

God's Love is Our Hope

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[0 : 00] Well, we get to consider more of God's great love for us tonight, and our scripture reading is going to be from Psalm 138. Psalm 138, and we'll read the whole chapter.

I will praise you, O Lord, with all my heart. Before the gods, I will sing your praise. I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your love and your faithfulness.

For you have exalted above all things your name and your word. When I called, you answered me. You made me bold and stout-hearted. May all the kings of the earth praise you, O Lord, when they hear the words of your mouth.

May they sing of the ways of the Lord, for the glory of the Lord is great. Though the Lord is on high, he looks upon the lowly, but the proud he knows from afar.

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life. You stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes. With your right hand, you save me. The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me.

[1 : 07] Your love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not abandon the works of your hands. Why do we like the Psalms so much?

Why do young Christians instinctively almost find their way to the Psalms? I think it's for the same reason that we love a good listener.

Because when we come to the Psalms, we feel like we're coming to somebody who knows us. Who understands what we're going through.

What it's like to be us. Psalm 138 is like that. Here he is in trouble, but he's still hopeful. He's in trouble, but he's hopeful.

Why is he hopeful? Because as this chapter or the Psalm ends, the Lord is going to fulfill his purpose for me. His love endures forever.

[2 : 10] And so God's love was David's hope. That's why he could live in the midst of trouble and enemies and still find hope.

So enemies around me, God loves me. Troubles on the inside. Troubles on the outside. But God loves me. I'm beat up.

I'm weighed down. I'm lowly. I can barely lift my head. But the Lord loves me.

He looks upon the lowly. And so in the middle of it all. Hope lives on. Hope lives on. So Jacob wrestled all through the night.

The Israelites moaned and groaned under Pharaoh's whip at the edge of the Red Sea.

[3 : 08] With enemies bearing down upon them. You know, but Jacob walked away that night with a blessing. The Israelites went free.

And the Red Sea opened up like a door. And the people went through it. Hope lived through all those nights.

It was the dawn of the darkest day. Christ on the road to Calvary. And then they killed him. They murdered the Lord of glory. You remember what the disciples said in Luke 24.

Before we had hoped. We had hoped that he was the Messiah. Their hope was gone. But on the third day, early in the morning, the sun came up like it did every day.

And with the sun, the Son of God arose. And hope had made it through the night. Hope had made it all the way through that night. And hope came out on the other side with Jesus.

[4 : 16] And that's what I want to talk with you about tonight. And this is where we're going to end our little series on God's love. And it's just this, this truth, that God's love is your hope. It's your hope.

And you're in Psalms. Turn over to Romans chapter 8. Romans chapter 8. Psalm 138 is sort of a reflection of what we see in Romans chapter 8.

We want to look at Romans chapter 8. And Romans 5 through 8, those chapters are all about hope and suffering.

They're all about hope and suffering. That's the theme that ties them together. The first four chapters of Romans is how is anyone saved?

How are we justified? And then Romans 5 through 8 is, well, here we are. We're justified. But our salvation is not yet complete.

[5 : 17] And we're in all sorts of suffering. And Paul begins with hope. Romans 5, 2 says we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. And verse 3, we not only rejoice in that, but we rejoice in our sufferings.

Because sufferings produce perseverance. And perseverance, character. And character, what? Hope. Hope. Romans 5 through 8 is all about hope in suffering. So Paul looks at suffering in our sinfulness.

And the fact that we're still wrestling with the flesh. That I'm still wrestling with, oh, what a wretched man that I am. I don't understand what I'm doing. That is a kind of suffering. And in the middle of that, he says there's still hope.

There's hope for now. There's hope for later. It's that we are united with Jesus Christ. And because I am united, I am connected. You know, vine and branch. Tree and limb.

[6 : 20] The spirit of God lives in us. And so there's this hope for holiness. I'm no longer enslaved to my sin. No, I'm now enslaved and entrusted to righteousness. There's hope for holiness.

And then Paul looks at the sorrow. The ache of living in a dying. In a broken world. And this is where we get into chapter 8.

In verse 18, he says, I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. That word glory.

It harkens back all the way to chapter 5 in verse 3 or verse 2 where it's we have this hope of glory. And so now here we are.

We're in bondage to decay. That's something we all have in common. No matter what it seems like sometimes, we're all in bondage to decay.

