

Hebrews 6:13-20

13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, 14 saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." 15 And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise. 16 For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. 17 So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, 18 so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. 19 We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, 20 where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

I don't know if anyone watched it, but not too long ago *60 Minutes* on CBS had a report on Mt. Athos in Greece, where generations of monks have lived according to centuries old Eastern Orthodox traditions. It was interesting for many reasons. The land was beautiful, and the way the monasteries were built into it and on top of it was stunning. The traditions of the monks were very fascinating, even though sadly mired in superstition in some ways, and, of course, their appearance was curious. What really struck me, however, was the ossuary, where skulls upon skulls rested in a great pile. This was where the monks' bones ended up when they were dead and their bodies had decayed. After the ossuary was shown, there was a shot a little bit later of the crosses on top of a monastery. They were crosses atop anchors, or at least that is what they looked like to me.

We recently celebrated the resurrection of our Lord, and we will be in the Easter season for a few weeks now. As we bask in the light of our Lord's victory over death, we do well to picture Christ as our anchor among the skulls. All of us, like it or not, and unless Jesus comes first, will one day be bones, wherever they might end up, or ashes, I suppose. But that is not for us a terror. No, that is for us simply a fact, and not an eternal fact at that. Those skulls we leave behind will one day take flesh and, as Job confessed, see our Redeemer with our own flesh upon them. Christ has redeemed us, body and soul. Our king of peace, our Melchizedek, so to speak, is our ***"sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain."*** As our high priest, by His sacrifice, once and for all, for sin, He has put our death to death so that only life awaits those who believe—a life incomparable to the one we live here. And more than that, our brothers and sisters in Christ, our departed beloved, have that same life and await the same resurrection of the living and the dead. And we can count on that. God has confirmed it with an oath, He has signed it with His blood, He has sealed it with His resurrection.

When death approaches, or when faced with the death of one you love, fear not. You have an anchor in the tempestuous sea. The One who chased away the storm and calmed the waves with but a word is risen to speak for you. Yes, unless our Lord returns first, our bones will one day be without flesh, but not for long, indeed, for no time at all in proper perspective, in proportion to the eternity that awaits them and us when our Lord comes to claim them and reunite our bodies and souls. And that is not a pipe dream. That is a guarantee. Sunday made that sure. Amen.