

Sermon Transcription • Romans 8:18-25

Christ is Our Hope

Pastor Jeff Bucknam

[Please Note: This transcript has been lightly edited for ease of reading. Also, some headings have been added in square brackets to aid the reader in locating portions of the sermon.]

The last week or two of my life has been very difficult. In fact my son was in a provincial volleyball tournament in Kamloops and we'd driven over, gotten there and we're sitting at Subway in Kamloops getting ready for his first game, at least the one that we were going to see. And I don't know if you've ever had a moment in an awkward location where the way that the world has just come upon you, but that was me in the Subway in Kamloops. My wife went and got some food and she said, "Do you want something to eat?" Against all odds I said, "No." [Laughter]. She said, "Are you doing okay?" And usually you know the way you respond is sure, and I said, "I don't ... I don't know." The week prior, one of the pastors from our church years ago, Vern Heidebrecht had died, I knew Vern, he was a dear brother in Christ; my mother's, the anniversary of my mother's death was the week prior to that; we had some families who had been in a car accidents and some of those people had died; others were in the hospital fighting for their life and still are. I read the news a lot. You're not feeling good, I don't recommend this. State of the world's not great. And for somebody like me who tends to be analytical, I get too involved in thinking about the state of the world and the plight of the church and the challenges that are facing and the apostasy - the turning away from Jesus of so many people who profess to believe in him. Friends, who even recently, have decided that they're going to walk away from the faith; these things, each and every one, takes a little bit out of you and then there's this moment, for me anyway, this moment where it just comes flooding in, and there sitting at this Subway, I was overwhelmed with grief. And I'm not a cryer, I'm really not, but my, I couldn't..I was leaking, my eyes, they were sort of dripping and I said to my wife, "I've got to go back to the hotel." And she said, "Are you going to be okay there though?"

"I don't know."

"What's wrong?"

"I don't know."

How do you live in a world like this? Where even the good things, you end up being a little bit cynical about because you think, "Well it might be a good thing, but on the heels of the good thing is going to be a bad thing, you just know it's coming, you're waiting for the other shoe to drop. Even the great victories that you experience in your life, you're kind of - the older I get the less I want to celebrate them because I think, "Oh but you know, the loss is going to be there very soon." Somedays I just want to go and go back to bed and pull the covers over my head and just not get up.

Well, Christmas, holds answers for people like me in times like this - I'm thankful in fact, it's this time of the year. And the reason I'm thankful for that is because they're all sorts of themes and ideas that



surround the Christmas season, that you and I know instinctively about: love, joy, peace, happiness, all sorts of things that come around this season, that if we really stop and we reflect on them they can actually be a great help to us. As we reflect about what the big picture of life is. I actually spoke to a girl this last week and I said, "What words come to mind when you think about Christmas?" And she said, "Magical." And I thought, "Okay, but I can't include that in the sermon because that's not really Christian." [Laughter] But anyway, it's okay she works for the church, it's good. [Laughter]

Here's what I want to do over the next number of weeks as we lead into Advent. Listen I just tell you to be honest, I need encouragement, and I need pumping of my tires. So my intention over the next few weeks of your life, if you come to church here, is to pump your tires a bit with the message of Christ and what it means that he has come. My hope is that every day that you leave the church that you will leave with a deep, seeded sense that God loves you and that things, believe it or not, are all right - even though they're not. So what does the birth of Christ mean for us? Over the next four weeks I'm going to try and talk about how Christ is our hope, Christ is our peace, Christ is our light, and Christ is our joy. Here's today; Christ is our hope - and when I saw that, what specifically is the hope that Christ comes to bring - in what way, detailed way, does Christ give us hope and to answer that I want to go to Romans 8. I know we just finished our series in Romans and we're supposed to start something else, but you know what I don't care, we're going back there, to Romans 8, to a passage that I didn't actually get a chance to preach when we went through the series in Romans 8. Romans 8:18-25, okay. And this passage, regarding the hope - is a great text about the hope Christians have. In this passage, we're going to see first that we have hope, second that that hope is for creation, it's also for Christians in particular and then finally what does that hope require of us? So big picture, we have hope - and then what does the hope look like in two pieces and then finally what is it require, the knowledge of that hope, how should you respond?

