

A TWO DOLLAR HOPE
February 4, 2018 Communion Colossians 1: 3-5 & 1: 21-27
The Church of the Covenant

The odds of hitting the Powerball are 1 in 292 million. The odds of being struck by lightning are 1 in 960,000. The odds of finding a parking space at Walmart within two miles of the door are 1 in 150,000. (I made the last one up!). But the odds of going to heaven through Jesus Christ are 1 to 1. 100%

Whenever the Powerball gets to a level of around \$400million I notice an amazing phenomenon develop. As I'm standing in line with my laundry at Giant Eagle the customer service line get longer and longer as people wait to buy a lottery ticket. They're like jumping up and down like a four year old before Christmas Day. Grandmothers doing cartwheels into the newspaper stand. They're excitedly telling the person next to them in line what they'll do with their winnings –"I'll buy houses for all my kids; I'll pay off my mortgage; I'll take the trip I've always dreamed of taking." You know, its like they've already won even before they bought their ticket. The lottery sells hope at two dollars a pop. It's a two dollar hope that according to the odds will never come to pass for anyone you have ever even met in your entire life. Its a sucker bet. Not much of a hope is it, really? Pretty sad, actually, isn't it? People putting their hope in something that will never come to pass.

By contrast, there is the hope we have when Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior. It is guaranteed through the promises of God. God is God and God always keeps His promises. Its surety is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. His blood poured out at Calvary. His perfect life lived as an atonement for our sin. And Jesus Christ never changes. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. It is His precious blood that interposes for us poured out at the cross. This is the payment made for us on our behalf. This is the guarantor of blessing and favor and spiritual abundance and ultimately eternal life in HIM. And what is the sign that we are indeed His and that His precious blood has availed for us? The Spirit, the Holy Spirit alive in our heart. The seal of the Spirit seals our heart and makes it His. We receive Jesus. We receive the Holy Spirit. And His life alive in our heart is the proof positive that we are His and He is ours. The Bible says: "To ALL who receive Him He gives the power to become children of God." To everyone. To ALL. For every person who opens their heart and invites Him in. 100% of the people. 100% of the time. Miraculous spiritual abundance beyond measure because of the precious, precious blood poured out for us by a Living Savior. He has promised you this. 100% of the time. For 100% of the people who receive Him and who love Him and who choose to live their life for Him. There is nothing else in life that is a sure bet. But this is.

So do you want a two bit, two dollar hope or do you want something more? People need hope in their lives. People die without hope. People cannot go on without hope. People get that glazy

eyed, there's nothing to live for look in their eyes without hope. Goes the old hymn: "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness." How about yours?

So when you invite Christ to live in your heart by faith, and indeed He promises to come and indwell you by the Spirit, what is your hope? Colossians 1: 27 says: "*Christ in you, the hope of glory.*" Christ alive in me, my hope in everything I face in life. Christ alive in me, the answer to my every prayer. Christ in me, the surety of spiritual abundance and blessing through every storm in life. Christ in me, the hope of glory. Christ in me, the hope of victory over disease and darkness and death. That means He is the hope that one day I will enter into glory, into heaven, into eternal life because of what Jesus Christ has done for me, and for us. **My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness!** That's not a two dollar hope. That's a real hope.

I want to shift gears just a bit. I want you to consider for a moment that God has placed a wager today on us. He has asked His only begotten Son to go to the cross. He has placed the most precious possession of His heart and His life and His Creation on an altar of sacrifice for us. He has allowed sinful men to nail His precious, beloved Son Jesus to a cross, and to suffer and die a most horrible death. Priceless and without monetary value its cost is so great. And HE has done this without any sure and certain knowledge that anyone will care what He has done for them, that anyone will understand the precious bet He has made on their behalf, that anyone will respond in any way to His supreme act of love, that the world will go on placing bets on stupid things and trusting in hope that will always disappoint them, in leading lives of no significance and no meaning and no purpose because they are lived apart from His only begotten Son. That people will get excited about a stupid two dollar bet on a lottery that they have no chance in winning, and forget about Jesus who is a sure bet every time.

So consider that this communion table today is the place where God has placed His wager on you. It represents for you the cross and the sacrifice and the blood of Jesus. And He asks you as you come to this table to place the only thing you really have on this table for Him. Your life, a living sacrifice poured out to Him as He has poured His life out for you. Remember the old lottery advertising slogan? You have to play to win. Yes, you do.

O that the day would come, when people were excitedly jumping up and down to receive the sacrament, and speaking of the new life and the eternal life in Jesus... in the same animated way they stand in line to buy a lottery ticket. What is your hope built upon? Who do you want to receive in this sacrament today? "*Christ in you, the hope of glory*" Amen and Amen.

*By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, PA
IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!*