

One Hope

This will be our last lesson in the One Doctrine series that we have been looking at from...

Eph 4:4-6

1

4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;
5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, **6** one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

We began this series with a discussion of the difference between judgment and doctrine.

Judgment is that which doctrine allows for us as individuals to decide. Will we meet in a rented facility or will we buy one? What color will the carpet be? Do we have 2 songs and the Lord's Supper or 3? Will I choose to eat meat or will I not? Paul calls these judgments or liberties that he discusses in 1 Cor. 8, responsibilities. We have both an obligation as well as an accountability for the judgments that we make for ourselves. He is absolutely clear that the judgments we make may very well affect others and the judgments that they make or the conclusions they come to.

1 Cor 8:13

2

13 Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.

If we practice a liberty that we might very well hold with a clear conscience towards God and His commandments and that practice causes a weaker brother who doesn't have a clear understanding of God's Will, for example, meat offered to idols is somehow tainted, but he violates his conscience and eats because of our practice, Paul says that can...

3

"Cause a brother to stumble"

The other consideration is how our liberties are viewed by those not of the Faith. In...

1 Thess 5:21

4

21 But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; **22** abstain from every form of evil. (*appearance*)

Here Paul warns the Thessalonians to avoid every form of evil. The KJV translates that as the idea of "*appearance*." He says to avoid even those things that might seem to appear as evil. If we engage in or practice things that the world accepts as OK, things which might be fine in accordance to the scriptures, but things which may make us appear to be just like them, it seems to me to be obvious that Paul is saying to avoid those things.

Our judgments will most assuredly affect how we influence others of the Faith as well as those of the world.

Doctrine, on the other hand is established by God is not open for judgment in application. While we might have the liberty to choose where we meet, within reason, we don't have the liberty to choose if we meet, God has established His doctrine that we are to meet.

Heb 10:23-25

5

23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; **24** and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, **25**

not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Doctrine is inviolate. That is what we have been looking at in these lessons, God's Doctrine...

Eph 4:4-6

6

4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;
5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

We discussed the Doctrine of One...

7

A) God

We saw how that God is manifested as three, whether entities or functions, however you think of it, The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit

8

B) Lord

There is but one Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, there is no other name by which man can be saved, Acts 4:12. That savior is God [Christ says in Jn 10 that He and the Father are one]

9

C) Spirit

In His discussion with the Disciples, Christ tells them that the Holy Spirit would guide them into all knowledge, Jn 16, and all power, Acts 1. And we see in Matt 28:19, Christ tells the disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

10

D) Faith

Acts 6:7

11

7 The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

The priests were becoming obedient to the Faith, obviously implied as meaning the Word of God that was spreading. The import of this is seen in...

Jude 3

12

3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.

The Faith, given once, never to be repeated, no other Faith established by God

13

E) Baptism

When Peter answered the question of the people in Acts 2:38, he told them...

"Repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins"

This baptism, immersion by definition, is the only thing that the scriptures indicate by which man can be saved, 1 Pet 3:21 and when we see that in light of the passage from Acts 4:12 where Jesus Christ is the only name in which man can be saved and with Matt 28:19 where the disciples were told to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, it becomes clear that the process of salvation is realized by

man through baptism by the authority of God, and there is only one immersion commanded by the scriptures.

- 14** F) Body
As we saw in Acts 2:47, it is the Lord that adds to His kingdom, His Church, Matt 16:18-19. An obedient response to God's Word brings man into contact with the blood of Christ through baptism after which the Lord adds the saved to His Church

Now I have spent a lot of time reviewing our previous discussions which might seem a little drawn out. I apologize for rehashing those lessons, but I feel that the foundation of the discussion of the Doctrine of One established in Eph. 4 is of vital importance in our understanding of our last discussion...

15 *"One Hope"*

I often say that God has done everything that He is going to do in His plan to save man. There is nothing left on His part. God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, purposed from the before the beginning that only the sacrifice of God would suffice in paying the price for man's sin. So God came to earth and gave Himself for the sin of man and then lead the Apostles and those inspired by the Spirit to proclaim the Word of God through which the faithfully obedient would be saved and then added to the Church. All of this is the doctrine which we have been talking about from Eph. 4. This is all God's plan. But none of this speaks to man's part.

The word Hope comes from the Greek...

- 16** Elpis (NT:1680), in the NT, "favorable and confident expectation" (contrast the Sept. in Isa 28:19, "an evil hope"). It has to do with the unseen and the future, Rom 8:24,25.

