

Hope Anticipating Christ's Return

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[0 : 00] Open your Bibles to Titus chapter 1. So, right after Thessalonians and the letters to Timothy, Titus.

And we're going to read verses 1-4 in chapter 1, and then we're going to jump down to chapter 2. Follow along as I read God's Word. Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness, of faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time.

And at his appointed season, he brought his Word to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior, to Titus, my true son in our common faith, grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

And then go down to chapter 2, and we'll read 11-14. For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.

It teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness, and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

[1 : 42] Let's hear the Word preached. Well, I agree with what Charlie said about gifts, with this one exception.

Today is my daughter Julie's birthday, and for her birthday, the living God gave them a little boy.

It's 6 o'clock this morning, and so we're rejoicing in a healthy baby, a healthy mother, and Tom and Julie's joy. I doubt if they'll forget the gift that they received today.

Soon after our entry into World War II, General Douglas MacArthur and his troops landed in the Philippine Islands to defend them from the Japanese, but while there he received orders from the President to withdraw in order to defend Australia, which he did.

But he left with the promise that has become immortalized, I shall return. And that became the reoccurring theme of most of his public speeches over the next couple of years.

[2 : 52] Though it was just three words, that promise had a powerful impact, and it became the hope of the Philippine Islands during the war. And then in October 1944, after advancing island by island through the Pacific, General MacArthur finally waited ashore on the Philippine island of Leyte, fulfilling the promise he had made two and a half years earlier, I shall return.

Well, in the same way, or a similar way, before ascending into heaven, the captain of our salvation left us with a promise to return. And for 2,000 years now, his people have been waiting for the fulfillment of that promise.

And I think it's strange that what I find in the New Testament is that the New Testament believers were more eagerly and expectantly looking for that return of their Lord than many of us in the Western church today.

Even though we are 2,000 years closer to his return in the keeping of his promise. Why is that? Well, let me just offer a couple possibilities.

Could it be that prosperity and freedom and health have allured us to setting our hearts on things below rather than on things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God and his promise to come for us?

[4 : 25] Could it be that we become too attached to the things of this world as if it could really satisfy us?

And so we become complacent, perhaps, toward the promise, I shall return. Perhaps life's been too good. God's been too good.

And we even might start to view the coming of Christ as an interruption of our good life. At least we're not yearning for it in the way that persecuted brethren for the last 2,000 years have been yearning and longing and praying for the Lord Jesus to come in fulfillment of his promise.

With their eyes lifted up for their Lord to come and rescue them. There are other possible reasons for the neglect of this vibrant hope of the Christian, of Christ's return.

Some of us have rejected or reacted against the preoccupation of many in Christendom, which could only be called a sensationalized view of Christ's return.

[5 : 35] marked by overly literalized interpretations of the book of Revelation, and based upon the idea of a secret return of Christ that we don't find in Scripture.

And many of us have rejected such interpretations, and rightly so. But in doing so, it's possible to have overreacted and thrown the baby out with the bathwater, to where we diminish the importance of our Lord's promise and return.

Well, that's no small loss, because it's to rob ourselves of the blessed hope. And that blessed hope is to be like an ever-burning coal in our hearts, causing us to long for, to look for, to pray for, and prepare for the Lord's coming.

And to do so with an even greater anticipation than if you were a Filipino under Japanese occupation during World War II, waiting for General MacArthur to return and rescue you.

And then just as MacArthur's promise to return remained the theme of his speeches, so it is that I find in the Scriptures that Christ's promise to return receives constant repetition throughout the Gospels on our Savior's mouth.

[7 : 11] Constant repetition. I believe in every single book of the New Testament, the only one exception being Philemon, that one chapter book.

It's the predominant note that is to be front and center. It is the predominant note of the believer's hope. We've seen this morning as we've sung that we look back to our Savior's death and resurrection, and that gives us hope.

But the predominant note for hope is forward to this blessed hope of Christ's return. And Peter tells us to set our hope fully on that grace to be given us when Jesus Christ shall be revealed.

We simply don't live right without this great motivator. Perhaps you're living with the Lord's return ever in view. If so, good for you. Keep it up and rub up against the rest of us.

And if not, repent with me and let's get the Lord's return back into the place that the Scriptures put it in our own hearts, in our own minds.

