

Unwavering Hope in 2026

Seize the Hope

January 4, 2026

Hebrews 6:13-20

Introduction

What are you looking forward to this year? This was the question we had hoped to discuss at dinner one night last week, but we quickly got off track trying to fix things that went wrong last year. But let's try again as a congregation. What are you looking forward to this year?

And I truly mean what is FORWARD. What is actually ahead of you? Don't default to the optimistic thing. What lies ahead?

Certainly not a national championship!

A birthday? A vacation? A promotion? A degree? An assignment? A prognosis? Some clarity? Some stability? Or maybe the present is enough for you right now. You see there is a bridge coming, but you're not thinking about crossing it just yet.

But even the most reluctant person among us—the one who says, “I'm not much of a planner,” or “I just take things as they come”—is still looking forward. God wired us this way. We are future-facing creatures because we were designed for an eternal home we have not yet reached.

In his book *Confessions*, Augustine famously stated this truth this way (SLIDE) – “*You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.*”

We were made to look forward. The question isn't *whether* we will hope—but *where* and *how* we hope.

Segue

In large part, this is why our mission at Beech Haven is to (SLIDE) *cultivate the unwavering hope of Jesus in every generation*. Our work is to develop in ourselves and in others an ever-growing, unrelenting hope in the life, death, resurrection, and eternal reign of Jesus. Our wayward hearts and our fallen world are very good at offering up alternate hopes: hope in comfort, hope in belonging, hope in moral improvement, and so on. None of those things are bad. But the Bible is exceptionally clear on where our hope should be placed and how much that hope should impact our lives every day. So what I want you to see from our text this morning is that **God is fiercely committed to you having the unwavering hope of Jesus.**

Body

God Desires Unwavering Hope for Us

The first thing I want you to see from our text this morning is that **God desires for you to have the unwavering hope of Jesus**. Our mission for ourselves and for this city is God's mission for ourselves and this city. **God desires for you to have the unwavering hope of Jesus**. This is explicitly stated in vv. 17-18, although we will have to do some work with the text to fully see it. Take a look at it with me, paying special attention to the end of v. 18.

*17 Because God wanted to show his unchangeable purpose even more clearly to the heirs of the promise, he guaranteed it with an oath, 18 so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might **have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us**.*

God did what He did in v. 17 so that through those things those of us who are in Christ (heirs of the promise ... who have fled for refuge) would possess “strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us.” **God desires for you to have the unwavering hope of Jesus**.

Be Amazed that God Wants this for You

Now, I'll explain how He gives us this strong encouragement in just a moment, but first, let's rest on this idea that God desires this for us. **It is an amazing thing that God is so passionate about our being people who have unshakable hope**. Not many kings have this kind of passion for their people. It is far easier to imagine God being the kind of God who said, “Get out there and do what I tell you to do, and stop thinking about whether you have hope or not. Do what's right because it's right, and stop dwelling on the future. Do what you're supposed to do and stop wondering about how it's going to turn out in the end.” He is utterly committed to working for our hope. He insists that we be people of confident hope, not of worry and uncertainty. He wants us to think about the future, and to be totally confident and assured about how it will turn out.¹

Illustration - Preparing for Vacation

Talk about our big trip across the Atlantic a few years ago and all that we did to cultivate hope in it. We never said, “Just focus on your chores and your schoolwork and stop dreaming about how vacation is going to be.” NO! We were quite passionate about our future hope. We made a chain to count down the days. We made reservations. We watched YouTube videos about the sights we'd see. We bought clothes that tampered down our American vibe. We prayed for everything to come together for a great trip, all because we desired to take hold of our future hope. Likewise, God is fiercely passionate about you being fiercely passionate about the hope that awaits you with Jesus,

¹ Derived from Piper, J. (2007). *Sermons from John Piper (1990–1999)*. Desiring God. – November 1996.

How does God Give Strong Encouragement?

There are three ways that the author of Hebrews says that our God gives us strong encouragement. They are through a promise, an oath, and an anchor. The promise and the oath go together, so let's take a look at those first.

The Promise and the Oath

Take a look at vv. 13-17 with me.

