

Joke: A little girl was sitting on her grandpa's lap while he read her a story. She kept taking her eyes off the book and reaching up and touching his old, wrinkled face. After a few times doing this, she finally asked, "Grandpa, were you made by God?"

"Yes, dear." he replied. "I was made by God a long time ago."

The little girl paused for a moment and then asked, "And did God make me?"

"Of course, dear." replied her grandfather. "God made you not long ago."

The girl felt her own face and then her grandpa's again, thought for a moment and then said, "God's getting better at it, isn't he?"

Anchor. **Week 1: Anchored by Hope**

As believers, we are to be anchored by Jesus. After all, He is our hope, our salvation, and our Savior. Because of that, in every trial we face, every storm that comes we need we to remain steadfast and unmovable, committed in our faith. And let's be honest trials will come, storms will rise up, but God is our hope and help through them all.

Today I'm starting another series I'll call The Anchor. The foundation in this series will be built around a single Bible verse found in Hebrews chapter 6. . .actually just the first half of the verse.

Hebrews 6:19 (NIV): We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. . .

It may sound pretty ambitious of me to talk about one half of one Bible verse for the next three or four weeks. But, that's the power of Scripture, it's called the living word.

And if we will allow it to, It speaks to us in each and every season of our lives. Every circumstance, every storm, and every victory.

The Bible is truly amazing, and I hope one of the things you take away from this series is a renewed interest in scripture.

So, let's get started with anchors... Who knows what an anchor is?

According to Google if you search, "what is an anchor" you will come up with this. . .

An anchor is "a device, normally made of metal, used to secure a vessel to the bed of a body of water to prevent the craft from drifting due to wind or current."

An anchor has been used by fishermen and sailors alike for hundreds, if not thousands, of years.

They came in all different sizes so that no matter the size of the vessel it will fulfill it's purpose.

An anchor is simple in its design, yet powerful in its function.

And as I mentioned a few moments ago as believers, we are encouraged to remain steadfast and committed in our faith through every trial and storm that life may bring.

We are anchored if you will, in hope... and do you have a guess as to who that hope is? In case you don't it's Jesus.

Bob Utley's commentary on Hebrews says this: an anchor "was an ancient Christian symbol for safety, security, and hope. It has been found on the walls of the Roman catacombs. This word brings to mind the hymn,

"I've anchored my soul in the haven of rest,
I'll sail the wild seas no more.
The tempest may sweep o'er the wild stormy deep,
But in Jesus I'm safe evermore."

So what is the specific "hope" the author of Hebrews is referring to in verse 6:19? Of course the answer is Jesus, but why is the conclusion being drawn that we have "this hope" and not another one?

To better understand what's going on in Hebrews 6:19 we really need to look at the section of verses that come before it, and probably at some point read the first six chapters of Hebrews altogether. I want to encourage you to do that, read the first six chapters of Hebrews.

And church I encourage you to read something from the Scriptures everyday. (Talk about why we don't)
But for today, let's start in Hebrews 6:13

Hebrews 6:13–17 (NIV): When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by

himself, 14 saying, “I will surely bless you and give you many descendants.” 15 And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised. 16 People swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. 17 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.

God made a promise to Abraham, the father of the Hebrew nation, and since God couldn't swear on anything greater than himself He simply said, *“I will surely bless you and give you many descendants.”*

God made a promise to Abraham, and He stayed true to His promise.

I love what the Apostle Paul said about God's promises. . .

2 Corinthians 1:20 (NIV): For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God.

I can remember a time that someone told me they would not share something I confided in them with. Now before you start wondering if it was anything sinful or inappropriate it wasn't it was just something not everyone needed to know. It wasn't but about an hour later that somebody called and asked what was going on.

And truth is broken promises has the tendency to breed distrust and division in a relationship.

But our God is a promise keeper.

At the end of the day, He has kept every promise and fulfilled every prophecy up to this point. Sure, there is still more to come, but up to this point, God has come through every single time. And I'm confident that He will continue to do what He says He will do.