[8 : 20] That's my intention even in this sermon as we come to the blessed hope. Open your Bibles to the passage read in Titus chapter 2. Our text this morning is just one verse, verse 13, but I'm going to begin reading back in verse 11.

Verse 11. For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, and that grace of God that saves people teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, godly lives in this present age.

While we wait. Here's our text. While we wait for the blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness, and to purify for himself a people who are his very own, eager to do what is good.

Don't miss the future orientation of our text. Indeed, of the Christian life. The whole Christian life in this present age, its constant warfare against the temptations of the worldly passions and ungodliness, with which we must constantly give a no for every one of its allurements, and must give a yes to godliness, self-control, righteous living.

That whole life of the battle with sin is to be carried on while we're waiting. And the word for wait there is a word that can mean look.

[10 : 00] It's the same word that Simeon and Anna were doing. They were waiting. They were looking for the coming Messiah. And even so, while we wait, while we look for the blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The blessed hope of the Christian then is never to be far out of sight. Indeed, if you're reading your Bibles, the Holy Spirit doesn't let it be long out of sight before you're reading about it again and again and again.

Jesus said, I shall return. And that's to be on the front burner with the people of God. Very briefly then, I want you to notice what is not our blessed hope.

Our blessed hope of the Christian is not death. It is not to have our spirit released from the prison of this body and to go to be with the Lord. That is not the hope, the blessed hope of the Christian.

That's more of a Greek concept, a pagan concept, than a Christian one that views the body and all things physical as evil. And the spirit is good and it's locked in this evil body and glory will be when this body, like a prison, opens the doors and lets our spirit fly away and into an eternity of a non-physical, no-body existence.

[11 : 30] No, that's not the blessed hope. Yes, when given the choice of continuing to live here or to die and to have his spirit go to be with Christ, Paul says, I'll take that.

That's better by far. To be there, my spirit there with Christ, my body in the grave, than just to be here, body and spirit. But that's not Paul's blessed hope.

That's the intermediate state. He says in 2 Corinthians 5, he doesn't want to be found naked. I don't want to be found just a spirit in heaven, unclothed with any body.

I don't want to be a naked spirit. I want to be clothed with a heavenly dwelling. I want to be clothed with my new resurrected body that will happen at the day that Christ returns. That's the blessed hope, the return of Jesus Christ, not death.

And so the blessed hope for which we're waiting and looking is the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

[12 : 37] Now, notice three things. First, it's a person. This blessed hope is a person. It is the historical person, Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah sent by God.

33 years spent on this planet, perfectly obeying God's law for his people, dying for his people, rising from the dead for his people, ascending into heaven for his people.

It's none other than our great God and Savior. What a precious description of Jesus Christ, our great God.

Jesus is God. He's as much God as the Father is God, as the Spirit is God. He is the God-man. And he is the great God, that eternally existent one, that one who was alone with the Father and the Spirit and spoke the world into being out of nothing.

That's this great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, holding all things together in his powerful hand. He's our great God.

- [13 : 52] He is our great Savior. Indeed, he's the only Savior that God sent for sinners. For salvation is found in no other name, in no one else. For there's no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

Our great God and Savior. And notice he's our great God and Savior. Paul includes himself, along with those that he's writing to, Titus and the believers there on the island of Crete.

He includes all who have fled for refuge to Jesus Christ to save us from our sin and that damnation that our sins deserve. All who were going their own way and then stopped and repented and repudiated that old way and turned and trusted in Jesus Christ and received him.

He is our great God and Savior. What a precious thing to be able to say that he is our great God and Savior.

That's what I'm waiting for. The appearing of our great God and Savior. Can you say that? Is he your great God and Savior?

- [15 : 13] Oh, if he's not, he's inviting you today. Every time his gospel is preached, his arms are wide open. And through the minister of the gospel, he's saying, Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light. I'm humble and lowly in heart. What a Savior. Receive him today.

So this glorious hope is a person. Secondly, it's the appearing of this person, Jesus Christ. You notice that. The appearing of this person.

He's not physically here. His spirit, yes, but his body, the body that was crucified and buried and raised again is not here.

It's in heaven. A real place, a real body is there. For after he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty in heaven.

- [16 : 23] But he's going to make another appearance. And it won't be anything like his first appearing. We're about to remember his first appearing. His first appearing was a humble appearing, wasn't it?