*13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater to swear by, he swore by himself: 14 I will indeed bless you, and I will greatly multiply you. 15 And so, after waiting patiently, Abraham **obtained the promise**. 16 For people swear by something greater than themselves, and for them a confirming oath ends every dispute. 17 Because God wanted to show his unchangeable purpose even more clearly to the **heirs of the promise**, he **guaranteed it with an oath** ...*

Explain how from Genesis 22:16-18, God made both a promise to Abraham and an oath on His promise.

“By myself I have sworn,” this is the Lord’s declaration: “Because you have done this thing and have not withheld your only son, 17 I will indeed bless you and make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your offspring will possess the city gates of their enemies. 18 And all the nations of the earth will be blessed by your offspring because you have obeyed my command.”

Those who believe in Christ are heirs of this promise and this oath. God promised and swore on the promise to give strong encouragement to the heirs of the promise, beginning with Abraham and all those who would believe God (*by faith”).

The content of the promise is certainly encouraging, but the emphasis for Hebrews is the “oath” part of this. Take a look at vv. 13, 16-17 again.

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Our language is filled with oaths ... usually called “swears.” When you want to stress the validity of your promise you pick out some great value (the Bible, your Mother’s grave, God) and you swear by it.

Illustration

- “I pinky swear.”
- “Scout’s honor.”
- “Cross my heart and hope to die ... stick a needle in my eye.”
- “Triple-stamp, no erasies.”

Why do you swear on something great and valuable? Because what you are saying in an oath is this: If I prove false—if I am lying—then let me lose a pinky ... or an eye, or whatever. An oath is a way of calling in something of weight or gravitas or higher integrity on your promise ... something bigger or more admirable than you ... to give your promise weight that it might not be carrying on its own in the eyes of the person to whom you are making the promise. *(Slide – Indigo Montoya)*

Remember the scene from THE PRINCESS BRIDE when Indigo is waiting at the top of the cliffs of insanity ... waiting for Wesley to climb to the top (a dangerous proposition). Indigo offers to throw a rope and promises not to kill Wesley until he reaches the top. Wesley doesn’t trust him. Indigo says, “I could give you my word as a Spaniard.” “No good” says Wesley. He’s known too many Spaniards. “I swear on the grave of my father, Domingo Montoya, you will reach the top alive.” “THROW ME THE ROPE.”

So the degree that you value and esteem the basis of your oath, to that degree your word can be trusted.

(Slide of verses coming up) So what would GOD, who made everyone and everything, swear by if he wanted to?

There is one thing He values and esteems above all. There is one Reality that he is less likely to dishonor and to shame than any other. There is one Person whose worth and honor and dignity and preciousness and greatness and beauty and reputation is more than all other values combined—God himself. So God swears by himself. Why? To give you and I strong encouragement in our hope. Look at vv. 17-18.

17 Because God wanted to show his unchangeable purpose even more clearly to the heirs of the promise, he guaranteed it with an oath, 18 so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us.

If he could have gone higher, he would have gone higher. He means for you and I to have as much confidence in Him as it is possible to have. For if more were possible, it says in verse 13, he would have given us that.

An Anchor

But God didn't just promise it, and He didn't just swear on Himself that He would do it. He actually kept the promise and honored his oath in the person of Jesus. And the fact that He kept the promise is illustrated by the author of Hebrews with the metaphor of an anchor. Look at vv. 19-20 (Slide).

19 We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain. 20 Jesus has entered there on our behalf as a forerunner ...

Explain this verse in my own words: "It" is "our hope" ... it's Jesus. He goes first and we follow.

Conclusion

Seize the Hope

(Title Slide) Now, you may be asking, "Pastor Rob, why does God want me to cultivate hope in something that is so sure and certain?"

Put another way, "If our hope was obtained and irrevocably secured by the blood of Jesus, then why does God tell us to seize it?" The answer is this:²

- What Christ bought for us when he died was not the freedom from having to seize the hope but the enabling power to seize the hope.
- What he bought was not the nullification of our wills as though we didn't have to seize the hope, but the empowering of our wills to want to seize the hope.

He died so that you would do exactly what Paul did in Philippians 3:12, "I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus." So I exhort you this morning with all my heart: reach out and take hold of that for which you have been taken hold of by Christ, and hold it fast with all his might. Cultivate the hope of Jesus.

Share the Hope

10,000 Gospel Conversations

² Derived from Piper, J. (2007). *Sermons from John Piper (1990–1999)*. Desiring God. – November 1996.