

29th August 2021
FBC On-Line

Communion

So appreciate you all joining with us this morning. It's so important we remain engaged with each other and with the Lord. I'm thankful btw for all of your participation in times such as this. But last Sunday I fired a text off to Rebecca Cochran after our online gathering, thanking Rebecca for her prayer. All of scripture has something to encourage us right, but there were 2 passages of scripture referenced to I think are particularly special for this time.

From Hebrews (6:19) *"we have this hope as an anchor for our souls, firm and secure"* and she also quoted Psalm 121 *"I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from?² My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.*

Why are these verses significant? Because we will all realise it only takes a seed of doubt, or a moment of anxiety, or a negative thought for us to begin to stray, get off track, and deviate from God.

A quick thought on Ps. 121 to begin with: If you look in your bibles, you'll see under Psalm 120 the words 'Psalms or songs of ascent. Psalms 120-134 were songs people would recite and sing as they made their way up to Jerusalem to worship. But going up refers to not only to ascending (as in going up). Because Jerusalem was the spiritual capital there was great excitement and anticipation for people as they made their way there. What they would see on the hilltops as they travelled were places of pagan worship of all kinds, that would entice the weary travellers in. What Ps. 121 says is "no", "when I look up there and around I'm not going to be drawn into those things, my help won't be found there, it only comes from the Lord"

Eugene Peterson says Ps. 121 speaks to us like the neighbour who comes over and tells us, you're doing it all wrong mate, you're looking in the wrong place, here's what you do!

I'm sure that similar things were in the back of the mind of whoever wrote Hebrews. V.19 of ch.6 picks up on a nautical metaphor of course, the idea being that unless our souls are anchored – like a ship needing to be anchored in a storm – who knows where we'll drift off to.

If we're thinking about storms and boats, we may remember what happened with Peter in Matt. 14. Jesus had sent the disciples out in a boat...he went off to pray...

Matthew says *"Later that night, he was there alone, ²⁴ and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. ²⁵ 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?"***

³² *And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. ³³ Then those who were in the boat worshipped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."*

Where do you suspect Peter was looking (think Ps. 121?) ...who was he lifting his eyes too? What was his soul anchored too?

Notice that those in the boat worshipped him... *"woh, thank goodness that's over and done with"* ...when the sea was calm, when all was well. Is worship and faith and hope and trust only for when things are calm...?

Go back to the beginning of that passage. I can't help but speculate around what Jesus might have been praying (v.23) when he pushed the boat out...that they would trust him, that they would pray, that they would reassure each other...

This hope – Jesus – is, the anchor for our souls, this hope – what he has done for us and will do for us – is the anchor for our souls. This hope – as written in his word that provides us all the promises and assurances of who God – is the anchor for our souls. He is the Lord the maker of heaven and earth, and our eyes look to him and help comes from him, because he is the anchor for our souls.

Ask yourselves, when our hearts and minds and spirits and lives and bubbles, are full of God's word, are full of God's Spirit, what room is there left for anything that is not of, or from him?

"We are secure, not because we hold tightly to Jesus, but because He holds tightly to us." —R.C. Sproul

Let me bring us now to communion: this morning you might be full of faith, be encouraged to get fuller! Conversely, you might really be battling, it feels like you're in that 'boat' a "*considerable distance from shore*" and Jesus is nowhere to be seen. Jesus has not forgotten you!

Song "Who am I..." we are chosen not forsaken, we are, who says we are, children of God. Who the son sets free, is what? Free indeed.

And so communion this morning is very simply this, remembering – through the body of the Lord and the blood of the Lord – not only he died for you and I, but also to remind us that *our hope in him, is the anchor, firm and secure...not budging an inch!*