[7 : 22] We're groaning. We're getting sick. We're getting old. We're dying. And yet Paul says there's still hope. Verse 23, we are waiting for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

That's really the final and full answer to the battle with the flesh is resurrection. That's actually the full and final answer to living in bondage to decay.

It's this redemption of our bodies. When will this battle with sin and decay and the difficulty and the grief of this world and the trouble and the sorrow be over?

Well, it's resurrection when our adoption is completed and we enter into the full inheritance of the glory of God. Then, verse 24 says, and in this hope we were saved.

Suffering, but hope right along with it. Now, as Paul winds down this whole section of hope and suffering, Romans 5 through 8, he ends with this ultimate reason, the ultimate foundation.

[8 : 34] What is underneath it all? What is the keystone? What is the resting place of all of this hope that we've seen in Romans 5 through 8?

And it comes down to God's love. God's love. God's love is going to keep us through everything. And God's love, just like what we sang, is going to bring us out on the other side. So listen as I read these very familiar verses.

I'm going to begin reading at verse 28 and read to the end. And I want you to listen for all the love in this passage. And we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Verse 29 tells us what that purpose is for those God foreknew. He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of a son that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

[9 : 44] Do you hear the adoption theme again? And those he predestined, he also called. And those he called, he also justified. And those he justified, he also glorified.

What then shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all.

How will he not also along with him graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.

Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died more than that, who was raised to life, is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

[10:44] As it is written, for your sake we face death all day long. We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Lord, did you hear all the love in that passage? So who or what can separate us from the love of God, the love of Christ?

And he says, no, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. Nothing in all creation will separate us from the love of God. And the point of the whole thing is just simply this.

As long as God loves us, there's hope. As long as he loves us, there's hope. And so we want to see this connection in three ways in this passage.

[11:58] How does God's forever love? How does that guarantee and give us reason to be hopeful in the midst of the troubles? Psalm 138.

He's going to fulfill his purpose for me. His love endures forever. We're going to see that connection of love and hope in three ways in this passage. And it's first that God's love will keep us through all of our sin.

God's love will keep us through all of our sin. What is our greatest grief now? What is our greatest sorrow? It's our sin.

I think it was John Owen who said something like this, that the unbeliever hates or dreads death. Because it will be the end of all of his sinning. But Christians look forward to death.

Because it will be the end of all their sinning. We used to taste it and enjoy it. But we've lost that taste. And sometimes we only hate the aftertaste now.

[13:06] But more and more, it's not what we want to eat at all. Maybe some of you kids, or maybe some of you adults, have read the BFG.

Or seen the movie, the BFG. The poor, big, friendly giant only has one food to eat. Does anyone remember what it is? Filthsome, nasty, disgusting snozzcubers.

And he hates them. But it's the only food that he can eat. But he hates them. It's disgusting. It's gross. And he wishes that he would never have to eat it again.

And his dream is to someday have other food to eat. Well, sin is our snozzcumber.

We can't wait for the day when we'll never taste it again. When it will never be on our mouths. But that day seems so slow in coming. Do you ever say that?

[14:09] When will this end? When will I be done with sinning? Sanctification is hard business. It is a dog fight. It is a slog.

It is tiring. It is tedious. It is frustrating. And we cry out with Paul, What a wretched man that I am. I don't understand what I'm doing.

Who is going to rescue me? Who will rescue me from this body of death? You know, fighting sin is like playing some sort of demonic game of whack-a-mole.

That when we hit it and we think it's down, it only comes up again. But, again, what is the theme of this passage?

Is that in the middle of that, there's hope. There's hope. And you see it in verse 29. For those God foreknew, and that's a love word.

[15:08] For those God foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his son. So why is there hope in the middle of all this suffering with sin and in this battle with sin?

Well, because God has planned our holiness. He has planned our holiness. He has purposed it. And his purpose for me will stand.

And it's not relative holiness. Holiness compared to the world. Although that is part of it. And it's not merely positional holiness. Where right now I can be called a saint.

A holy one. But actually and forever and totally holy. He predestined you to that.

That is already put down. That is the place that you are going. That is what you are going to become. Conformed to the likeness of his son. You are moving inevitably.

[16:09] Without stop. Without delay. Towards that point when his purpose for you is fulfilled. When you are completely and utterly just like his son. And in love he is going to bring it about.

