

Worshipping God Together

Call to worship

Minister: God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

All: **Therefore we will not fear, though**
the earth give way and the
mountains fall into the heart of the
sea.

MP 13

All Hail the Power of Jesus' name

Opening prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Let us pray:

Lord we live in a world of change
Every day is filled with uncertainty
We are surrounded by the twists and turns of life
And we often feel we have little or no control
Over things that happen to us
Lord we come to stand in your eternal presence
We come to you to find ourselves
To find our way,
To find hope,
We come to you because in Christ
you promised that you will be with us until the end of time
help us Lord to be reminded of all promises to us
We ask this in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray:
ALL: 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 debts as we
forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver
us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory
for ever. Amen.

MP 450

I was sinking deep in sin

Reflecting on God's Word

Reading: Hebrews 6:13-20 (NT page 1204-1205)

Reader: Irene Nichol

Background to the reading

Our reading this morning is quite tricky in the sense that the writer presupposes that his readers know exactly where he was coming from. Maybe they did. But the dilemma is – we that live so many years after our reading – know little and we have to dig deep to understand what he meant.

In our reading he is making the point that God never breaks his promises. He promised Abraham that he will make him the father of a great big nation and He did. But equally in the new testament God promised through faith in the redemption, ascension and resurrection of Christ, that every believer will inherit His eternal kingdom.

But our writer was quite clever. He had to link these two promises together and so he did through the mentioning of the order of Melchizedek.

What is he talking about?

Melchizedek was the king of Salem or Jerusalem and priest of God who blessed Abraham when he returned from battle according to Gen. 14:17-20. Then Abraham awarded him a tenth of everything he took from his foes. When king David conquered Jerusalem, his house became heirs to Melchizedek's dynasty of priest-kings. In Ps. 110:4, the incident is recalled, as God addresses the Hebrew king as 'priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.' In later literature, Melchizedek is regarded as an ideal priest-king and, in the Dead Sea Scrolls, as a heavenly judge.

In the New Testament in the Gospels we find that the people thought that the Christ is the son of David. So, if Jesus is the Davidic Messiah, he must be the 'priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek'. This inevitable conclusion is drawn by the writer to the Hebrews, who develops his theme of our Lord's heavenly priesthood on the basis of Ps. 110:4: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."

According to the writer, Christ is the eternal high priest in the "order of Melchizedek" who have healed the broken relationship with God, and managed to enter in the presence of God on behalf of all the redeemed sinners. All those who believe in Him, have received the living hope which will be like an anchor that will remain intact through all the storms and winds of life.

The "anchor" was a frequent metaphor in Greco-Roman literature, especially for the secure hold on hope which moral qualities produced.

Let us sing now about an anchor?

MP 167
MP 770

Give me oil in my lamp instead
Will your anchor hold?

Sermon

Verse 19 & 20a: "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain,²⁰ where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf".

Have you ever felt that you are drowning in an open sea by means of speaking?

A few years ago Nanda, the boys and I stayed on the island of Coll. One day we decided to go on a daytrip with the ferry boat to Tiree. Unfortunately the day we picked was a very bad one for sailing. We woke up to a drech day with Gail force winds. But because we had booked it, there was no escape. But if I knew

what I know now, I would have taken my family and rather sit in a cramped car all day!

In the first place I had to reverse my car into the boat...big mistake, I nearly drove off the pier..

Once in the boat, Nanda said that she did not feel very comfortable with the movement of the boat, so we sat down. And this movement never stopped. It was if the waves got higher and higher as we sailed further ashore. But then the boys wanted to explore, and because Nanda was feeling very queasy AND looked totally white in the face, I had to run after them. My oh my, I was so scared I felt like I just want to sit down and wait for the end to come. But for the boys it seemed they felt no fear and no queasiness. So they taught me two lessons: always take your wallet with you even if you are on a "sinking ship", and secondly because they did not look at the waves or listened to the wind, and focussed on exploring the boat and the toys in the shop, they were not scared at all. And when I did the same, it seemed as if all fear subsided.

I guess life is no different from any boat. The only thing that is safe and secure is the anchor. And we also have an anchor namely the hope of the living promise of God that each and everyone who believes will enter in the Holiest of Holy places, in the presence of God through the redemption of Jesus Christ. He is our anchor when the going gets tough.

Sometimes we feel as if our challenging situations is never going to change. Sometimes we feel as if we are on a sinking ship with no hope in sight. Sometimes we focus so much on the waves and the wind and the rain that we forget to see the beautiful colours of the sea, the majestic dance of the trees as the wind blows through them and the miracle of water falling from heaven...

God never break his promises. He said that He will be with us through His Holy Spirit. We must know if we experience storms and challenges, God is with us. We need to focus not too much on our circumstances but focus on His promising presence with us, in

any challenging situation. And there is in every challenging situation a way out, a ray of sunlight, a majestic dance of the wind.

Indeed we must ask ourselves will our anchor of faith, hope and love hold in the storms of life, in the straits of fear, and in the floods of death. Will our eyes behold when we anchor safe at the heavenly shore? Our faith in the Lord Jesus is the only anchor that will bring us through storms, strife and death. He is the ONLY one who can bring us to the heavenly shore....

May we go from here, knowing that: "We have an anchor that keeps the soul, Steadfast and sure while the billows roll, Fastened to the Rock which cannot move, Grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love."

Amen