He justified, whom He justified He glorified.” That is His purpose; He will be faithful to it.

“For what shall we say to these things, if God be for us, who can be against us?” He cannot fail. He cannot deny Himself. *“The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal; the Lord knoweth them that are His.”*

God is faithful to His Son. In **John 6:37**, our Lord said, *“All that my Father giveth Me shall come to Me, and him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out. I came down from heaven, not to do My will but the will of Him that sent Me. This is the will of Him that sent Me that of all that He hath given Me; I will lose nothing.”*

When Israel came out of Egypt, there wasn't even a dog left behind. The whole nation came out. I will tell you this, the whole nation of the redeemed, the whole nation of the elect, the whole nation of God's eternal Covenant, will be redeemed by Christ; *“He is faithful!”* That is what Jeremiah says, *“When I call this to mind; I have hope; God is merciful to sinners and God is faithful.”*

Here is the third reason: In **verse 24**, Jeremiah had hope because he said, *“The Lord is my portion.”* What does he mean preacher? What he is saying is, “The Lord is my life; the Lord is my provider; the Lord is my nourishment, therefore, *“I will hope in Him.”*

He is my Father. He will not fail me. He said, *“If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.”*

He is my husband. He has entered into an eternal relationship with me. He is my Surety. He will fulfill my every need. The Lord Himself is my salvation and my hope.

My friends; this is where today's modern religionist has missed this whole thing called “salvation.” Salvation is not a thing; it is a person. I know that salvation is an experience but experiences are not salvation. Christ is salvation.

People today, talk of pardon; they don't talk about the person who pardons. People today, talk about the place and say, “I can take you to the place.” I think that I have heard a song that goes like that, “I'll Take You to the Place.”

They don't talk about His presence; they talk about the place and not the presence. They talk about the gifts but don't talk about the Giver. They talk about the blessings and don't talk about the Blessed One.

The Sons of Levi, the priestly tribe, didn't own any property. They did not have any property or any land. God was their inheritance. God was their portion. They lived on God. They lived by God.

When a great violinist picks up a violin and plays it, the music is not in the instrument, it is in the violinist; it is in the hands of the master. A violin is just a piece of wood put together in a certain shape with strings. Left alone, it will stay there forever and never sound a note; it will never alone sound a note.

When an amateur comes along and plucks at it, it will sound terrible. There is nothing worse than a terrible violinist. When a master picks it up, the music is in him, in his hands. I say to you, the music of the life of God is in God and not in me or you.”

Somebody wrote this, (and try if you can, to lay hold upon this): “*The Lord is my portion.*” The Lord Himself is my portion. He is my life, my nourishment; He is all things.” Somebody wrote this poem years ago; I don’t know where I found it or who wrote it. I can’t give credit to the author because I don’t know who the author is. The person who wrote this found something out, and they found out what I am trying to say:

**“Once it was the blessing
Now, it is the Lord.**

**Once it was the feeling
Now, it is His Word.**

**Once the gifts I wanted
Now, the Giver I own.**

**Once I sought for healing
Now, I seek Him alone.**

**Once it was my working
His it now shall be.**

**Once I tried to use Him
Now, He uses me.**

**Once the power I wanted,
Now, the Mighty One.**

**Once for self I labored
Now, for Him alone.**

Do you see what I am saying? Jeremiah said, “*When I call to mind these things, I have hope.*” These things are the Lord’s mercies. It is not my merit, but His mercies and the Lord’s faithfulness to His Covenant. It is to His purpose, to His name, to His Word, to His Son, and the fact that the Lord Himself is my portion. If the Lord Jesus Christ is my life and my portion, “*He is the True Vine and I am the branch.*” He is the Head and I am the body.

THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE

LAMENTATIONS 3:21-26 • HENRY T. MAHAN

He won't be in Heaven and leave me behind. You see; He is our forerunner and He is already, "*For us, entered within the veil*" and has occupied glory. He said, "*I go to prepare a place for you.*" Being one with Christ, where He is, I am. What He has I have. Do you see that? He is my portion! That is the thing that I want you to see, more than anything else I have said this morning, "*The Lord is my portion.*"

Fourthly: In **verse 25**, Jeremiah had a good hope of eternal life because he knew, "*The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him.*" The Lord is good, the Lord is merciful. The Lord is gracious. "*The Lord is good to them that wait for Him.*"

"*The Lord is good to them that seek Him.*" Do you know why? First of all, those who seek the Lord's mercy, the Lord's grace and the Lord's person, do so with a deep sense of need. Sin seeks forgiveness. Guilt seeks grace and misery seeks mercy.

We seek the Lord because we need Him. We seek Him like blind Bartimaeus, who cried "*Jesus, Thy Son of David, have mercy on me.*" We seek Him like the woman with the issue of blood, who had tried all the physicians and was no better and only grew worse. She said, "*If I can get to Him; if I can find Him.*" She was seeking Him. I need Him. I come to Him because I need Him. Do you see that? The seeking sinner comes out of a need. Christ meets and honors that need.