And you say but how do I know that? Won't my sin turn his heart away? Won't my sin spoil his plan? And Paul says no. Those he predestined. Those he justified. And those he justified. He also passed tense.

Because it is as good as done. Glorified. God in love has woven. And put together. Crafted a golden chain. That cannot be broken.

But again how can I know? He gave his son for you. He gave his son for you. More than that Jesus is praying for us.

Jesus is interceding for us. And that is why our sin will not. And cannot. Spoil our hope. Because even now.

[17 : 13] Jesus is praying for us. So how often do you remember in your sin. In your wrestling with sin. That Jesus even then is pleading for you.

Imagine those prayers. The risen Jesus is at God's right hand speaking for you. And that is why sin won't win. That is why sin.

Won't cut us off from God. And ultimately destroy us. Because there is a Jesus. Praying for us.

Praying against our sin.

Praying for mercy. Praying for forgiveness. So oh. How often have we been saved. By the prayers of Jesus Christ.

And we didn't even know it. How often has he pled his blood and righteousness in heaven for us.

And we were not thinking about it. Because of his prayers we've won through.

[18 : 15] And his prayers have won the day. You aren't fighting your sin alone. You're not fighting your sin alone.

Jesus is our Moses who is up high on the hill. And he's raising his hands to God in prayer for us.

And his arms do not get tired. We are down in the valley. We are fighting the war.

But he is up high praying. And so we win. You know I so often forget that. I so often just go into the feeling that.

I've sinned. I'm all on my own here. I need to do the right thing. I need to pray. And certainly repentance is required. For my restoration.

But there is more than going. More than just me repenting and praying that is going on. There is my Savior. Praying for me as well. Christ is interceding for me against all the accusations.

[19 : 15] Against all my sins. And so what does Paul attribute it all to? It's the love of God. He says we're more than conquerors. More than conquerors.

Through him who loved us. So God's love. In God's love he gave us Christ. In God's love he sent him to die. In God's love. God's love raised him to live. God's love exalted him to be our high priest. And so right now he's there praying for you. Through thick and thin. Now why is he there? Because God loves you. And he knew you in need of high priest.

He knew that you would need someone interceding for you. And so he gave you Jesus Christ. And so he will fulfill his purpose for me.

Jesus is on high. Praying us all the way home. Praying us all the way home. All the way there. And so there's hope. Our sin is not stronger.

[20 : 16] Is not greater. Is not worse. Than the goodness and the grace. And the glory of our high priest Jesus. And so there's hope. Now second.

Remember we're talking about. Why is. How is God's love our hope? We secondly see that God's love will keep you. Keep us. Through all of our sadness. And you can see all the things that Paul mentions next.

All the things that threaten us. All the things that make us sad. All the things that. Would seem to. Laugh in the face of hope. Would say to us.

Despair. Curse God and die. Look at all these things. Trouble. And hardship. Those are big words. That just throw their arms around this whole fallen condition.

Trouble. And hardship. Persecution. Famine. Nakedness. Danger. Sword. Everything that hurts.

Maybe you've seen. Or you've read. Jerry Bridges book.

[21 : 21] When. Trusting God. When life. Hurts. That's. He's talking about those things. Things that hurt. Things that grieve us.

Things that say. That seem to say. You're never going to make it. Paul says. None of those things will stop God's love. None of those things are going to stop.

God's love from glorifying you. And fulfilling our hope. Romans 8:28 says. He uses these very things for our good. He uses those very things to do us good.

And so we live in a hostile world. We live in bondage to decay. There's so much that threatens to undo us. But that decay is not stronger than God's love.

His fierce love for us. There's so much that threatens to undo us. But that decay. Those threats. Are not stronger than God's love.

[22 : 19] No. That's why he says. We're more than conquerors. Whatever more than conquering is. That's what we are. Through him who loved us. And so how can we conquer?

How do we conquer? Why will we conquer? Over cancer. And sickness. Over grief. And pain. And disappointment. Over dashed dreams.

And disappointments. And things that will never be. That we wish that could be. How are we going to conquer? Over the senseless hatred of men. How can we conquer?

Through loneliness. And widowhood. How can we conquer? Through split marriages. And prodigal children. It's through him who loved us.

He loves us. So he's not letting us go. So he will fulfill his purpose for us.

