

Rejoice in Hope

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[0:00] Romans 5, we're going to read verses 1 through 11. Romans 5, 1 through 11. Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which now we stand.

And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance character, and character hope.

And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this.

While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him?

[1:22] For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life?

Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. In most Bibles, there's some blank pages at the back.

And my father liked to write down certain quotes in the back of his Bible. And one of the quotes that he wrote in the back of his Bible was from a 17th century Welsh Puritan named Walter Craddock.

And the quote is this, Take any Christian, put him in any circumstance, and he knows how to rejoice. Take any Christian, put him in any circumstance, and he knows how to rejoice.

Now we saw that last Sunday with the Apostle Paul. Take the Apostle Paul. Put him in prison, whether in Philippi or in Rome.

[2:39] We saw it morning and evening, didn't we? And he knows how to rejoice. We found that to be true. Now, we need to understand that that was not some special dispensation of grace for the Apostle because he was an Apostle.

But it's not for the rank and file Christian. No, that's not the case at all. Rather, this is the birthright of every believer. Take any Christian.

That would be you, brother or sister. You who belong to Christ. Put him in any circumstance. That would be your circumstances.

Indeed, all of them together. And he knows how to rejoice. She knows how to find joy in God.

Now, one of the reasons that such joy is available to the Christian is that it comes to us from all directions. From the past, from the present, and from the future.

[3:47] Here in Romans 5, we see joy coming at us from all three directions. Past, present, and future.

There are joys that come to us from the past. Something happened 2,000 years ago that is still giving us joy today. And it's that Christ died for us when we were still sinners.

Ungodly. He died for us. That's old news. But it never gets old. We've not gotten over it. It remains the source of great joy. It still is the theme of our songs of praise.

Amazing love. How can it be that thou, my God, shouldst die for me? Joy coming from something that happened 2,000 years ago.

Another joy from the past is found in verse 1. We have been justified through faith. We have been. This is in the past. Over 40 years ago, when I turned to Jesus Christ in faith, I was justified.

[4:59] I was declared righteous. All my sins were put to Christ's account, and all of His righteousness was transferred to my account, so that now I stand clothed in the righteousness of

God, accepted by Him, justified.

As righteous as Jesus is righteous. Wonderful exchange that still gives me joy, though it happened 40 years ago.

Well, those are just a few of the joys that we have from things happening in the past. Take any Christian, put him in any circumstance, and he knows how to rejoice in things from the past.

But he also has joys from the present. Notice verse 1. We have peace with God. We have, present tense right now, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The war is over. Our Lord Jesus has established peace for us. The point of conflict, our sin, has been taken care of.

[6:13] And so, it no longer stands between us. God is no longer against us. He's now for us, as we just heard.

I'm no longer His enemy. I'm His reconciled friend and child. And I'm really happy about that. That gives me joy in my present situation.

I, right now, have peace with God. And I also, through Christ, have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. Right now, I am standing in grace, in God's favor, with access to God at any point in my life.

Right now, I can turn to Him and have His ear and His heart. That makes me happy. That gives me joy from the present. And verse 3 says, and not only this, we also rejoice in our sufferings.

We also rejoice in our sufferings. Well, the Christian is able to find reasons to rejoice.

[7:19] Right now, in sufferings that are happening right now in their lives. Because right now, the Holy Spirit is living within us. Right now, the Spirit is shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts.

And is enabling us to rest in our God. Well, these are just a few of the multitude of joys that come to us in the present.

From present realities. Right now, we have peace. We have access. We have God with us in our sufferings. So, just as a hummingbird goes from flower to flower, sucking nectar out of each, so in any circumstance, the Christian is able to suck joy out of these three huge flower beds.

The past, the present, and the future. We come to the third. The future. The Christian is able to draw joy out of things that haven't even happened yet.

And that's where I want to spend the rest of our time this morning. We see that in the last half of verse 2. It's our text for today. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

[8:36] We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. This verse reminds us that we can rejoice now in things that will happen later.

There's something coming in the future of every Christian that is so amazing that its joy spills over into this life.

So that future joys produce present joys. That's what Paul is saying. We right now rejoice in the hope of the coming glory.