[We Have Hope]

So here you go. First of all, we have hope, Romans 8:18 - probably know this verse if you've been around the church at all, if you don't, memorize it, here it is.

"I consider [writes Paul] that our present sufferings are *not worth* comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."

That the things that are currently taking place in our lives, our present sufferings, the things about which he will say in a second - we groan, that if you were to compare them to the glory that will be revealed in us one day, this glory just is so overwhelming and it makes the present things look meaningless, small, petty. You know look back and think, "Why was I complaining?" So I want you to imagine for a minute that I buy Ezra a Christmas gift, Ezra is one of the... yeah he's the campus pastor at Mission Campus, he's my African brother - ah I will not be buying Ezra a Christmas gift this year, so when I say imagine, I mean that. [Laughter] Imagine that I buy Ezra a Christmas gift and that the Christmas gift I purchase for Ezra this year is a trip to Hawaii. Yeah... Ezra does not enjoy the cold at all. Wears his little toque around, "Oh I'm so cold," he says all the time. He and I travel together quite a bit, and I give this gift to Ezra, he says to me, "Thank you so much." And so we get on the plane and



you know we're going to fly from Abbotsford, there are no direct flights from Abbotsford to Hawaii, instead you have to travel through other places. You have to stop over in places that are not Hawaii, like Calgary, which is not at all Hawaii. It's cold, you're going to go in January, Ezra and I are in the plane, we get on the plane, flying to Calgary, first thing he says is, "I have the middle seat, I don't like the middle seat, I like to look out the window, can I look out the window?"

"Fine Ezra, you can look out the window."

"I don't have leg room."

He complains about the flight right. [Laughter] We're flying we get to Calgary, we land there, if you've been to Calgary before - you get there the only thing to do in the Calgary airport is to go to that foodcourt where the Subway is, always Subway right there's always, we get this sandwich, which is twice as much as what it costs at every other Subway in the world for some reason, you're sitting there and it's not good at all, but you're sitting there and he's complaining, "I don't like it, look it snowy outside, it's so cold, I hate all the cold, I'm tired." Now in this moment where he's complaining about the flight and about how we have to get there and all the difficulty that we're having in our *present circumstance* and he's sitting across from me. What is it that I'm going to say to Ezra? "We going to Hawaii! Ezra there will be a moment when we're sitting there on the beach, in Hawaii - I've got this great hotel, it's going to be fantastic, you can't even imagine how great this is going to be. There's going to be a moment where you're sitting there and I'm going to remind you about the whining that you're doing right now. And you're going to think, 'Ahhh why was I whining?'" Because the present circumstance in which you find yourself in the Calgary airport eating a really bad Subway in the cold is not worth comparing to the glory that will be revealed. What Paul is doing essentially here is he's sitting there with you in that airport food court and he's looking you in the eye and saying, "Listen I know that there are circumstances in your life that are really bad, I get that. But the things that are happening right now, if you just think about what's about to be, your present circumstances will pale in comparison. So let's think about what will be then - what specifically is the hope? So we have hope."

[The Hope for Creation]

Well second, it's a hope for creation. Look what he writes in Romans 8:19-21,

"For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed [you know what I mean by creation - the natural world, the cosmos, the physical things around us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed]. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God."

Okay so the created order, in which we live currently is frustrated, it's been subjected to frustration. What does that mean? Paul's actually, he's reflecting upon a specific passage in Genesis 3, you remember the story of course of created, creation, God creates man and woman - he puts them in the garden, he says to Adam, "Listen, see that tree over there you can eat from any of the other trees in the garden but don't eat from that one tree in the garden."



