



## Hope in the Face of Apostasy

*“We have (God’s promise) as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” (Heb 6:19)*

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### God Calls us to Worship

God has gone up with a shout,  
the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.

**Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises!  
For God is the King of all the earth; sing praises with a psalm!**

*(Ps 47.5-7)*

Let us pray.

**Almighty God,  
to you all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from you no secrets are hidden.  
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

## *Psalm 139 (Part I)*

O Lord You have searched me,  
and You know my ways;  
You perceive all my thoughts from afar.  
Your hand is upon me  
wherever I go;  
before I can speak,  
You already know

Where can I flee  
from Your presence, O Lord?  
If I sleep in the depths, You are there.  
Your day will consume  
all the shadows of night;  
The dark cannot hide  
from Your brilliant light.

*If I rise on the wings of the dawn,  
You are there;  
If I rest on the far side of the sea,  
Your love hems me in both behind  
and before;  
You have laid Your hand upon me;  
You have laid Your hand upon me.*

*If I rise on the wings of the dawn,  
You are there;  
If I rest on the far side of the sea,  
Your love hems me in both behind  
and before;  
You have laid Your hand upon me;  
You have laid Your hand upon me.*

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## **We Confess and Are Assured**

“O LORD, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether.” *(Ps 139:1-4)*

Have mercy on us, O God

**According to your unfailing love;  
According to your great compassion.**

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves,  
and the truth is not in us.  
If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins  
and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.  
Therefore, let us confess our sins against God,  
and against our neighbour, first in silence and then aloud together.

*Please kneel or be seated.*

## *Prayer of Confession*

**Almighty and most merciful God,  
We confess to you that we are by nature sinful and unclean,  
And that we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed;  
Not only in outward transgressions,  
But also in secret thoughts and desires  
that we are not able to understand,  
But which are all known to You.  
For this reason, we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy,  
Seeking and imploring Your grace  
for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Amen.**

## *Assurance of Pardon*

*"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death." (Rom 8:1-2)*

## *Psalms 68:1-18*

God shall arise, his enemies shall be scattered; and those who hate him shall flee before him! As smoke is driven away, so you shall drive them away; as wax melts before fire, so the wicked shall perish before God!

**But the righteous shall be glad; they shall exult before God; they shall be jubilant with joy!**

Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides through the deserts; his name is the Lord; exult before him! Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.

**God settles the solitary in a home; he leads out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious dwell in a parched land. O God, when you went out before your people, when you marched through the wilderness,**

the earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain, before God, the One of Sinai, before God, the God of Israel.

**Rain in abundance, O God, you shed abroad; you restored your inheritance as it languished; your flock found a dwelling in it; in your goodness, O God, you provided for the needy.**

The Lord gives the word; the women who announce the news are a great host: “The kings of the armies—they flee, they flee!”

**The women at home divide the spoil— though you men lie among the sheepfolds— the wings of a dove covered with silver, its pinions with shimmering gold.**

When the Almighty scatters kings there, let snow fall on Zalmon. O mountain of God, mountain of Bashan; O many-peaked mountain, mountain of Bashan!

**Why do you look with hatred, O many-peaked mountain, at the mount that God desired for his abode, yes, where the Lord will dwell forever?**

The chariots of God are twice ten thousand, thousands upon thousands; the Lord is among them; Sinai is now in the sanctuary.

**You ascended on high, leading a host of captives in your train and receiving gifts among men, even among the rebellious, that the Lord God may dwell there.**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;

**As it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be forever, age after age.**

**Amen!**

## God Speaks to us Through His Word

*First Reading: Mark 8:31-37*

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God**

*Second Reading: Heb 5:11-6:20*

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Sermon: Hope in the Face of Apostasy (Mark Payne)*

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## We Respond to God's Word

### *Christ the Sure and Steady Anchor*

Christ, the sure and steady anchor  
In the fury of the storm  
When the winds of doubt  
blow through me  
And my sails have all been torn.  
In the suff'ring, in the sorrow,  
When my sinking hopes are few,  
I will hold fast to the anchor;  
It shall never be removed.