[23 : 22] Those he justifies. He glorifies. God's love is taking us to a world. Where there is no more crying. Pain.

Or death. God's love is taking us to a world. Where nothing impure will ever enter it. Nor will anyone who does.

What is shameful and deceitful. None of it. Can separate us. From God's love. And none of it. Can kill your hope. And so you can stare.

Sickness. Cancer. And disappointments. And persecution. In the face. Not as some sort of. Unconquerable.

Though. You know how the Israelites. All except for David. Looked at Goliath. He was this giant. That could not be beaten. He was a giant. That could not be killed.

[24 : 19] But we are not those. Like those unbelieving Israelites. Who stand back in cowardice. We are like David. The spirit of God is in us. Just as he was in David.

And so we do not look at the. That those giants. As these unconquerable foes. But we look at them. As already conquered. Already beaten.

Christ has been raised. Christ lives. And so shall I. And so we are more than conquerors. Through him who loved us. And it is not future tense. We will be more than conquerors.

Even though that is true. It is present tense. We are. Our identities. Our identities. Is as conquerors. And it is not us.

It is his love. Not a single one of them. Can snatch you out of his hand. Christ will have the prize. For which he died. So we are going to sing at the end.

[25 : 18] Men may trouble. And distress me. Twill but drive me. To thy breast. Life.

With trials. Hard. May press me. Heaven will bring me. Sweeter rest. Oh. Tis. Not in grief.

To harm me. Grief doesn't have. What it takes to harm me. Why. While thy love is left. To me. So then my soul.

Take thy full salvation. Rise. Rise. Over sin. And fear. And care. Brothers and sisters. We are those who rise.

Why are we those who rise. Over these things. Because God loves us. And as long as God loves us. Our hope. Lives on. And so finally.

[26 : 15] That's the second thing. God's love is going to make us happy. Now the third is. God's love is going to bring us home. We even sang of this. In our hymns.

God's love will bring you home. Says nothing. Will separate us. Nothing will separate us. From his love. And that's now.

That none of those things. Can separate us from God's love. But I think there is this future aspect to it as well. Because God's love is going to finally have its way.

Remember what Jesus prayed. Lord, I want them to be with me where I am. That was the heart of Jesus. That was the love of Jesus praying a prayer. And love is going to have its way.

And we will be with him. And Paul has already said that the adoption is going to be completed.

Finalized. I know I've told you this story. About the time we were at this transition home.

[27 : 14] In Ethiopia. And there was this 11 year old boy or so. And he had written in this big colorful chalk. On the driveway. I love my parents. And he had never been home.

He had never been on an airplane. And flown to the United States. But. He was theirs. And they were his.

The adoption was almost complete. He was theirs in name. But he was not quite theirs in reality. Sort of like the situation that we find ourselves in with God our father.

Waiting for the completion. And they were just waiting for all the paperwork to get finished. So he could travel home. Just can't put children on an airplane.

You have to do a lot of paperwork first. And home was across the big ocean. But you know one day he was going to make it home. But you know it wasn't his love for them.

[28 : 19] That was going to make it happen. It was their love for him. That was going to make it happen. Their love was going to do all the work. Their love was going to make it happen.

They were going to make sure that he made it. They were going to get him home no matter the cost. Nothing was going to separate them from their love.

And so my fellow adoptees. My fellow adoptees. God's love is going to bring us home.

God is pulling you home. He's pulling you home. God's love is pulling you homeward. And he's going to eventually probably yank you right through death itself.

And it might be a big mighty yank. A sudden yank. From this world to the next. I think of our brother Ed Withrow.

[29 : 22] It was a mighty sudden yank. But all of a sudden. Separation. Gone. Hope fulfilled. He was home. Psalm 49 says.

He will. Take me to himself. He will take me to himself. Boo. For others. It's a slow. Relentless pull. It's like that tug of war. And the rope is only slowly. Inch by inch. Crossing the line. For some of us. That's what it's going to be like. But Christian.

You have a rope around you. A rope. Tied with God's own hand. He's going to bring you home. He's going to take you to himself.

And all kinds of enemies are holding on to you. All kinds of enemies are holding on to you. Holding you back. Struggling to keep you away from God. Struggling to separate you from him. And some are desperately pulling.