Born into poverty of a poor carpenter from Nazareth. A backwater town. Can anything good come out of Nazareth? Nobody there ever really amounted to anything in the world's eyes.

Born not in a palace, but wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger, a cattle feeding trough. Because there was no room for them in the end.

There was nothing in his appearance that would suggest that he was a great king. Far less that he is the great God and only savior of sinners. No, no.

That was all veiled. Oh, but his second appearing is of a different nature. Altogether. Same person. Different kind of appearing.

- [17 : 28] Notice what it says. Our text says, the blessed hope is the glorious appearing of our great God and savior, Jesus Christ. The glorious appearing.

The manner of his first appearing veiled the glory of who he was. But when he comes again, the veil is going to be torn off. He's coming in all his glory.

In all the splendor and brightness of his glory. And Jesus says, it will lighten up the sky from east to west. And all his glorious angels are coming with him.

Ten thousands times ten thousands. His royal retinue as he comes in glory. All his glorified saints coming with him as a mighty army that no man can number.

With a trumpet sound worthy of a king. A fanfare for the king. A shout that will waken the dead and call them all to final judgment. There's nothing secret or inglorious about it.

[18 : 34] Every aspect of his appearing will be marked by outward glory. Indeed, some translations read the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory.

The glorious appearing. He's coming in glory. And when he comes resplendent in his glory, every eye will see him and will know who he is.

And every knee will bow and every tongue confess to the glory of God the Father that he, Jesus, is God, is Lord.

So the blessed hope, it's a person, our great God and Savior. It's the appearance of this person in glory.

And then thirdly, and on this will count the longest, notice it's a happy hope. It's a happy hope for all those who possess Jesus as their great God and Savior.

[19 : 40] For them, it's a happy hope. The word blessed, we're familiar with it. The Beatitudes, blessed is the man. The Psalms begin that way. Blessed is the man.

Blessed means to be in a happy condition, to be in a state of happiness, a good state. The blessed man is the happy man and the blessed hope is the happy hope.

Yes, this hope of the Christian is a happy hope. And that corresponds with what we read elsewhere about this hope. The joyful element of hope cannot be missed.

Listen to what Paul says just three times in the book of Romans, chapter 5, verse 2. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, he says. What right now?

We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, both seeing it and sharing in it. Romans 12, 12. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction.

[20 : 43] Hope has a power to bring joy into any circumstance, even the greatest afflictions of life. Joyful in hope. And then Romans 15, 13.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him so that you will overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The one who is, the believer who is overflowing with hope is one who is full up with joy and peace as well. It can't be otherwise because hope is a joy-producing grace.

It is a happy hope. Do you want more joy? Then feed your hope because it is a happy hope. Meditate on the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

And that's what I want to do in the time remaining. Just to remind ourselves, why will that be such a happy day? And why should that day cause joy to spill over into this day?

[21 : 53] What is it about that day that we will experience that even now our hope of that joy should cause us hope? Well, it's a momentous event at the end of the age when Jesus returns.

And many things are happening in relation to it. It's kind of like a college homecoming. You're invited to the homecoming. It's a grand event, isn't it?

But it's made up of many other smaller events. So, there will be meetings of various classes that graduated in various years and activities for them.

Maybe tours at the new buildings, the old dorms where they used to attend and sporting events and a banquet, a program.

all under the umbrella of homecoming. And so, the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ is one grand momentous event as Jesus perforates history and comes down and marks the end of this present age and the beginning of the age to come, the eternal age.

[23 : 04] Now, there's a lot of things happening surrounding the return of our Savior and all of it makes us happy. So, we've touched on some of this as we've considered the topic of the believer's hope and we could talk about many things.

We could talk about it's going to be Victory Day and the ticker tape parades of the end of World War II celebrating victory will be nothing compared to the celebration of the victories that Jesus Christ has won on behalf of His people over sin, over Satan, over death, over the curse, over everything bad.

We have spoken of the change in the creation. That is, it comes in great destruction upon this world out of the dust and ashes will come forth a new heavens and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

And we talked about the fruitfulness of the creation set free from its bondage to decay and even our own bodies and what will it be like that these lowly bodies will know no more death and disease and sickness and pain and will be like our Lord's resurrection glorious body.