Hebrews 13:8 says, *“Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever.”*

He's not going to have a midlife crisis, or go on some crazy subjective journey to find Himself. He remains the same. And this is incredibly good news in a world that's constantly changing and moving.

Let's pick up in verse 18 it explains to us why God promised Abraham in the way that He did. . .

Hebrews 6:18 (NIV): 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.

Hebrews 6:18 (TPT): So it is impossible for God to lie for we know that his promise and his vow will never change! And now we have run into his heart to hide ourselves in his faithfulness. This is where we find his strength and comfort, for he empowers us to seize what has already been established ahead of time—an unshakeable hope!

So, be encouraged today. He brings us hope. He is firm and secure. He is an anchor for the soul.

Once we have Jesus, we are able to “anchor” ourselves to Him. . .

Listen to how Albert Barnes, a biblical commentator beautifully describes this reality:

“Hope accomplishes for the soul the same thing which an anchor does for a ship. It makes it fast and secure. An anchor preserves a ship when the waves beat and the wind blows, and as long as the anchor holds, so long the ship is safe, and the mariner apprehends no danger. So with the soul of the Christian. In the tempests and trials of life, his mind is calm as long as his hope of heaven is firm. If that gives way, he feels that all is lost.”

In this series over the next few weeks, we’ll talk about the storms and tempests of life as well the temptation we have to hold fast to other things that we think may keep us safe.

But for now, let’s consider how peaceful it must be to sleep and work on the deck of a ship whose anchor is steadfast and secure. It’s obviously not a perfect metaphor, but this is in some way how it feels to be anchored to hope.

If you are anchored, firm and secure - if your connections are strong and the anchor is trustworthy then what room is there left for anxiety or fear?

If all is good, you can say, “The anchor will hold.” Or you might even say, “We’re not going anywhere, we can stay the storm because I trust the anchor to hold.”

We can be confident because of “this hope” we have. And “this hope,” as opposed to so many other things, is firm and secure.

Look around us, there is so much uncertainty in the world. . .turmoil, confusion, and division. . .is it any wonder that our cities and cultures are struggling with epidemic levels of anxiety, stress, and uncertainty?

Friends, family, and neighbors are literally grasping for anything firm and secure to hold fast to. But everything they grab gives way.

And hear this church, hope, wrongly applied, will often leave us worse off than when we started.

This reminds me of a story, maybe you’ve heard it. It’s the story about Jesus walking on water.

Let’s look at it a moment. . .

Matthew 14:25–31 (NIV): Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear. 27 But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” 28 “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.” 29 “Come,” he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus.

30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!” 31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?”

Everything was going well for Peter until he took his eyes off of Jesus and began to have doubts.

This story, among other things, reminds us to stay locked onto Christ, fastened to Him, our firm and secure hope. There’s nothing else, no one else that holds up to the storms.

And let’s face it life can be complicated and complex, so that’s pretty good news.

An anchor is simple in its design, but so very powerful in its function.

Over the next few weeks we are going to continue talking about anchors, boats, hope, and of course Jesus.

In the meantime it would be good for all of us here today and listening online to take some time this week to slow down and spend some time thinking about the things or people we’ve put our hope in.

Has someone you trusted ever let you down in the past?
Has someone ever lied to you, misled, or manipulated you?

If you can identify with those, or something I didn't mention, that fits the bill, it doesn't mean you're weak, dumb, gullible, or broken.

It means you're human.

It means you're exactly the type of person Jesus came and died for.

In Mark chapter 5, there is a story about a woman afflicted with bleeding for 12 years. She spent all her money on doctors, with no relief. She was ostracized from her community and family, set aside and forgotten about.

According to the levitical law of the time, everyone she touched and every place she sat became unclean, because she was unclean.

But then, Jesus shows up. She pushes her way through the crowd and touches the very edge of His garment. Thinking to herself, "If I can just get to Jesus, He can heal me."

And He does.

He heals her completely.

Physically and socially, He restores her.

He is our hope, firm and secure. And it is this hope we grab hold of.

Even just the edge of His garment. If you've got Jesus, then you've got more than enough.

Let's pray together.

Join us next week as we pose this question. . .what are you holding onto?