It's joy in anticipation. It's rejoicing in hope. Now that sort of thing is something we're very familiar with in life. Every fiancé knows about this.

The wedding date is still a couple months away. It's only a plan at this stage. And yet it's such a joyous plan that they already find joy just thinking about it.

[9:40] And so she sees herself. She's got her wedding dress on. She sees all the guests standing. She can hear the music playing in her ears.

And she sees Mr. Wonderful at the end of the aisle waiting to receive her hand in marriage. She finds great joy in it. Well, it's something that hasn't happened.

It's not happening. But one day it will happen. And she rejoices in the hope of that day that it happens. Maybe you've planned a vacation. A real vacation.

And you're getting away for two weeks. And you've got the plan but it still hasn't happened. It's just a plan. And it's only Wednesday and you're not leaving until Friday evening and things are not going well at all at home or at work.

But you're thinking in just a couple days I'm going to be off for two weeks away from work resting away from pressures going to be with people I love eating food I love in a place I love and just the thought of it brings you great joy.

[11:05] I'm going to take a vacation from my problems. And I'm happy about that. Right now in the midst of Wednesday afternoon with what's going amok in my life.

Even so the Christian in any circumstance knows how to suck joy out of the future and bring it right in to their present experience.

Now what is this hope? Well it's the hope of glory. Notice it's hope. Now we we want to look here at three words in our text.

It's a short verse and there there are three words that I want us to to see. Rejoice hope glory. We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

Let's start with we rejoice. This rejoicing is not a small joy. It's a great joy. It's a strong joy. It's we boast we exult our heart leaps for joy at this reality.

[12 : 13] That's the word rejoice. And what gives us such joy is hope. We rejoice in the hope.

Now hope is a word that refers to the future. Hope is a word that is oriented toward what is going to happen.

Indeed it's not the iffy kind of hope that we speak about when we we say I hope so. No the hope in the Bible is the confident expectation of future good.

It's a confident expectation of future good. It's something that hasn't happened but will happen and I'm confident about it. I'm expecting it to happen. Now it's not the kind of hope then that fizzles like a dud firework on the 4th of July and you build up anticipation hope hope hope fizzle nothing.

Now we've had those hopes haven't we? And we've set our hopes in the wrong things and and and they fizzle out and they come to nothing. But this hope is a hope that does not disappoint.

[13 : 37] It doesn't disappoint us. Rather it leads to something glorious that causes joy great joy.

The reason it doesn't disappoint us is because it rests on the promises of a God who cannot lie.

I have put my hope in your word David says and when we put our hope in his word we know that it cannot disappoint.

His word is never failed yet. Do you think you're going to be the first one to have God's word fail? No. Because if God's word fails then he un-gods himself.

He's no longer true. He's no longer reliable and faithful. His whole being stands behind his word. So this hope is the confident expectation of future good.

Nothing less could create and produce this great rejoicing. I don't get very excited about things that I'm not sure are going to happen.

[14 : 49] But I can rejoice in hope of the glory of God because I am sure I am positive that it is coming. So we have we rejoice in the hope of what?

Of the glory of God. That's what we're looking forward to. And this glory of God is something that hasn't happened yet.

Hope tells us that because if we already have it why do we hope for it Romans 8 says. No this glory of God is referring to glory of God yet to be revealed. God's glory has been revealed in the past.

It is being revealed at present and it will be revealed in the future. This text is talking about the future glories. And I'd like to focus on this future glory.

We rejoice in the hope of this future glory. So there are the three flowerbeds.

[15 : 56] Do we know how to suck joy out of past blessings, present blessings, future blessings. Our hope is set upon the glory of God.

I'm going to set forth three different ways that the glory of God will be revealed and that are causes for our joy in the presence. First of all God's glory seen in Jesus Christ at his coming.

glory of God's glory seen in Jesus Christ at his coming. This is the great end toward which all of history is moving.

Jesus is coming again. And when he does, God's own glory will be manifested. Now that's the reason God does anything, is for his own glory.

For from him and through him and to him are all things to him be the glory forever. Amen. And that's the reason we live. That's the reason we draw breath. That's the reason we get up this morning.

[17 : 05] To see God glorified. That's the chief end of man. So we're very interested in seeing God glorified. And hope is, our hope is set upon God being glorified.