“Got it.” Well the serpent comes along and says to Eve, “Look really? God doesn’t want you to eat from any of the trees of the garden? I think God’s trying to limit you Eve, he’s trying to hide something from you, he’s trying to keep things just for himself, I think that tree over there looks really good, the fruit looks really good. You should have a go at that tree over there - I mean I would,” says the serpent. And Eve of course grabs the fruit, she tastes it, it looks good to eat, and so she eats it and her husband - she hands it to her husband who’s standing there, “Um, okay.” And he eats it as well and then of course they realize that they are naked and they hide themselves, and then the Lord comes walking in the garden and they hide themselves from the Lord as if that’s going to work. And God says to them, “Wait a minute - why are you hiding yourselves? Who told you you were naked?” God’s not seeking information here, he’s speaking to them the same way you speak to your children, “Why you got crumbs all over your face?” [Laughter] You know why. The woman says, “Well it was the serpent.” The man says, “The woman.” So God says, “Alright, Serpent here some, here’s what’s resulting from what you’ve done, here’s the curse that you’ve brought upon the world and your life because of this.” And he goes to the woman, “Here’s the curse you’ve brought upon the world and your life because of what you’ve done.” And he gets to Adam and this is what he says, Genesis 3:17-19,

“Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, “You must not eat from it,” [Because you did this act Adam,] ‘Cursed is the ground because of you [the earth the thing that you stand on is cursed because of the sin you’ve committed against me]; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life [Presumably we were supposed to eat without the painful toil. The earth was supposed to yield its fruit easily. Think about that the next time you’re digging a ditch, it was supposed to be easy gardening]. It will produce [verse 18] thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

So in other words, Adam’s sin has affected his relationship with the entire earth and the earth is now frustrated. It was supposed to yield its fruit easily, but it doesn’t now. It’s under bondage. What bondage? Well the bondage of sin which was committed by Adam. You see how that works? Adam and what he does affects the earth. So what’s going to happen then when Christmas comes? And ultimately when Jesus goes to the cross. Well through the forgiveness of sin, through the second Adam, Jesus, the earth that was cursed is now going to be released from that bondage. So the effect of Christ’s forgiveness isn’t just on human beings its on human beings and the whole earth. It’s going to renew human beings and the whole earth. Coming of Christ signals in other words, the undoing of evil. It’s cosmic in its significance.

So I was in Caen, France a number of years ago. My wife and I were travelling there and we went to the Normandy Museum, the D Day Museum, and those amazing exhibits. One of the exhibits I remember standing there, they had done this with lights on a massive board, they said well when D Day Happened right, prior to that the German troops, the Axis powers had covered all of Europe - had taken all of it over and that was all represented in red, and then from England on D Day they landed on this beach and so the first stage of that was like two little lights on the beach. But then over the next number of weeks you saw these lights start spreading across the board. Right, they’d stop and slow



down in some places and then they'd start to spread, it was really a helpful image. That's essentially what Jesus has done - what the coming Christ has done, is that God has essentially said, "Look I'm, I'm done with letting evil reign, it's covered the earth and so now I'm sending in my emissary on the beach head and he's going to start, through Christmas, the roll back of the evil."

I preached a sermon a number of years ago called, during Christmas Eve, at the Mennonite Brethren Church, called Christmas is an act of war. I got a lot of email on that one, right. [Laughter] But it's the point, that's the idea though, it was , it was an act of war. God was tired of Satan and his minions and all evil triumphing and he said, "Enough!" And he sends his best commander and he puts him on the ground and he's taking over everything, baby. Christmas is an act of war.