I have always defined hope as an expected desire, which is what Vine's calls a "favorable and confident expectation." This is man's part. God doesn't hope, at least not in this context, for sure, but man does. All the elements of the One Doctrine bring about in man his hope.

There is but One God, not many. There should be no confusion as to which God should be revered and worshipped, there is only one, and ever has been. There is only One Lord through which man can be saved. Only One Lord who gave Himself for man. Only One Messiah that established the kingdom of the One God. There is only One Spirit that brought power and knowledge to mankind. There is only one Word, One Faith, One Baptism, established by that Faith, and One Body through which the salvation offered in that One Faith.

Paul describes this idea in...

Rom 8:24-25

17

24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? **25** But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

Man's hope points forward to receiving the promise of God, eternal life, but the trust implied in that hope is founded in the trust and faith in the elements of the One Doctrine. Where would trust be place if there were more than one god to worship? Where would salvation be found if not in Jesus Christ the Son of God? What pattern of practice in worship is what God wants if there are more than One pattern, One faith, One Word? Do you see the dynamic of what's under discussion? All of what God has done is what leads man to his One Hope. Why just...

18

One Hope

Well, think about it, man has hope in One God, One Lord, One Spirit, One Faith, One Baptism, One Body, One promise of Eternal Life, how could there possibly be more than One Hope? Remember the passage we looked at from Jude, verse 3...

Jude 3 19

3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.

Jude had wanted to write about the common, read one, salvation that those who come to God receive but found it necessary, because of false teachers, to exhort and encourage them to contend for the faith. Thus, in the remainder of his epistle, Jude admonishes them to resist the false teachings of those that were trying to creep in and then he gives them the reason for the resistance that he is urging them to in...

Jude 20-21 20

20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, **21** keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.

Eternal life, therein lies the hope of man, that in spite of his sin, which must separate him from God, the sacrifice of God can and will bring him back into a covenant relationship with God for eternity.

1 John 2:24-25 21

24 As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. **25** This is the promise which He Himself made to us: *eternal life*.

While John defines for us what the promise of God is, Eternal Life, he also illustrates how we put ourselves into a position to receive the promise of God, Abiding in that which has been from the beginning. This interesting, John also tells us in his Gospel that...

22 ***"In the beginning was the Word"***

And when this is combined with what he says in...

1 John 4:15-17 23

15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. **16** We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. **17** By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

The hope of eternal life is found by abiding in God through faithful obedience to that which was from the beginning, the Word. Now note what they Word says in...

John 14:15 24

15 "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

It is difficult for me to understand how people can read the scriptures and fail to see the common sense logic of the progression of them. The one God has One plan instigated by the one Lord and revealed by the One Spirit leading man to one faith and one baptism and adding him to the

one body. And all man has to do is keep the commandments of the Word, Jesus Christ, the One God.

Paul emphasizes this progression in...

Eph 1:17-18

25

17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. **18** I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

God, through the Word, imparts wisdom and revelation so that we can know what is the hope of His calling, eternal life.

So we have come to the real crux of this discussion. What the hope is and what it is not. The world views this hope as pertaining to the things of this world. This is a very common teaching and is practiced by some of the more well-known names that have been and still are practicing...

26

Prosperity theology (sometimes referred to as the prosperity gospel, the health and wealth gospel, or the gospel of success) [A] is a religious belief among some Christians, who hold that financial blessing and physical well-being are always the will of God for them, and that faith, positive speech, and donations to religious causes will increase one's material wealth. Prosperity theology views the Bible as a contract between God and humans: if humans have faith in God, he will deliver security and prosperity. Prominent leaders in the development of prosperity theology include E. W. Kenyon, Oral Roberts, A. A. Allen, Robert Tilton, T. L. Osborn, Joel Osteen, Creflo Dollar, Kenneth Copeland, Reverend Ike and Kenneth Hagin.

Where does God teach in HIS scriptures that those who seek after Him will be immune from the travails of this world and will indeed prosper financially? Where is the teaching that the affairs of this world are what are more important the affairs of the spiritual. Therein is the difference in understanding of what the hope of man is.

God's promise of rest and comfort is not a promise for this world, but for the spiritual. The spiritual world consists of the realm of heaven, a place of comfort, joy, a home with God, and the realm of hell, a place of eternal torment, where there will be...

Luke 13:26-28

27

26 "Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets'; **27** and He will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you are from; DEPART FROM ME, ALL YOU EVILDOERS.' **28** "In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being thrown out.

Eternal life is the promise of God to all who faithfully obey His will, responding in love to the love He has offered to all men. Eternal life is the promise that brings man hope.

I guess the only question is whether or not it is our hope?