Glorious things are spoken of these events of the return of Christ. Christ. It will be the end of war.

[24 : 40] All the wars and rumors of war that go on down through history. Never again. Nothing to cause us fear. Nuclear armament.

This, that, or the other. Nothing will be left. All the wicked will be cast into hell. There will only be the righteous. There will be no tempters. There will be no devil.

There will be nothing to cause us to be afraid. Come and see the works of the Lord, the desolations he has brought on earth. He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth.

He breaks the bow and shatters the spear. He burns the shields with fire. You won't need them. Peace throughout the whole universe. I want to be there for that.

It's the end of a long dangerous journey to finally be home and out of danger's reach. Home where we belong with those that we belong with.

[25 : 41] At rest after the wearisome journey. With nothing to disturb us. Where work has no weariness.

To be there with other believers. That's the concern that Paul addresses in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. I don't want you to be ignorant about those who are in Christ when they died. Well what's going to happen to them when Christ appears?

Well they're going to rise first. They're not going to miss out on anything. Their bodies will rise first joined to their spirits. Then we who are alive will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air.

There's going to be this glorious reunion with those who've gone before. And some of our joy of heaven will be the joy that we have to see our brothers and sisters who suffered here in this life set free from their suffering.

Some of my joy is going to be seeing Edwin in enjoying the music of heaven. He's going to enjoy it. But part of my joy is going to be to see him enjoy it.

[27 : 03] We rejoice with each other here. We'll do that to perfection there. Some of my joy in heaven will be to stand by our brother Paul and to see him looking upon our Savior's face and the joy on his face to have his sight restored.

restored. It's vicarious joy to be with those who are brothers and sisters and to enjoy their joy.

That will go on through all eternity as we sit around the fire and share the faithfulness of God, the testimonies to his kindness.

As providence is turned over, that weaving of the strange providences and all we see from this side is the underside of the knots and all the yarn. But in heaven it will be turned over and we'll say, look, look what God was doing through that trouble in my life.

Look what he did in answer to my prayer. It was so weak in faith. I hardly thought it would ever be possible. But look, look at that thread right from my prayer over here to this happening.

[28 : 17] what a glorious joy it will be to see how our intercessory prayer was answered. These are just a few of the joys of heaven.

But as we sang, Jesus is the centerpiece of heaven. Jesus will be what makes it heaven for me, the song says.

And so I want us to focus upon that as we think about what all heaven will be like.

I'm sorry, I've lost my place. First of all, we're going to be happy then for our Lord Jesus. Just in the same way we'll be happy for our brothers and sisters to see them happy and no longer suffering, we're going to be happy to see our Lord Jesus receiving the glory that he is due.

We've seen him in his humiliation and his sufferings and how happy we will be to see him glorified, honored. We've wept to see him rejected.

[29 : 31] We've wept to see him weeping, to see him bleeding drops of blood as sweat, sorrowing, abused, mocked, tortured, crucified as he worked out our salvation.

Oh, how our hearts have hurt. Even as Simeon said to Mary, a sword will pierce your heart. And a sword has pierced our hearts to see our Savior humiliated and suffering.

Oh, but that heart of ours is going to enter into the joy of seeing him exalted and receiving the glory do his name.

We've heard his name misused here, haven't we? We've heard it mixed in with cursing and blaspheming. We've heard those who say there is no God who refused to give him the glory of his creation and instead attribute it to natural causes of time and chance.

Those who give him no thanks but arrogantly take all the glory of their achievements and what they are and have to themselves. That was my hard work. Thank you. No glory to God.

[30 : 36] No thanks to God. No thought of God. And what happiness will it be to us in that day to see every knee going down and every tongue confessing the greatness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

To see the greats of world history that knew him not now bowing and acknowledging. Thomas Kelly takes us right into that sight after his sufferings. When the whole the heavenly father exalted him to the highest place.

Look, he saints, the sight is glorious. See the man of sorrows now. From the fight returned victorious. Every knee to him shall bow. Sinners in derision crowned him, mocking thus the Savior's claim.

Saints and angels crowd around him, own his title and praise his name. Hark those bursts of acclamation, praise. Hark those loud triumphant chords.

Jesus takes the highest station. Oh, what joy the sight affords. Crown him, crown him, King of kings and Lord of lords.