Christ, the sure and steady anchor  
While the tempest rages on,  
When temptation claims the battle  
And it seems the night has won;  
Deeper still then goes the anchor  
Though I justly stand accused;  
I will hold fast to the anchor;  
It shall never be removed.

Christ, the sure and steady anchor  
Through the floods of unbelief;  
Hopeless somehow,  
O my soul,  
Now lift your eyes to Calvary.  
This, my ballast of assurance;  
See His love forever proved;  
I will hold fast to the anchor;  
It shall never be removed.

Christ, the sure and steady anchor  
As we face the wave of death,  
When these trials give way to glory,  
As we draw our final breath;  
We will cross that great horizon,  
Clouds behind and life secure,  
And the calm will be the better  
For the storms that we endure.

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### *Creed (Heidelberg Catechism)*

Believer, what is your only comfort in life and in death?

**That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death,  
am not my own, but belong to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ,  
who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins,  
and redeemed me from all the power of the devil;  
and so preserves me that without the will of my Father in heaven  
not a hair can fall from my head;  
indeed, that all things must work together for my salvation.  
Wherefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life,  
and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live unto Him.**

## *Prayers of Intercession*

*After each petition:*

Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

As our Saviour taught us, let us pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen.**

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## **We Celebrate the Lord's Supper**

### *Invitation to the Table*

*All baptised Christians who trust in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and seek to lead a new life by God's mercies, are welcome at this table. If you do not profess faith in Christ, please refrain from receiving the bread and wine.*

### *Gifts and Offerings*

Gifts and offerings may be placed in the offertory box at the back of the hall. *"Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God that he has given you." (Deut 16:17)*

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The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

*Please join in saying the Sanctus ("The Holy", based on Isaiah 6:3)*

**Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

*The stewards will distribute the wine and bread. Eat the bread as you receive it, but keep the wine until we all drink together.*

### *Prayer of Thanksgiving*

**Father, as we have received these gifts of bread and wine, you have fed us with the spiritual food of the body and blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Thank you for assuring us of your goodness and love, and that we are members of his body. Renew us by your Holy Spirit, unite us in the body of your Son, and bring us with all your people into the joy of your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.**

### *Psalm 57*

Be Thou, O God, exalted high;  
And as Your glory fills the sky,  
So let it be on earth displayed,  
Till You are here, as there, obeyed;  
Till You are here, as there, obeyed.

Awake, my glory; harp and lute,  
No longer let your strings be mute;  
And I, my tuneful part to take,  
Will with the early dawn awake;  
Will with the early dawn awake.

O God, my heart is fixed, 'tis bent  
Its thankful tribute to present;  
And, with my heart, my voice I'll raise  
To You, my God, in songs of praise;  
To You, my God, in songs of praise.

Your praises, Lord, I will resound  
To all the list'ning nations 'round;  
Your mercy highest heav'n transcends;  
Your truth beyond the clouds extends;  
Your truth beyond the clouds extends.

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## **We Are Blessed and Sent Out to the World**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

**In the Name of Christ, Amen.**

## Sermon Notes

The writer to the Hebrews again raises a warning, in which he answers three questions.

### **What exactly is the danger?**

- Spiritual immaturity due to their laziness
- They should have moved on from elementary teachings of
  - o Responding to Christ (Repentance and faith)
  - o Joining Christ's people (Washings (baptisms) and the laying on of hands)
  - o Living Christ's way (Looking to resurrection and eternal judgment)

### **How serious is the danger?**

More serious than they can possibly imagine

- Notice the context (who he's writing to and what he's just said)
- Notice that apostasy isn't general sin
- Notice that this is real, *not* imaginary

Remember the wilderness generation

The danger applies as much to us as it did to them

### **What keeps us safe?**

He offers them

- An encouragement (He is sure of better things in their case)
- An assurance (Our hope rests not on our poor efforts, but on God's promise, and his oath)

As the hymn writer says:

*Christ, the sure and steady anchor  
Through the floods of unbelief;  
Hopeless somehow,  
O my soul,  
Now lift your eyes to Calvary.  
This, my ballast of assurance;  
See His love forever proved;  
I will hold fast to the anchor;  
It shall never be removed.*