Now God's glory has been largely veiled. Largely hidden and under eclipse. Even as our Lord Jesus, the glorious Son of God, came, his glory was veiled in human flesh, wasn't it?

So that the world did not see any glory in him. But one day, God's glory is to be openly revealed.

It's to be uncovered, unveiled. The Son is to come out from behind the moon and the eclipse and is to shine in meridian brightness.

Listen to the words of Jesus. Matthew 16, 27. The Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with all his angels and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.

[18:13] Matthew 25, 31. When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory.

Matthew 24, 30. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. The first time Jesus came, he came with great humility, didn't he?

He came with obscurity and hiddenness. Very few saw the glory of God when Jesus came the first time. But the next time no one is going to miss it.

He is coming with such a display of the glory of God it will be impossible to miss. Petrifying to those unprepared to meet him, exceedingly great joy for those who belong to him.

So when Jesus comes he's coming in glory and he's coming for judgment. This very passage he speaks over and over didn't he? He's coming in his father's glory, he's coming in his own glory with the angels and he's coming to judge.

[19:23] He's coming to give to each one according to what he has done. He will sit on his throne in heavenly glory and judge.

For so long God has been dishonored. He's been treated as a nobody. And that grieves the Christian. It hurts to see God's name taken in vain.

It hurts to see his word trashed, his worship withheld and given to other things, his laws trampled on as if they have no consequences to see nations of people ignoring him, to see false religions distorting him, to see Christ's kingship mocked and ridiculed.

But not in that day when he comes in glory to judge the earth. Every eye will see him, every knee will bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Great glory is coming when Jesus returns. And oh how it will thrill us in that day to see God glorified in Jesus Christ.

[20:48] To see him receiving the glory he is so worthy of. That's what gets us up on Sunday morning to come and to ascribe to him the glory due, his name.

We've been doing that in our songs, in our prayers, and in the preaching of the word. But one day we will see his glory acknowledged by every living being and every wrong will be made right and every sin will be punished that is not under the blood.

And he will say to those on his left, depart from me, I never knew you. And to those on his right come you who are blessed by my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world.

And then the unrighteous will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life and how his glory will shine in that day. This is the blessed hope.

This is what Titus 2.13 says, the blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

[22:00] What is this hope of the glory of God? It is the blessed hope of the appearing of our great God and Savior in glory as Jesus comes.

We're going to see the King in his glory. And we'll be with him forever and how happy that will make us. You know, that was the desire of our Lord Jesus on the night that he was betrayed and he prays to his father in John 17.

Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am and to see my glory, the glory that you've given me because you love me before the creation of the world.

We're going to see him face to face. That's what he wants. I want those you've given me, Father, to be with me and to see my glory. And it will be our joy that will know no end to be face to face with Christ our Savior, face to face with the one that we have heard about all of our lives in the scriptures.

scriptures. The one that we have talked to in prayer. The one whose love letters we have read in the scriptures.

[23:15] The one we have hung our hopes for heaven on. The one who loved me and gave himself for me. What will it be to see him in his glory?

The queen of Sheba came from a long distance to see the glory of Solomon. She nearly fainted saying the half has never been told. What will it be to see the greater than Solomon in all of his glory?

First Peter 4 3 Peter says to those suffering for Christ's sake now rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

You will be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. Joy is coming. Overjoy, whatever that can mean, is coming.

And the joy of that day is to spill over into every day now as we rejoice in hope of the coming glory of God. Future joy is to give us present joy even in the face of suffering, even in the face of death itself.

[24 : 31] In Pilgrim's Progress, the summons came for Mr. Standfast saying that he must prepare for that final change and that his master was not willing that he should live so far from him any longer.

So he put his things in order. He went down to the river and he said, the waters indeed are to the palate bitter and to the body cold, yet the thought of what I am going to and of the convoy that awaits me on the other side lies like a glowing coal on my heart.

I see myself now at the end of my journey, my toilsome days are over, I'm going to see the head that was crowned with thorns and the face that was spit upon for me.

I've been living by hearsay and faith, but now I'm going where I shall live by sight, and I shall be with him in whose company I delight. Take me, Lord, for I come to thee.

That's rejoicing in hope of the glory of God to be seen in the face of Christ when we meet him personally, face to face.