[31 : 48] For his return and freeing of the Philippine Islands, General MacArthur received the highest medal of honor. What will be the honors given to our Savior as we cast our crowns at his feet?

And as the Father exalts him in our presence, praises him for his glorious victory in our salvation, how happy we'll be for the Lord Jesus to see him receiving what he has coming.

Amen. And then no small part of heaven's joys will be to see him. To see him as he is and to be like him.

We saw that from 1 John chapter 3 and verse 2. But I wonder if you have thought much at all about that first reunion when you first see him. The one that loved you and had you on his heart when he died on the cross.

For you, you're going to see him. Just like you see me now, you're going to see him even closer than I am to you. You're going to see him. The one you've read about all your life in here.

[33 : 07] The one you've talked to all your redeemed life in prayer. The one who's heard every whisper, every groan, every longing desire of your heart.

The one who speaks to you in scripture and now at last to meet him face to face. Face to face. What will it be?

When with rapture I behold him. Jesus Christ who died for me. Oh, that will be glory for me. Glory for me. When by his grace I shall look on his face.

That will be glory. Glory for me. Our happy hope, you see. The appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. And it won't just be happiness to see his glory or to see him as he is, but in that moment to be made like him.

Perfectly so. Sanctification complete. Your heart, mind, will, affections as pure as Jesus heart, mind, will and affections. That will be a cause of great joy.

[34 : 20] The image of God fully restored in us so that we will be perfect mirrors of the nature of God, even as Jesus perfectly mirrors his father's glory.

glory. So we will bear that nature perfectly, no longer marred by sin. No more spots or wrinkles, sinful thoughts, desires, motives, choices, actions.

and no more frustration and sorrow that I should ever sin against the one who's loved me so much as Jesus has. There's a heaven of joy in that alone.

It'll be high happiness, not only to see him, but to be made like him. And then to be with the Lord. For the dead in Christ shall rise first and after that we who are still alive will be caught up together with them, together with them to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

With the Lord. That's it. The Lamb is all the glory of Emmanuel's land. So we will be with him. Him in whose presence is fullness of joy.

[35 : 32] At whose right hand are pleasures forevermore. Whose warm welcome to us will be. Enter into the joy of your Lord.

Think about that. We're talking about the joy of Jesus. That's no small joy. For the joy of redeeming you, he endured the cross.

That's how powerful. That's the kind of strength that the joy of the Lord is our strength. The joy of saving you held Jesus to the cross. And we're going to share in his joy.

That's his welcome. Come. Enter in. Share the joy. The happiness of your Lord. To be with him is to enter into his joy. What will it be like to know that my joy in being with him is only surpassed by his joy in having me with him?

You see, we've been physically apart. He there, we here. And Jesus' love will not settle for any distance between us as heard in his prayer to the Father on the night he was betrayed.

[36 : 53] In John 17, 24. Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am that they might see my glory.

I want them with me. That's his longing. That's his prayer. And when Jesus appears, he's coming as the great bridegroom.

It's shot through our Bibles. Bridegroom. Bridegroom. Look at the parables of Jesus about his appearing. The bridegroom is coming.

Prepare to meet him. And he's coming to claim his beloved blood-bought bride. And there's going to be a wedding and a wedding supper like none other. Revelation 19, 7 says this calls for rejoicing and gladness and giving him glory for the wedding of the Lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready.

When's the last time you've been to a wedding? Maybe it's been a while with COVID. I had to attend my last wedding on Zoom. We couldn't go to Canada and see Chloe and John joined in marriage.

[38 : 07] Favorite part of the thing to see in that wedding was the overflowing joy of the couple. as they were just lost in each other's love.

He was looking at her with an unchanging smile of delight that was bigger than his face. And she, delighting in his look of delight for her, threw back the same delight in him.

which only caused that delight in him to grow greater and only caused her. And that's the way it went. I know I've tried to smile and your cheek muscles get tired after a while.

They hung in there the whole 30 minutes or whatever it was. Lost in wonder and love with each other. And the love of the one spurred on the love of the other.

Brothers and sisters, we are the bride, the love bride of Jesus who laid down his life for us. And when he comes back for us as his bride, oh, the look on his face that will melt us as we see his delight in us, his joy in us.

[39 : 26] Oh, how our delight and joy and love for him will respond. And his all the more to us expressed and ours to his.