There's a great image in *The Lord of the Rings*, the last of those movies, and last of the books, *The Return of the King*. So Samwise Gamgee, who's the buddy of Frodo, and they travel together and they finally get to Mt. Doom and they throw the ring in; so it's all basically over and they faint on the side of this mountain. And then they awaken, they're in their beds back in their home. And all of their friends come pouring through the door and they see Gandalf, the great white wizard, and Samwise Gamgee says, "Gandalf, what happened? Is everything sad going to come untrue?" This was Tolkien's way, J.R.R. Tolkien's way of saying, "Yes - that's the Christian hope!" Everything sad is going to come untrue, or to put it specifically as I can, God is renewing the world in which you live, the physical cosmos, which is under frustration at the present moment, God is going to renew that world. Now that raises a question, okay. So my point here is that the hope for creation is that it will be completely renewed, to use Paul's language here, liberated from it's bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God okay? But here's the question that you should be asking at this point if you've been around the church at any time in your life, "Wait a minute I thought the whole physical world was supposed to be destroyed. I thought actually what was going to happen in the future is that God was actually going to destroy the world, in fact language of fire is used in the Scriptures. It's going to dissolve and then God is going to drop a new one out of heaven. What about that Jeff, because the Bible says that?" And you'd be right to challenge me there, because the Bible does say this, so 2 Peter 3:7,

"By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly."

And then in 2 Peter 3:10,

"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will *disappear* with a roar; the elements will be *destroyed* by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare."

"Take that Bucknam, you and your dumb sermon!" So if the whole world is supposed to be renewed, what about Peter who's saying, actually it's all going to be destroyed - which is it? Is God going to drop a new one out of heaven or is he going to take the existing one and renew it as it is? Well this is a great moment for us to do a little bit of Bible Study, so that passage 2 Peter 3, I want to look at the context of it. Just as an aside, anytime you have a problem like this the first thing you got to do is look



at the context at both of the passages that are in tension. So let's look at the context of 2 Peter 3, let's go back to verse 3, 2 Peter 3:3-7

"Above all [writes Peter], you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. [People who are outside the church who will end up being, 'Bah, you guys don't know what you're talking about, and specifically how? Well verse 4,] They will say, 'Where is this "coming" he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.' ['Huh you guys talk about Jesus coming back? There's no way he's coming back, how long has it been now? Maybe he got lost in the woods. Scoff, scoff, scoff.' At least that's the way I picture it.] But they [the scoffers, verse 5] deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water. [So that's a reference to the creation, if you go to Genesis 1, that's what he's saying, God spoke it into existence and he caused it to emerge out of the water.] By these waters [verse 6] also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. [What's that a reference to - Noah's flood, right. So when Noah's flood - see in the creation God spoke his word, and the world emerged out of the waters and then in Noah's flood the waters then covered it again and the earth was - did you notice the word? Destroyed! Was it? At Noah's flood was the world destroyed in the sense that it ceased to be? Well no, it was destroyed in the sense that all of the dross and the wickedness was destroyed on it and then it emerged after 40 days of a flood, purified, yeah?] By the same word [verse 7, so the reason the scoffers are wrong is cause God gave a word to Noah and it came true and his word about his return is going to come true by the same word,] the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire [What kind of fire - like the destroying kind that makes it melt and there's nothing left or the kind of purifying fire?], being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly."

My mother, years ago, <laughing> when she used to try to get slivers out of my, out of my feet, and I had a lot of them, and she'd take the needle and take a flame, right, and she'd heat that needle up while she was digging. By the way - I didn't grow up in a real Christian family and so like we had lots of alcohol around, and I don't know why she didn't use the alcohol. I remember this, her going <laughing, scheming> "I still have marks on the bottom of my feet from my mother digging things out with the - why is she heating this? I asked her that one day, "Why do you heat it up?"

"Because the fire purifies it." Right. That's what's going to happen, that the present world in which you inhabit will be put through a purifying fire in the same way that during Noah's flood it was put through a purifying water. But the world in which you inhabit right now is the world in which you'll inhabit then. You will have a renewed body there, it will look like the one you got, but it will be renewed. God's not done with your body, he created it and said it was good. He's going to, he's going to take your body, renew it, he's going to place it in a renewed earth that's been freed, been liberated from it's bondage to decay. So my, here's my big point, our future is on a renewed earth, we will have renewed bodies - remember Jesus tells in his renewed body, he says, "Thomas touch my hands, touch my hands." He eats fish, we're going to eat the foods there, Doritos will be there. [Laughter] We'll eat the foods - guys you need to really convince your children that this is the case, cause in their minds when they start thinking about heaven what they think about is like sitting on a cloud with a harp thinking, "Oh no, this is going to be so boring, Hell's going to be way better." No! Listen to me, you'll be able to do all the