[30 : 24] And some are desperately trying to cut the rope. There's hardships. There's persecution. There's demons. There's trouble. The world is pulling you back. You've got your own sin at your feet. Holding you.

Pulling you back. Grabbing at you. Tripping you up. Desperate to keep you from God. But you know what? That rope is made out of a material that is too hard to cut. It was woven together in the heart of God.

Way before the world ever began. And it was dipped in the blood of his son. So that now it's impenetrable. It cannot be cut. It's a rope made out of God's love.

God's love. And at the other end is this almighty, omnipotent God pulling that rope. Pulling you home. And that's our hope.

He's going to get us home. God's love is going to make you holy. God's love is going to make you happy.

[31 : 23] And God's love is going to get you home. So are you sick? Wasting away. In bondage to decay.

Beauty fading. Knees hurting. Back hurting. God loves you. He's going to get you home. He's going to get you through this.

Maybe you're in an agony. And with a battle with sin. You stumble and fall. And you pull out your hair. And you say, what a wretched man that I am.

I don't understand what I'm doing. God's love is going to get you through that too. Maybe you're homesick. You're just tired of the distance.

You want more than anything to see him. And be with him. God's going to get you through this. Nothing will separate you from his love. Some of you are weary.

[32 : 28] And tired. And well doing. Well there's hope. God's not done with you yet. And maybe some of you are starting to pull away. You're starting to go away to other hopes.

Other dreams. Other loves. And to you I say, false hopes are going to fail you. And there is no need for them. You don't need to go find another hope.

Your hope is still good. So don't get pulled away now. Don't get pulled away now. Some of you.

Have no hope. Death is. It's something you don't even want to think about. Because. That's the end of it all for you. No hope in life.

And no hope in death. And I say what a tragic. Way to live. All the joy you have. Right now is all the joy you're ever going to have. And I would just plead with you to think.

[33 : 29] To think of what lies ahead. And how unnecessary it is. I think that's the saddest thing about hell. Just how unnecessary it is.

And to you. Even to you though. I say there's hope. There is salvation. And it's in Jesus Christ. Because you know what God did in love.

He didn't put salvation. Way up high on the top shelf. Where only the biggest and the best can reach. God so loved the world.

He gave his one and only son. That. Whosoever. Would believe on him. Would not perish. But have eternal life. God.

God. And love. Put salvation. Way down low. Since no work at all. Just believe. God and love made salvation.

[34 : 30] Easy. As easy can be. So how do you get it? You just entrust yourself to Jesus. You just trust Jesus for it.

I need saved. Jesus. You do this. No work. Just faith. And so. What's going on inside of you? What's going on inside of you?

Are you saying. I'll never be saved. I can't be saved. I'm too sinful. Gone too long. I don't understand.

It seems too hard. Any of those things. Just. There's hope for you. God. Loves. Sinners. And he loves them so much. He makes salvation.

In some ways. As easy as falling into bed. You just trust Jesus. You fall into his arms. And if you do.

[35 : 30] God says. You'll have life now. And life forever. And you say. Can it be that easy? Yeah. God so loves. The world. That he did it.

Just like that. So don't miss it. Don't make it harder. Than what it has to be. There's still hope for you. Don't squander that hope though.

By waiting. Let's pray. God. What a. Merciful. Merciful.

Great. God you are. I pray for those. Who are grieving. And hurting. And. And that's all of us. To some degree. But to those especially.

I pray that you would. Bring hope to them. Pray that. You would give us.

[36 : 25] Courage. And grace. To take. This. The. The troubles. Of. This life. Just like Jesus.

Told us. One day. At a time. And. So I pray. Lord. That your grace. Would be sufficient. For this day's troubles. And we thank you.

That. They'll be sufficient. For this day's troubles. And. And that they're going to be. Sufficient. For every single day. After that. Because. In love. You have stored up. Everything we need.

In Christ. Everything. That we need. Is in him. And so. I thank you. For your love. I pray. That you would help us.

To learn to. Know. And rely upon it. To rely upon that love. This evening. And tomorrow. And the next day. To know it better.

[37 : 20] That you would. Wash away. That you would. Wipe away. The clouds. And give us a greater. Understanding. And appreciation. For that love.

And for those. Who are lost. Lord. Have mercy. Have mercy. Pray these things.

In Jesus name. Amen. Amen.