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At the heart of my sermon is hope, the hope that we all aspire to as Christians. 1 Peter 1:3-4 states: “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for you.”

Hope is something that is very tangible for us in the physical world, but often loses a lot of its meaning when we talk about the eternal world, and specifically the hope of heaven that all Christians have. In our world, hope is almost interchangeable with vision. If we hope for a new house we have a vision of it and use that vision to take the necessary steps of saving and house shopping to get that new house. In the same way, we need to make the hope of heaven the driving force for our lives here on earth. We need to “set our minds on things above,” as Paul states, meaning to set our mind on heaven.

One thing that keeps us from doing this is that heaven is not tangible to us, we have never been there and we as humans have a natural fear of the unknown. This being the case, it is important for us to use whatever means necessary to wrap our heads around the bliss of heaven. Whether by study of scripture, prayer, or by simply understanding that the true untainted pleasures of this life are simply tiny foretastes of the large and unending pleasure’s that we will experience in heaven. It is important for us to long for heaven, not in the sense that it diminishes our existence here on earth, but in a sense that it becomes the driving force of our life on earth. The prize that we set our eyes on that motivates and drives the race we run.

It is also important for me to mention the “therefore” phenomenon. So many of the writings in the new testament follow a familiar pattern of, “this is how it is, THEREFORE this is how you should live, or what you should do or not do, etc.” So often we get caught up in what is after the “therefore” that we forget what it is that we are actually striving for. It would be like having a boss who constantly gave you work to do but never once told you what it is you were actually working on. A worker is not going to be very effective in this situation, just as we are not effective workers for Christ unless we understand the hope that we are working towards. The hope of glory divine with our father in heaven. The hope of salvation.