And we will go on loving him who first loved us in this eternal reciprocating love and delight. You know, Isaiah looked forward to this day in Isaiah 62 in verse 5.

As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you. Next time you're privileged to be at a wedding where two are lost in love with each other, think of you meeting the Savior and your bridegroom.

Loving you. smiling upon you. Delighting in you. The bridegroom says in Song of Solomon 410, how delightful is your love, my bride.

How much more pleasing is your love than wine. And to have our bridegroom Christ look at us with such pleasure and delight will inflame our delight for him. C.S. Lewis calls this aspect the eternal weight of glory.

[40 : 40] When with love and delight he smiles at us and praises us, well done. Well done. Good and faithful servant.

And we realize as never before that we've actually brought pleasure to him whom we were created to please. that we are a real ingredient in the divine happiness.

That's Lewis's phrase. A real ingredient in the divine happiness. In his joy. His delight. And as he looks at us we will have no more self-consciousness about our sinful defects, about our weaknesses, our strains, our stepping out of the straight and narrow into the by-path narrow.

And to have that sense of having displeased our Savior, having grieved his spirit. No, none of that.

As he looks on us, remember, we're not like him. We're the mere object of him. And so he sees nothing in us. But what is alluring and attractive and beautiful.

[42 : 01] And we know that. And for the first time we stand before him fully known and yet fully delighted in. And all this joy and his delight will be without any pride or vanity as if it were our own doing to have perfected ourselves.

No. No, no. There won't be any such vanity. We'll be perfected. And we will know then as we've never known before that it was our bridegroom who gave himself for us to make us holy and who's cleansed us by the washing with water through the word and who now is presenting us to himself as his radiant church, a radiant bride without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish but holy and blameless, Ephesians 5.

Fully known, fully delighted in. I say that will spark and fuel and refuel our delight in him to be delighted as an artist who delights in his work as a bridegroom who delights in the bride that he has made beautiful.

Well, what can we say? What about the worship of heaven? Have you found it precious when the Lord Jesus draws near here in our worship and lifts your heart and praises and his words spoken to you and your heart burns within you as the two along the way with the Savior?

What will heaven's worship be like when all glory is being given to God by all present, angels and the saints?

[43 : 59] Every converted child of God the way it should be and no hindrances in our heart. No remaining blindness, no wrong thinking, no indisposition for worship, no lethargy, no coldness of heart, weariness of body and spirit and that we'll be all alive and to sing, to sing to our Savior, worthy is the Lamb that was slain.

I want to be there and experience that joy of heaven and then to take all that we've spoken of and to know that it will never end. Here, our best times always end.

But that is something that will never end as we heard, never even spoil or fade. This glory of His appearing and what it brings, what He brings to pass is beyond knowing.

The Bible says no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him. You simply have to go there to find out.

When the Queen of Sheba heard about the wisdom of Solomon and the glory of His kingdom, though she lived far away, she came from afar to see for herself.

[45 : 29] And she questioned Him about His wisdom, about plants and animals and everything. And here's her report. The half has never been told.

What I heard, it's not even half of what I've seen and experienced. When you've been in heaven for one hour and I come as a reporter and stick a mic in your face and say, now give me your report on heaven, you would say the millionth.

Pastor John was stuttering in his preaching trying to tell us how good it will be. It's a million times better. It's a trillion times better.

And we'll know that we're there because the Father chose us and there was nothing attractive in us. We'll know that we're there because Jesus became a man for us and became sin for us and became a curse for us to bring us to God.

And we'll know we're there because the blessed Holy Spirit came one day to a man that didn't want Jesus, who was blind and dead in trespasses and sins and woke me up to the fact of God, of Jesus Christ, of damnation awaiting me, of eternal life offered me in Jesus Christ and drew me to that Savior.

[46 : 55] He was the heavenly matchmaker, the Holy Spirit. He took my hand and He took Jesus' hand and He brought us together and I received Him, my Savior, my great God and Savior, my bridegroom, I'll know it's all because of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit that I'm there with Him and will taste that love of God like we've never done before.

Closing application, children of God, our Savior said, I shall return, I shall return. Are you looking for it?

Are you longing for it? you waiting for that? Is it with you? Monday, Wednesday, Friday? The future belongs to us, saints.