[25 : 45] Samuel Rutherford said, the king there in his beauty without a veil is seen. It were a well-spent journey, those seven deaths lay between. The lamb is all the glory of Emmanuel's land.

And the glory is such that it would be worth going through innumerable deaths to get there. That's the glory that's coming.

And so we rejoice in hope of this glory means to so confidently expect it, that right now I rejoice at the thought of it.

But there's more to God's glory to rejoice in than the glory to be seen in Jesus Christ at his coming. There's also secondly God's glory to be seen as believers share in his glory, as we share in his glory.

For we will not only behold the glory of God in Christ, we will share in it. 1 Peter 5 1, Peter says, I am one who will also share in the glory to be revealed.

[27 : 01] There's not only a glory to be revealed, I'm going to share in it one day. Paul puts it this way in Romans 8, verses 17 and 18, now if we're children, then we are heirs, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.

if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory, I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

The glory that will be revealed in Christ, yes, but also in us, he says, in us. this will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven, 2 Thessalonians 1, on the day when he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at in all those who have believed, this includes you because you believed our testimony to you.

When Jesus comes again, how marvelous he will appear in all believers. His glory will be shared with them and we will shine with the reflected glory of God as we're conformed to the likeness of his glorious son and he will have a whole family that looks just like his son, our elder brother as we reflect his holy character, his glorious attributes.

You know that even now we are being transformed into his likeness from one stage of glory to another. Well what this passage is telling us is that there's coming a time when that process will be complete and we will share in that glory and the likeness of Christ will be complete in us.

[28 : 57] when he appears we will see him as he is and we will be like him.

Verse John 3 2 we will be like him presented faultless before the presence of his glory a radiant church with every spot and wrinkle and blemish gone perfectly holy blameless bride of Christ all glorious within with the king enthralled with her beauty and she with his and each taking joy in the other.

So brother or sister do you grow weary in your war with sin? You grieved at the battles lost or scarcely won? Here's the hope that's to sustain you a joy.

The joy of the Lord is to be your strength the joy that one day the battle will be done. There will be no temptation. We will be purified.

A day is coming when the war will be over and there will be nothing outside of us to tempt us and there will be nothing inside of us to go along with the temptation.

[30 : 16] An artist once made a life size sculpture of a horse. He worked long and hard and he was asked how he did it. Well he says I started with a block of marble and then I got rid of everything that didn't look like a horse.

And you may feel like you've had hammer and chisel on you this week. You must know that God is starting with a block of fallen humanity and he is getting rid of everything that does not look like Jesus Christ.

That's all he's taking away. That's all he's chipping at. That's all he wants gone. Nothing but what does not look like Jesus. And when he comes we'll see him in his glory we'll be made like him. Finished product. That's part of the glory of God that's coming. That's meant to spill over into our lives with joy in the midst of that temptation that keeps coming back and you have to say no to it. You have to cut off things that are dear to you as your right arm and your right foot and it's painful and it's hard and you don't like it. Oh but there's coming a day when it's all going to be over.

[31 : 41] It's no exercise in futility that you're involved in as you seek to purify yourself through this hope. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself.

John says for the day is coming when we will reflect his glory to perfection and the transformation will be complete and you will look in vain to find one thing wrong with me and I will look in vain to find one thing wrong with me.

Not a thought passing through my head that's wrong. Perfect in every way. That's glory.

You may not think it's glory for you but brother to have this sinner looking like Jesus thinking like Jesus willing like Jesus acting like Jesus that will be glory and that's to be part of our joy today. And it's not just that our souls will bear the likeness of Jesus but our bodies will as well. Glorification for the believer is not just that our souls will be transformed into the likeness of Jesus' soul but it's that our bodies also will be transformed into the likeness of Jesus' glorified body.

[33 : 05] What are we? We're body soul creatures. If it's just our soul that's half salvation. No it's to be our entire being body and soul. So what does Paul say in Philippians 3?

We eagerly await. Eagerly await. There's hope. We eagerly await a savior from heaven. The Lord Jesus Christ who by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

his body of glory. There is glory coming. The glory of God will be seen in our bodies. Paul speaks of it here in this very chapter of Romans 8 23.

