

*Exploration—  
from Galileo’s determined journey through the night skies  
to Magellan’s perilous voyage around the world,  
to the American Pioneers vision of a more fruitful land  
to NASA’s Mars rover—  
to  
a first grader’s question  
“Do you have any fives”  
receiving the response, “Go fish”  
confident that a five is somewhere  
the deck if not in Mom’s hand.  
to  
An angler descending the embankment to a favorite  
spot on the river and flinging a line into the water—  
can’t see the bass but knows they’re in that river—  
hoping to catch one for dinner.*

Humankind hopes for the reward of the unseen.

We are often willing to risk time, energy, ridicule  
and disappointment  
to pursue it.

Such is the message today’s scripture.

Christians especially are motivated by faith—

Faith is not the journey—

It is our tool for the pilgrimage of Christian life

Jeremiah 23:23-29  
Psalm 82  
Hebrews 11:29-12:2  
Luke 12:49-56

our walking stick along the way of Love.

Often living by faith and hope, however,

can be tiresome

even exhausting,

As William S. Craddock writes in *Restreaming*,

*We sometimes reach a stage in life when we wish we could nestle down  
in a wayside shelter. We want to just stoop and stay there for good, to  
give up the journey.*

*But that is to deny of forget our Abramic roots  
pitching tents and moving on.*

*Just as ships are not built to rest safely in harbors,  
we are created to journey out into the open seas—  
to engage in life with vigor and astonishment.*

*Life is not a spectator sport but an adventure,  
an experience where you don't know how it will turn out...  
We are pilgrim people<sup>i</sup>*

The Christian life is a pilgrimage in the Kingdom of God.

Faith is our walking stick.

Our Abramic roots are the power—which is faith—

that comes from

inspiration,

Jeremiah 23:23-29  
Psalm 82  
Hebrews 11:29-12:2  
Luke 12:49-56

*the substance of things hoped for –  
our daily bread, forgiveness, love, and  
freedom from temptation and fear.*

And faith is experience

that five drawn from the deck

that bass finally caught

it is

*the evidence of things not seen—*

the courage and power to go after them

in order that God's Kingdom come

on earth

as it is in the realm of the Trinity.

We see the revolving of other people as well as us

around the Son of God, not ourselves.

We come to appreciate people and cultures

Jeremiah 23:23-29  
Psalm 82  
Hebrews 11:29-12:2  
Luke 12:49-56

our biases and fears

have prevented us from discovering.

Sometimes we draw that five ring off the bat,

Sometimes we wait for it.

Sometimes we catch fish after a long patient wait

on the river bank—seeing other anglers succeeding

while we continue to watch for the unseen bass

dangling from our lines, landing in our basket.

Faith is the substance of things hoped for,

*And hope will never fail to satisfy  
our deepest need because the Holy Spirit  
that was given to us has  
flooded our hearts with God's love.<sup>ii</sup>*

Flooded, not trickled.

Pastor John Piper asks

*What is so important about Christian hope?  
If our future is not secured and*

Jeremiah 23:23-29  
Psalm 82  
Hebrews 11:29-12:2  
Luke 12:49-56

*satisfied by God then we are going to be excessively anxious.  
This results either in paralyzing fear or  
in self-managed, greedy control.  
We end up thinking about ourselves, our future, our problems and  
our potential, and  
that keeps us from loving.  
In other words,  
hope is the birthplace of Christian self-sacrificing love.<sup>iii</sup>*

When Jesus says,

*My little flock, don't be afraid.  
God is your Father,  
and your Father's great joy is to give you His kingdom.*

Echoed in our relationship with Jesus is the fulfillment of

God's ancient promise to Abram on which

Jesus builds:

*[Faith] means you can sell your possessions  
and give generously to the poor.  
You can have a different kind of savings plan:  
one that never depreciates, one that never defaults,  
one that can't be plundered by crooks or destroyed by natural  
calamities.  
Your treasure will be stored in the heavens,  
and since your treasure is there,  
your heart will be lodged there as well.*

Jesus elaborates,

Jeremiah 23:23-29  
Psalm 82  
Hebrews 11:29-12:2  
Luke 12:49-56

*I'm not just talking theory.  
There is urgency in all this.  
If you're apathetic and complacent,  
then you'll miss the moment of opportunity.  
You should be wide awake and on your toes  
like servants who are waiting for their master.<sup>iv</sup>*

It is more likely that “waiting for their master” is a better translation:

“waiting on” as we would say—

serving like fine dining wait staff,

and like loving parents, and faithful children.

Waiting on the master is to do for the master

that which the master prefers:

Jesus prefers to feed rather than eat.

Jesus prefers to wash feet rather than be washed.

Jesus prefers to give his life rather than jeopardize his disciples' lives.

Jesus prefers the way of self-sacrificing love.

The way of Jesus is our faith – our power to do good.

The substance of things hoped for,  
the evidence of things unseen.

Jeremiah 23:23-29  
Psalm 82  
Hebrews 11:29-12:2  
Luke 12:49-56

*Let your loving-kindness, O Lord, be upon us,  
as we have put our faith in you.*

*Amen*

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<sup>i</sup> *Restreaming*, William. S. Craddock, Jr. p. 100

<sup>ii</sup> Ro 5.5

<sup>iii</sup> John Piper, <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-is-so-important-about-christian-hope> (March 7, 2008)  
[emphasis mine]

<sup>iv</sup> Lk 12.32-40 VOICE