Second: Those who seek the Lord, seek Him only in Christ. Charles Wesley wrote these words:

**"Jesus lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,**

**While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high.**

**Hide me, Oh my Saviour, hide,
Til the storm of life is past**

**Safe into the haven guide,
Oh receive my soul at last."**

Your answer is only in Christ. The Lord is merciful, the Lord is gracious and the Lord is good to them that wait for Him. Those who seek the Lord, seek Him only in Christ. They are not satisfied with anything else. They won't take anything else. They want Him and they wait for Him and seek Him with all their hearts. They do it sincerely; they seek the Lord sincerely.

He said, "*Ye shall seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all of your heart.*" There is a heart seeking and a heart pursuit. In the next place, those who seek the Lord, do so continually. Like Jacob of Old, who said; "*I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me.*"

THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE

LAMENTATIONS 3:21-26 • HENRY T. MAHAN

My friend; this goes with that thing of waiting on God and those that linger at His doorstep. I'm talking about those, who like Mary, "*sit at His feet.*" They wait on the Lord. You can't find many in this generation who are willing to wait on the Lord. They want everything instantaneously. They want everything right now. They will just let men give it to them instead of waiting on God.

I am going to sit at His feet. I want to hear Him say, "*Thy sins be forgiven thee.*" I want to hear Him say, "*Rise up and walk.*" I want to hear Him say, "*Well done, thy good and faithful servant.*"

I will just sit at His feet. I will be patiently waiting at His feet. I want to do business with the King. "*The Lord is good to them that wait on Him.*" David wrote this in **Psalm 27, verses 13 and 14**; "*I would have fainted except that I believe to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.*"

He said, "*I would have fainted.*" All the things about me, the circumstances, the environment and everything were against me. All hope was just about gone. He still said, "*I would have fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait, I say, on the Lord.*"

Again, he said, "*Wait on the Lord. The Lord is good to them that wait on Him.*" Are you willing to wait at His feet? He is "*good to them that seek Him.*" I will tell you this; those who wait upon Him and seek Him know that He is the only source of mercy. He is the only source of forgiveness and pardon. There is no other source. I won't be satisfied with anything else; I must get to Christ. I must lay hold upon Christ.

I seek Him because He has the mercy. I seek the Lord only in Christ and I seek Him sincerely. I'm not playing games. Don't play your games with this. You better be sincere. The Scripture says, "*You will find me when you search for Me with all of your heart.*" Do it continually and don't give up. Don't be discouraged or distracted.

Listen to this, "*Those who seek the Lord will be found.*" He said, "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness; they shall be filled.*"

Here is my fifth reason: In **verse 26**, Jeremiah had a good hope because he knew this, "*Salvation is of the Lord.*" Listen to **verse 26**, "*It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.*"

Oh, my friends; that is where his hope was. Do you see those five things? Jeremiah said, "*I know my misery; I know my affliction; I know the wormwood and the gall. I know the flesh and I know the world; I know all of these things.*"

I know there is a life to live and a death to die. I know there is a judgment to face and an eternity to spend. "*But, this I recall and therefore I have hope; I recall the Lord's mercies, His loving kindness and tender mercies.*"

THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE

LAMENTATIONS 3:21-26 • HENRY T. MAHAN

I recall this, that *“He is faithful; He will not fail.”* He is faithful to His purpose; He is faithful to His Son and He is faithful to His Word. God is faithful. *“He shall not fail.”* He is faithful in all things.

“He is my portion.” I have cast my lot with Him. I have committed my soul to Him. He is my portion and He will not disown me. I know this, those that wait on Him, He is good to them.

Someone said last week, “No sinner has ever perished coming to the door of mercy as a beggar. NO sinner has ever perished casting himself at the feet of Christ.” *“He is good to them that wait for Him.”* Don’t you listen to any other kind of religion. Don’t you take any other kind of hope, but rather sit at His feet and wait on Him. *“He is good to those that seek Him.”*

Last of all; you can have all the confidence in the world (of an eternal hope) if the salvation that you have is of the Lord. The reason is because *“Salvation is of the Lord,”* in its planning. He planned it and He purposed it in Christ Jesus.

From before the foundation of the world, God Almighty ordained that there would be a *“new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.”* That new heaven and new earth will be populated by a people redeemed by the blood of His Son.

That is His everlasting Covenant. Christ is the Surety and the Great Shepherd of that everlasting Covenant. God planned it. Not only that, God executed this salvation. *“In the fullness of time, He sent His Son into the world, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them who were born under the Law that we might receive the adoption of sons.”*

“It pleased God to bruise Him,” to nail Him to a cross for our sins for the salvation of our souls. Salvation is of the Lord in its execution.

Salvation is of the Lord in its application. The apostle Paul said, *“When it pleased God who separated me from my mother’s womb to reveal His Son in me.”* God revealed Christ to the apostle Paul. He applied that salvation; *“Salvation is of the Lord”* in its application.

Watch this, *“Salvation is of the Lord”* in its sustaining power; *“We are kept by the power of God through faith.”* God keeps His people. He will not suffer us to fall. Though we stumble, we shall not be ultimately cast down. *“He upholdeth us with His hand.”*

God will sustain that salvation. *“He that hath begun a good work in you, shall finish it, (shall perfect it and shall complete it) in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Watch this; *“Salvation is of the Lord”* in its ultimate perfection.” Some day He will take us out of the grave and take us to glory. He will make us in the exact image of His Son. We will forever reign with the Lord.

“Salvation is of the Lord!”