



Sermon-Based Study Guide
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Sermon Title: Setting a Secure Anchor

Sermon Text: Hebrews 6.13-20
Related Texts: Genesis 22.1-18; Matthew 5.33-37

I. Start It – Connecting With One Another

What are some of the most significant promises you have made in your life?

II. Introduction

Throughout chapters 5 and 6, the author of Hebrews has been encouraging the congregation to go deeper in their understanding of scripture, of the person of Jesus, and in living out the implications of the gospel. The encouragement has taken on the form of a rebuke for being slow to learn (5.11-14), a warning against falling away (6.1-8), and a “pep talk” kind of encouragement – “keep up the good work!” and “imitate those who have been faithful” (6.9-12). Before moving on to a deep, robust theological description of Jesus as High Priest, the Preacher conveys one more admonition – place your hope in the secure anchor found in God’s unchangeable promise.

III. Study the Text – Hebrews 6.13-20

- 1) Hebrews 6.12 issues a call to imitate faithful people. Now in verses 13-15 the author refers to Abraham. From what you know about Abraham, how is he an example of a faithful person? Look at Genesis 12.2-3; 15.4; and 17.2, and 17.7-8. What promises did God make to Abraham?
- 2) Now look through Genesis 22.1-18. How did Abraham demonstrate trust in God’s promise that he would become the father of a great nation of people? How did Abraham learn that God is not only a maker of promises, but God is a keeper of promises?
- 3) Notice in verse 15 the phrase “after waiting patiently.” How is this something for the Hebrews to imitate? How can you imitate Abraham’s patience?
- 4) Now look at verses 16-18. Human oath making in the first century – much like today – had to do with an appeal to a divine being as a witness on some disputed matter. A person swearing to a higher deity was in essence saying: “I am telling the truth, you can believe my word, and I swear, if I am telling a lie, strike me down.” In Deuteronomy 6.13, the Israelites are instructed to make their oaths in Yahweh’s name. How does an oath made by a human being differ from God making an oath? Why, according to the author, did God make such an oath? What is significant about God “making the unchanging nature of his purpose clear to the heirs of the promise (Verse 17)?” What does this say about God? About God’s unchangeable promises? About God’s trustworthiness?

- 5) God does two unchangeable things related to Abraham: 1) promises Abraham a multitude of descendants, and 2) makes an oath to confirm the promise (as in Genesis 22.16-18). These are described as things “in which it is impossible for God to lie (Verse 18).” The author suggests that God did this so that all who “have fled to take hold of the hope may be greatly encouraged.” How are the trustworthiness of the promise maker and the promises made related to the hope and encouragement of those who embrace them?
- 6) In verses 19-20, the author describes this hope as “an anchor for the soul.” How is this anchor described? To what is it firmly attached?

Note: Verses 19-20 refer to hope as a firm, secure anchor that is attached to “the inner sanctuary behind the curtain.” This refers to the Tabernacle during the Exodus experience. The high priest would enter this inner sanctuary to offer sacrifices for sin on behalf of himself and the people. It was the place where heaven (God’s presence and dwelling place) and earth (the realm of human beings) met. At the end of verse 20 the writer quotes Psalm 110.4 for a third time and refers to Jesus as a high priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. We will see this unpacked in the following chapter of Hebrews, but for now it is sufficient to say Jesus is this high priest. Upon their conquest of Jerusalem c. 1000 B.C. David and his house became heirs of the Melchizedek dynasty of priest-kings. Jesus, the Messiah, is identified as this Davidic King and with that as high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

IV. Theological Reflection

God does not lie. God’s promises do not change. A fundamental quality God has revealed is that of immutability – not changing. Because of the unchanging nature of God we can be confident of the promises God has made to us. This is essential in order to have real faith. Apart from God’s immutability we could never be certain of truth or which promises of God we can trust. We find, then, that our faith is not just “faith in faith,” but faith in God whose promises are sure, whose purposes do not change, and whose word is trustworthy.

V. Apply It – Reflect and Respond

- 1) Who has been a trustworthy person in your life? How did their trustworthiness express itself? How did that trustworthiness make you able to depend on them?
- 2) In what ways are you imitating the faith, trust, and hope that Abraham had? Are you able to “wait patiently” as he did? Are you able to trust God even when circumstances seem to suggest that God has not kept a promise?
- 3) Please pray for yourself and for the Good Shepherd congregation to be anchored securely to the hope that comes from God’s unchangeable promises.