The redemption of our body that we're now groaning in and eagerly waiting for this transformation.

So this is our hope in all of our aches and pains and in all of our more serious health problems.

This is our hope in the doctor's office when he's got a report back from our tests and it's not a good report. This is our hope in the hospital. This is our hope on our deathbed.

[34 : 16] Our hope at the graveside of a loved one who died in the Lord that the body that is sown in dishonor will be raised in glory like unto his glorified body.

glory. Where there is no more pain, no more disease, no more death possible, but death is swallowed up in victory.

So the glory of God to be revealed at Christ's return includes our glorification of body and soul.

That's the hope we live in. That's the hope of the glory of God and it's the hope we rejoice in in all of our physical and spiritual struggles of life.

I told you there was at least three things that I wanted to point out as to the coming glory. God's glory will be seen in Jesus Christ at his coming. It will be seen in us at his coming and it will be seen in a whole new world, our environment.

The third point, God's glory seen in a new heaven and a new earth. You know, the old heaven and the old earth came under a curse when sin entered the world.

[35 : 30] And Genesis 3 records that curse and how the thorns and thistles came up and made man's work to only be productive by the sweat of his brow.

And nature now is red in tooth and claw and it's subjected to frustration and to bondage to decay and destructive forces are unleashed that mar life on this planet.

It's all part of the curse. It wasn't always like this as it came from the creator hand. It was good. It was very good. But sin brought the curse upon our planet and it too is presently groaning for the coming liberation.

It's all part of the glory of God to be revealed at Christ's coming. As chapter 8 of Romans goes on to tell us, this liberation from this bondage nature is crying out under the heaviness of the curse. When will we be free again? Peter says in Acts 3, or Acts 3 in verse 21, Jesus must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.

[36 : 47] All that sin has ruined in God's created order is to be restored by Jesus Christ at his coming. 2 Peter 3 13, after telling us that at Christ's coming, this old world that now exists that was once destroyed by water is to be destroyed by fire, but in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

This too is part of God's great salvation in Jesus Christ. It's a yet future revelation of God's glory. You say, but John, isn't there glory in the creation now?

Oh, there is, isn't there? Even under the curse. I enjoy in the morning going out and sitting on my patio. It's quiet and the dew is on the grass sparkling with the sunlight.

Mr. and Mrs. Ren are making their trips back and forth to the nest to feed the little ones. And the hummingbird is hovering and buzzing around. And the butterflies are as beautiful as the flowers they land upon.

And all seems to be at peace. There's glory in that. The glory of God is displayed in creation. And I simply say that if his glory is displayed now in creation, what will it look like when the curse is lifted off of it?

[38 : 19] And it is without anything of the frustration and destructiveness of nature that has been brought upon it by the curse. When the land will be so fertile that the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes.

And new wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills. That will be glory indeed. Isaiah speaks about it in the last two chapters of his book.

The book of Revelation speaks about it in the last two chapters of that book. Let me just read from Revelation 21. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth.

For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. And there was no longer any sea. I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Now the dwelling of God is with men and he will live with them. They will be his people and God himself will be with them and be their God.

[39 : 30] He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain for the old order of things has passed away. He who was seated on the throne said, I am making everything new.

The next chapter says there will no longer be any curse. And an angel said to John, come, I'll show you the bride, the wife of the lamb. And he carried me away in the spirit to a mountain great and high and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.

It shone with the glory of God. That's the bride. That's the church. She's shining with the glory of God. And its brilliance was like that of a very precious Jasper.

The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine for the glory of God gives its light and the lamb is its lamb. We recently were in Sedona, Arizona and you come into that area and suddenly there's these outcroppings of these gigantic red rocks.

They stand like cathedrals. And you really feel like you're in a fairy tale world. This is a different world. I didn't see any on the way to church this morning like that.

[40 : 46] I've never been there. I felt like I'm living in a different world. And if we feel that way in some of the places on God's earth here, what will it be like when this is the new heavens and the new earth?

We will be in a new place. We will be in an amazing thing. Stuff will amaze us over and over as we won't be able to look anywhere but that it will be shouting the glory of God.

And we're all living there. Love and rejoice in the glory of God and reflected in their holy character and lives and where the Lord Jesus is seen in all his glory living with his blood bought bride, the church.

