

# Coach House Church **BEACONS**

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## **FIRMLY ANCHORED**

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**3 R D S E P T E M B E R 2 0 2 0**

We have recently had the pleasure of being able to take a holiday. We made a last minute decision to head to Scotland, to the Ayrshire coast, to enjoy the sea air and a bit of walking. As we walked down the coastal path we passed a marina and outside alongside the path they had placed a large number of anchors. Each one had a brief description, when it was made, where it was made, and what it was used for. Some were small and were intended for small boats, some were large and were intended to keep a large boat safely moored in deep waters. It reminded me of the old hymn "Will your anchor hold in the storms of life, When the clouds unfold their wings of strife, When the strong tides lift and the cables strain, Will your anchor drift or firm remain"

This wonderful old hymn, much loved by some of our older brothers and sisters, was actually written for children. The hymns writer was Priscilla Owens, a Sunday school teacher and youth worker from Baltimore in America. Now Baltimore is a port city and in the 1860's, when the song was written, it was still very much reliant on trade coming through the port. The city had a seafaring heritage and Miss Owens would have been well acquainted with seafaring practice. Whilst the port was well protected from the sea it was not unknown for storms to hit the area. In a storm boats are liable to break free, drift or capsize. Miss Owens was clearly aware of the importance of a substantial and sturdy anchor to keep the boats in place.

So what was it that Miss Owens was teaching her children through this song? What is it about life that she had seen that made her want to prepare the children for?

It doesn't matter if you are young or old, you will know that life has a habit of throwing bad stuff at you. In our youth we are often tempted by wrong career choices, wrong lifestyle choices, or worse, inappropriate relationships. As we grow older some of these temptations fade away and we become weighed down with

illnesses and infirmities. In making such choices we are often heavily influenced by our peer group, that is, those people that we spend most time with. If you choose to spend more time with worldly people and less time with brothers and sisters in Christ it should not come as a surprise if you start to make wrong choices. Wrong choices often come about because we misunderstand the purpose of this life. There are many objectives people have in life; here are just a few. Having children, earning more money, leaving a legacy behind, being the best at something, or perhaps even just living to be old. Let me tell you, there is nothing wrong when these things happen, but the true objective of life, however long or short it is, is to continue in eternity with Jesus at the end of your life.

The song that Miss Owens wrote takes its first line from a scripture in the book of Hebrews, Chapter 6 and verse 19 says "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure"

This scripture is talking about something that will make you immovable in your faith, no matter what the size of the storm. It describes the anchor as a result of "this hope" So what is "this hope" that the author is referring to?

Well earlier in the letter to the Hebrews the author has just referenced an example from the Old Testament. He has pointed out that God had promised Abraham a son. He did so by taking an oath. Now an oath needs to be made in the name of someone higher than the one swearing it, but as there is no-one higher than Himself God had to swear the oath in His own name. Then all Abraham had to do was wait, in fact he needed to be very patient as it was 25 years before the oath was fulfilled.

The author points out that God's nature and His promises are unchangeable, He cannot lie. If you truly seek God, believing in Jesus as your redeemer, God gives you an unconditional promise of acceptance. When you ask God with openness, honesty and sincerity to save you from your sins He will do it. This truth should give you encouragement, assurance and confidence.

To explain this a bit further let's look at a parable which Jesus told about a man who built his house on a rock. You can find this parable in Matthew's gospel and also in Luke's gospel chapter 6 verse 46 onwards. He said "As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like. They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundations on a rock. When the flood came the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words

and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without foundations. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed, and its destruction was complete"

So we need to listen to the words of Jesus and put them into practice. We must build on a rock, but what rock should we build on? Well the apostle Paul, writing to the Ephesian church said "You are fellow citizens with God's people, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus as the chief cornerstone. In Him the whole building is joined together..." Now it is important to know that, in a building, the cornerstone is what keeps it supported. Jesus Christ is the cornerstone, the rock on whom we build our lives. Notice in the parable that the flood came to both the man who built with a foundation and the man who didn't. Being a Christian does not in any way exempt us from the trials of this life, but having that deep foundation will keep us from caving in when the going gets tough. So how can we build deep foundations? It is surprisingly simple. Trust in Jesus only and do not lean on your own understanding; keep reading the bible and spend time in prayer; and spend as much time as you can with other Christians.

A couple of other lines from the hymn state these important truths; The anchor is "Fastened to the rock which cannot move, Grounded firm and deep in the saviours love" and "It is safely moored, it will the storm withstand, For it is well secured by the saviours hand"

Check your anchor. Will it withstand a storm? If not, it is never too late to put things right.

Will your anchor hold in the storms of life  
When the clouds unfold their wings of strife  
When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain  
Will your anchor drift or firm remain?

Amen.



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