great things that you do here. Listen, Canucks will win there. [Laughter] See I would say the Maple Leafs would win but I don't think they'll be there. [Laughter, clapping] Seriously though, if you ever, so today, this morning, I'm driving down the road and I see the mountains around us, peeking out with their snow capped peaks above the fog of the valley. It's magnificent, I had to keep, I started looking down at the road, it was like, "Oh my gosh, it's so magnificent." You see that and it's under a curse. You ever sat by the ocean and just seen the power of the waves roll in and it's just the beauty of the sand and all of the magnificence of it. It's under a curse! Can you imagine what it's going to be like when it's freed? See that seems like the kind of place I'd want to live. Christian you're going to be there in that renewed world with your renewed body.

[The Hope for Christians]

So there's hope for creation, yes? And then he, he's going to do what he really wants to do here Paul, he's going to turn that and say, "Okay, so just as there's a renewed creation, there's going to be a renewed, a renewed you, Romans 8:22-23,

"We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, [we] groan inwardly [like pregnant mothers, we groan inwardly] as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies."

Now hold on a minute, we are, as he says here, *awaiting* our adoption to sonship. So our sonship is a *future thing* that we are *eagerly awaiting*. Okay but what do you do about the verse he just had a few verses prior, so look at this - Romans 8:15, so that was Romans 8:22-23, go back to Romans 8:15, here's what Paul writes, he says,

"The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received *brought about your adoption to sonship*. [That's a past tense. So you're adoption to sonship's already happened] And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'"

We cry now, currently he's our daddy because we have been, past tense, adopted to sonship, and then a few verses later he says we eagerly await our adoption to sonship. What?!? So have we been adopted or will we be adopted? And the answer is . . . yes. We're already adopted but not yet totally adopted. This is actually not hard to picture because if you know people who have ever adopted a child or you have yourself you know where there's a moment where officially you've adopted the child, right. Given the go ahead for it, but there is a gap between that go ahead, and the moment that child's in your home. You might need to travel distances, you might need to sort out some logistics, and figure all that stuff out but there's a gap, so in that gap you're living in a kind of tension because they have been adopted, "Yes is that your son?"

"Yes, that's my son."

"Is he completely your son yet?"

"Well yes, but no. He's not present fully yet, he's already adopted but not yet totally adopted." This is an image that is used throughout the Bible to talk about the life that we live right now in the current



time, we are *already* Christ's but not yet totally. So we live in this weird tension, actually Paul uses a great image to describe it. It's really inept image, he says, "It's like we're pregnant women giving birth."

The first time I was ever around a pregnant woman giving birth, I had just started dating my now wife, and her sister went into labor, so my job was to go and look after her two year old son. So we went around the town and visited all sorts of stuff and I thought, "Surely it's over now right, cause I don't know, how long is that going to take?" I'm like 19 years old at this point so I finally drive this little boy back, back to the hospital, I'm walking down the hallway. Honestly I hear somebody screaming, like someone's stabbing them, I was like, "What is that? What is that?" I asked the nurse, "What is that?" And she said, "Well you're on the maternity ward." I was like, "So, why are they screaming?" So I got to the room where my sister-in-law, my now sister-in-law, my girlfriend's sister at the time was in there and she was giving birth and I stopped at the door and I thought, "First of all, no I'm not going in there at all, what am I going to see in there? That's going to be crazy." The sounds were absurd, like she was crying and screaming and everyone was encouraging her and stuff, her little boy, her older son who I was looking after wanted to run in and I kept holding him back and holding him back and then screaming, screaming, "You can do it, you can do it, you can do it!" And then all the sudden all cry of a little infant inside that room and then tears of joy.