That's why we ought to be the most forward-looking people on the planet. we are confidently expecting this future good of our Savior's appearing, the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior.

And so we're forward-looking people. We're not always looking over our shoulder, living in the past. We're not even always living in the present as if this is all that there was.

[48 : 17] No, we're people looking forward. Isn't that what Paul says? forgetting what is behind me and straining toward that which is before me, I press on for the prize that will be mine, the goal of Christ bringing me to heaven.

That's the forward look. And this is the bullseye of our hope. This is the hope that is the bottomless ocean which all the other streams of hope feed into and lead into is to be with Christ forever and ever as he comes and appears for us.

Set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. Is your hope set fully, fully, entirely, completely on what he's bringing for you then?

And then secondly, it's through the grace of hope that something of the joy of that day is able to be spilled over into this day. So yes, why did God tell us all about the joys of heaven?

Well, it's so that right now as we're making our way through the hardest part of our journey with affliction, bodily, spirit, grief, loss, troubles, no hope here, death, the curse, sickness, war, strife, all the bad stuff.

[49 : 49] What is it meant to do? It's meant to lift our eyes up to the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior. What he's bringing, there is something there to answer every trouble here.

He's going to make right every wrong, and so every wrong experienced here is taking me to that glorious appearing and making me long for it and pray for it.

Even so, come Lord Jesus. So let all that's bad in your life point you to his coming. Let your sorrows point you to your happy hope and feed your joy.

That's far more than a spoonful a spoonful of sugar that helps the medicine go down. No, you can say I've experienced sadness and grief and loss and heartache and pain in this life, but I'm on my way to becoming the happiest that God can ever make a man.

That's where I'm going. And so I'm going and I'm not turning back. Hope motivates us to persevere, you see. When my son-in-law came to court, our oldest daughter, he came all the way from his homeland in Arizona, but once he had her, he beat his feet back to Arizona with his prize, proving that you can take the man out of Arizona, but you can't take Arizona out of the man.

[51 : 09] Well, in some similar way, you can take a man out of all the joyful and hopeful circumstances of life. You can throw him into a pot of misery like Job, but you can't take the joyful hope out of the man.

This is an implanted grace of God the Holy Spirit, and he's able to make a man overflow with hope, hope, even in the most hopeless circumstances, because our hope doesn't feed off that.

It feeds on a person, the Lord Jesus, our hope, and his glorious appearing when he returns for us. Be aware of the enemy's attempts to steal your hope, your joyful hope.

He knows better than we do that the joy of the Lord is our strength. He knows that, so he's trying to cut out the joyful hope, the happy hope, out of your life, maybe to rob you with doubts and suspicions, just to keep you preoccupied with other things, so you're muckraking, you see, while this blessed hope is hanging above your head, but you're not looking up, you're down here, and Satan loves to keep us muckraking.

Be aware of your enemy, it's a spiritual warfare, so feed your hope, feed your hope, meditate on heaven, visit heaven every day, you know we can visit heaven, we can take our Bibles and we can make one of those online visits to someplace we've never been, right here, visit heaven every day, just to have something of the taste of the joy of that day, spill into your day here.

[53 : 01] If you're lost, Jesus is not your savior, he is not teaching you to say no to worldly passions and ungodliness and to say yes to self-control and righteous godly living, if you've not turned from your way and thrown yourself upon Christ for his mercy to save you, well then this is as good as it gets.

So grab all the gusto you can get, you only go through life ones, get it, because you don't have anything after that, but eternal torments awaiting you.

Oh, but why? You know one of the greatest torments? Is that gnawing worm that on December 6, 2020, Jesus Christ offered me heaven through his wounds.

And I said, I don't want you. I like my way. and that will haunt you. Oh, but why?

Why? Why keep yourself out of heaven? Have pity on yourself. Come to Jesus. He'll love to make you the happiest man, woman, boy, or girl, as happy as a man, woman, boy, or girl could ever be, to know you're forgiven, right with God.

[54 : 28] Eternal heaven is yours. Well, we're going to be in that choir if we're in Christ and singing all glory to Jesus and casting our crowns at his feet. And so we're going to close with that song.

All hail the power of Jesus name. Let angels, let save sinners, prostrate, fall, and worship and sing. Let's stand as we sing.

May we go in the joy of it and share it with those who need to know it. Amen.