

Global Encounter Sermon Prompt

Rev. Dr. Sharon Koh

Title: Hope from Generation to Generation

Text: Hebrews 10:19-25

Hebrews 10:19-23

“Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. **Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.**”

First, make the point that it is Christ’s sacrifice, “his body,” that gives us the right and ability to have “full assurance” that we can draw near. For example, there are celebrities whose bodyguards are charged with making sure nobody unexpected can approach them unless allowed. Having tickets to a special event would also make a good illustration. **It is Christ who allows us to draw near to God because faith has given us full assurance.** And, it is joy and hope in our lives from this relationship that gives us a desire to share the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Second, focus on **hope**. What is hope? What do you hope in? When have you been disappointed by hope? Did hope help you pull through in the end? Is God worth holding unswervingly to? Scripture tells us that our God is faithful.

*[Note: This is where I would tell a story about a time when I’ve met people who are holding on to hope – Internally displaced people hoping to be reunited with their families, immigrants hoping for a better life in a different country, trafficked children hoping for rescue and repatriation, sick people hoping for access to healthcare. In some of these stories, their hope was fulfilled. In other stories, they were bitterly disappointed. **But, hope placed in God through faith is full assurance.**]*

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:24,25).

International Ministries has been sending and supporting missionaries (now called global servants) for 210 years. In many situations, hope is thin and answers are difficult to find. It is the sending community of prayer warriors and supporters who sustain our global servants amid intimidating levels of human need and deep meaninglessness in life without God.

[Note: This is where I would encourage prayer and support of global servants, short-term mission engagement and exploring of God's missional call on our individual and corporate lives.]

*[Third and finally, **offer some concrete ways that your church is planning to participate in God's mission.** Perhaps a vision team is going to visit one of our global servants to explore ways to further partner with their ministry. Perhaps a service opportunity? Perhaps a prayer circle committed to praying regularly for the global servants your church supports? How are we spurring each other on toward love and good deeds? **Need specific ideas? [Please contact me!](#)***

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is alive and well and still changing lives today. We are affected when we participate in any part of God's kingdom, longing for a world where God's values of peace, hope and joy are foremost.

Global Encounter Sermon Prompt #2

Rev. Dr. Sharon Koh

Title: Fixing Our Eyes on What Is Unseen

Text: 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Introduction

In times of great discouragement, burnout can creep into our souls and weigh us down. What are some examples of burnout that you or someone close to you is experiencing these days? *[Note: I would tell the story of being in a migrant shelter in rural Ukraine – where people displaced by the war are safe and sheltered, but the food supply has been dwindling as it feels like the rest of the world has forgotten about them.]* **Much of the time, burnout and loss of hope are intricately connected.**

The Source of True Hope

“For God who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6).

In the preceding verses, the author of Hebrews makes the point that the glory of Christ is the image of God. That is, Christ is the closest thing we can see and experience of God in flesh and blood. I don’t know what your image of Jesus Christ is – walking around peacefully, looking people in the eye and *seeing* them, healing, feeding, meeting human needs... occasionally getting very angry and overturning tables when it comes to dealing with greed and injustice. I imagine that Jesus would wander through a migrant shelter, making conversation, listening hard, and holding stories with compassion and empathy. I also imagine that Jesus would provide food and clean water, comfort, and healing.

Jesus is the source of true hope.

I recently had a conversation with a mom-of-teens, and she told me that her son’s take on life is, “I did not ask to be born.” We ended up getting into a conversation about mental health in young adults and the validity of their statements that there is very little to hope for in life these days. The systems that worked for their parents do not work for them today.

The author of Hebrews describes how our bodies, our “earthly tents,” are like fragile jars of clay.

“We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed” (2 Corinthians 4:8,9).

What is the source of this resilience, this stubborn perseverance? **Hope**. It is in the insistence on fixing our eyes on the unseen future **that hope comes through**.

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:16-17).

International Ministries is celebrating our 210th Anniversary; through the many chapters of our history, there has been great sacrifice and physical suffering, solitary confinement, and even martyrdom **for the sake of the Gospel**. Our legacy's seal shows an ox faced with an altar and a plow with the phrase "ready for either" – either for the ultimate sacrifice or for incredibly hard work. Through the years, it was eyes fixed on Christ and the sharing in Christ's glory that gave our colleagues enough hope for each trial.

*[Note: This sermon can be wrapped up by **encouraging listeners first to fix their eyes on Christ in hope – no matter what they are going through**. Then, I would also encourage them to encourage others, especially global servants who have followed a calling to make their lives entirely about the gospel. Perhaps a note, a message, or an increased amount of financial support would be a great way to encourage a global servant or global servant family.]*