Right, that's what he's describing here. Current, groaning in pain both for the creation and for you and me, waiting for an absolute joy that is going to make the current groaning look like nothing. Right, because when you get that baby, I have never in all my years heard about a woman who when she has the child that she's been groaning over for hours, sometimes days, and they lay that child in her arm, she looks at that child and says, "Eh, wasn't really worth it." They don't do that. They forget, they forget what all the pain, and they think, "I'd do that again, I mean not right away, but I would do that again." [Laughter] This is overwhelming joy that they have, but the image also helps us because Paul's not trying to diminish the pain, listen all the pregnant ladies in the room or those who've been pregnant are like, "Yeah it hurts, it hurts." And we guys are like, "Really? I mean I hurt my thumb once." No it hurts man! It hurts and so Paul's basically trying to say, "Look it, it's really hard in the present time, and in the present time you don't need to have some fake smile on your face." Can you imagine if I went to my wife while she's giving birth to one of our children, leaned over to her and said, "Honey, you need to smile more [laughter] like this is hard, I know, but you know when the child comes you'll forget all about it, so you should smile more, enjoy this time right." Do you know the most she's going to be able to do if I say that is, "You're just really good, I love this." No! It's not a plastic happiness, Christian life in the present time is not some plastic happiness. You know what it is, it's a settled confidence that it will not always be like this. That there is a hope coming, there is a joy coming, there's a child coming that is going to make all of this seem like it was nothing. Don't consider the sufferings of this present time worthy to be compared with the joy that's about to be revealed in you.

Joni Eareckson Tada, she had a diving accident in 1967, made her a quadriplegic, she dove into some water that had a rock underneath it, like mother's worst dream. Shallow water, hits her dead, quadriplegic for the rest of her life. She's been an author since, a painter, all sorts of things. She was speaking at a conference in her wheelchair, right, she sits there in the wheelchair and the adjust the



microphone in just such a way and she can't move, except for her head, she hasn't been able to move, she's been like that since 1967. So a few years ago she was speaking at a conference and here's what she said. She said,

"Soon... God will close the curtain on sin and suffering and disease and death, and we are going to step into the Niagara Falls that will be. And one day I'm going to leave this wheelchair behind. I can't wait. I may have suffered with Christ on earth, but one day in heaven I'm going to reign with him. I may have tasted the pains of living on this planet, but one day I'm going to eat from the tree of life in the pleasure of heaven, and it's all going to happen in the twinkling of an eye. Romans 8:18 says that we can consider our present sufferings not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us... but I sure hope I can bring this wheelchair to heaven. Now, I know that's not theologically correct. But I hope to bring it and put it in a little corner of heaven, and then in my new, perfect, glorified body, standing on grateful glorified legs, I'll stand next to my Savior, holding his nail-pierced hands. I'll say, 'Thank you, Jesus,'... And I will say, 'Jesus, do you see that wheelchair? You were right when you said that in this world we would have trouble, because that thing was a lot of trouble. But the weaker I was in that thing, the harder I leaned on you. And the harder I leaned on you, the stronger I discovered you to be. It never would have happened had you not given me the bruising of the blessing of that wheelchair.' Then the real ticker-tape parade of praise will begin. And all of earth will join in the party. And at that point Christ will open up our eyes to the great fountain of joy in his heart for us beyond all that we ever experienced. And when we're able to stop laughing and crying, the Lord Jesus really will wipe away our tears. I find it so fitting that finally at the point when I have the use of my arms to wipe away my own tears, I won't have to, because God will."

[What Does Hope Require?]

There's hope for creation, for us in that creation. So what? What does that require then, the knowledge, what does that require of us? Finally Romans 8:24-25,

"For in this hope [okay what he's referring to is the redemption of our bodies. For *in this hope*, this physical reality in a physical world, renewed beauty; *in this hope*] we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. [You got something you're not hoping for it, you already have it.] Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have [we don't yet have it, it's promised, we have the first fruits of a promise in the Holy Spirit, but we don't yet have it, if we hope for what we do not yet have], we wait for it [how? Well] patiently."

In other words, he's saying the same thing that you say to your kids right now. "Mom, Dad, can I have the...?"