Dear believers, we are to maintain this future orientation to the Christian life. this hope of glory is to never be far from our minds.

We weren't meant to live without the hope of glory. We lose heart without the hope of glory. We give up without the hope of glory.

[41:50] We don't purify ourselves as we are without the hope of glory. The devil loves to keep our eyes away from the hope of glory.

Christ in you is the hope of glory. He's bringing many sons to glory. You're an object of mercy whom God has prepared in advance for glory.

He's called you to his eternal glory. You're going to appear with him in glory. We're headed to such an amazing, eternally, breathtaking experience of the glory of God that will bring us joy that will never end, seen in Jesus Christ, in us, and in the new heavens and the new world.

Live in that hope. It's a hope that generates joy. That's how the joy of future glory gets produced into the present reality of where you live.

How does this work? Well, I thought of it this way. Is there some aspect of the future glory that corresponds to your present trouble and suffering?

[43:09] Whatever your present suffering and trouble is, try to find something in the future glory that corresponds to it. Maybe it's that spiritual battle with sin that we talked about.

Remember what's coming. You will be like Jesus without sin. Let that infuse some joy into the spiritual battle now. Maybe it's frustration and disappointments of life on a cursed planet.

Maybe it's a work, a job situation. It's just like that. And it's just due to sin and the curse and things like that that are going on at your place. And all the frustration and disappointment.

Remember, this old earth is going to have the curse lifted. All the frustration will be gone. Maybe it's the injustice of wicked people mistreating the innocent.

Remember, the judge is coming in glory and will right every wrong. Maybe you're feeling polluted just working beside these guys. Just going to school and hearing the trash and the vile things that people are saying.

[44:12] One day you'll be in a place where only the righteous live. And you find in the coming glory that which corresponds to your present suffering.

For I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. Adoniram Judson was a missionary to Burma in the early 1800s.

And when the Burmese and the English in India went to war against himself. Judson at age 36 was thrown into prison on the charge of being a spy.

He was thrown into a crowded prison. 40 to 50 of the worst criminals. His feet were held in iron chains that bruised his ankles.

He was rudely treated. He nearly starved to death. Stifling heat, stinking filth that was never cleaned out. damp, rat infested, vermin all over.

[45:11] Hearing screamings of prisoners who were being tortured in other places. At night, hearing the guards sharpening their knives to decapitate prisoners in the morning.

Rumors of being burned or buried alive. Being fed to a starving lioness. For nearly two years he endured. Not knowing what was going to happen.

From his prison, he writes to his wife, my future is as bright as the promises of God. That's rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.

And that's why you can take any Christian and put him in any circumstance and he knows how to rejoice. May the Lord help us.

Let's pray. Father, when we read these things that are coming, we hardly know how to even interpret them.

[46:22] The glory that shall be when we shall see our Savior face to face and be made like him and live with him in a place where all is new and all of sin and the curse is gone and the glory of God shines from Christ reflected in us and in his created order without anything marring it.

We do thank you that such a day is coming and we do pray that the anticipation and the confident expectation of that day will bring us joy this day and every day and you would teach us how to unlock that future joy and how to bring it into our present experience by hope by thinking that this is going to be my experience oh the blessings that are ours in Christ past, present, and future thank you for all you have done for us and we praise you and we pray that many others might come to know this Christ and be justified by him and have such a future to look forward to we pray in his name amen I must say these are only the hopes of the justified if Christ is not yours you do not belong to him by faith then your future is not this bright in fact your future is dim indeed because it's

appointed unto man once to die and then the judgment and from judgment there are two paths and one leads to everlasting life and the other leads to everlasting torments do you have Christ to be without God in the world is to be without hope without hope so what do you have to hope for what do you have to look forward to not to next week beyond next week what do you have to look forward to after death anything outside of Christ you don't have anything to look forward to in Christ all that we've been talking about this morning is what you have to look forward we would invite you to Christ and to this wonderful hope in him let's sing as our response to the Lord number 667 and if you need to trust in Christ you can do so right where you're at in your seat and cry out to him to have mercy on you a sinner to forgive your sins because of what Jesus has done in dying for sinners on the cross 667 let's stand and sing to God be the glory