"No, Christmas is coming."

"Oh But I want it now."

"It's coming."

"I don't know if I can possibly wait that..."

"You'll wait that long."



“Oh but please give it to me.”

“Just be patient, Jonny.”

Wait for patience, it’s the best gift you could ever had, the renewed heaven, the renewed earth, you’re renewed body. Wait, you got to wait for it patiently. But how do you wait for something patiently? What does that look like?

So just as we finish here let me give you three ideas as to what it looks like to wait for something patiently, specifically this. Number one, I think you need to start thinking more about your future than you do. Listen I know people say stuff like, “You don’t want to be so heavenly minded you’re no earthly good.” You have my permission to punch them in the face, because that’s ridiculous. It’s absolutely, is that really our problem, that’s our problem right now is that we are too heavenly minded? Colossians 3, set your mind on things above where Christ is seated. And you’re seated with him because you’re already there, not yet totally, but already there. Set your mind on things above, let heaven govern your thoughts. If you ever talk to a pregnant woman or are around her very long, they talk about the coming child all the time, they think about the coming child all the time. Go into the store, they’re looking at something like a lamp and they end up unconsciously just being drawn to the baby section right. It’s always on their mind. They’re sitting around at home - we call it nesting, because they can’t keep minds off of whether or not the room is just right, or they prepared just right, they’re always thinking about it. You need to think about heaven more. You need to consider where your home is more, that feeling that you have in your heart, that homesickness that you have, that is *right* to have homesickness now, cause this isn’t home. We are strangers and aliens here, but home is coming, you think about it more.

Secondly, we need to *help* each other think about it more, remind each other especially during the groaning, that it won’t always be this way, Hebrews 10:23,

“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. [He’s going to get us there.] And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but *encouraging* one another—and *all the more* as you see the Day approaching.”

Why do you gather in church, why do you hang out with other Christian people? Not just to talk about the recent scores or whether or not your life stinks or whatever, but to tell each other there is a day approaching. There’s a heaven, and you’re headed there, your home is coming. It’s imminent. What’s a husband’s job when the wife’s in labour, right, the ice chips, you get the ice chips, that’s your job, “You want some ice chips?” You know you got nothing else you can do, ice chips, you massage, you cheer, “Come on honey, you can do it.”

“Shut up!”

“You can do it, I know you can do it.”

“I’m going to kill you. I’m going to ...”

“You can do it, come on honey, come on, come on. We can do this.” What are you doing there, you’re just encouraging it in the midst of groaning. That there is an end to this.



Think about your future, remind each other about your future, but finally, and this is maybe the hardest thing, at some point or another you're just going to have to gut it out. In the midst of the groaning and the challenges that you face in this present moment, you got to just gut it out. My friend, Paul, from New Zealand, whenever we'd face a difficult time he'd say, "Mate, it's just time to put your head down and your bum up." What does that mean? It's a rugby term right, if you've seen this scrum, with their heads and they lock it in together and you shove your head down and you stick your bum up and you just push baby, right? Husbands if your wife's pregnant you can use that in labour if you want. Isn't that, at the end of the day, the woman who's in labour, she can be cheered on and pushed on and at some point or another, *she* has to push. That's hard, this life's hard, it's difficult, we sit in Subway and we're just overwhelmed with grief. Look I know some of you are sitting here right now and you are overwhelmed with grief. You're going to go to your car and you're going to cry. I have to tell you, this moment, don't get stuck in this moment because there is a joy coming that will make this moment so small. Look Jesus says it himself, John 16:20-22,

"Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. So with you: [So it is with you:] Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you *will* rejoice, and *no one* will take away your joy."

Merry Christmas? Let me pray,

Father, oh just fill us with knowledge of this, in this time. Would you just fill us, give us that gift this Christmas, let our tires be full, even, even as we drive on icy roads in our lives. Let our tires be full knowing that the ice will not always last, that winter will fade in the great spring and summer of your love is on it's way. We thank you for it, in Jesus name, Amen.