

Between the Times

The Motivating Power of Our Future Hope of Glory

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THE MOTIVATING POWER OF OUR FUTURE HOPE OF GLORY

Romans 8:31-39

Good morning, church. It is an honor to stand before you today. If you have your Bibles, would you please turn with me to Romans chapter eight? We're going to be studying verses 31-39. And I am so excited about this passage of Scripture. I'm excited about the opportunity I have to preach it this morning; however, to be honest with you, I'm a bit terrified to stand before you.

One of my friends told me one time, he said, "Preaching is a lot like working out. It's a lot like going to the gym. If you only do it every once in a while, well then, it's just painful." Based upon the frequency of my preaching ministry, this quite possibly could be painful—for me and possibly for you as well.

But in all seriousness, despite my butterflies, I trust that His Word that we just confessed will never fail, will be bringing about life transformation in our lives this morning. So let's pause right now and go to the Lord in prayer.

God, as I proclaim Your Word today, as we study Romans chapter 8, Lord, my earnest prayer is that You would come very powerfully, very clearly, and work through me. I ask that Your Word would bring about life-transforming effects; Lord, that You would even alter eternities during this time; and Lord, that You would bless Your people as Your Word is preached. We pray all of these in the strong name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Lord. Amen. Amen.

As a way of introduction, my family and I have served alongside this church, our faith family, for the past five years. For the past five years I've served on staff as college minister. I oversee our ministry to college students, specifically lead out in the efforts to equip and to encourage college students to glorify God with their lives by making disciples of all nations. It has been an honor of my life to serve in this role.

And for the past year I've served as one of this church's staff elders, which has been a humbling thing. It's been one of the great blessings of my life, to come alongside of you and to lock arms with you to glorify God by making disciples of all nations. As difficult as this sounds, as difficult as it is for me to say this, our time at Brook Hills is coming to a close. You see, this January my family and I, alongside a team from this church, will make the transition from living life and doing ministry in Birmingham, Alabama, to living life and doing ministry in the Middle East.

Our plans are to launch out of here in January with a team of folks following behind us, and to land, to plant our lives on the Arabian Peninsula, and to do the hard thing of learning the language and learning the culture. And our hope is to begin to share the life-giving good news of Jesus Christ with many who have never had the opportunity to hear before. Our desire, our earnest desire is to see God raise up reproducing disciple-makers among these

people, to see an ever-multiplying church planted among some of the most unreached and difficult to reach people on the planet.

You might be asking the question, “Why in the world would you do this? Why would you leave Brook Hills alongside your wife and your four children and do such a thing? What is the motivation behind this?” And it’s in light of this question that I want to turn our attention to Romans chapter 8, and I want to deliver to you a sermon that I’ve entitled, “The Motivating Power of Our Future Hope of Glory.”

Before I read these verses, I want to say this, that Romans chapter 8 verses 31-39 is not just for those of us who are looking to engage unreached people groups. It’s not just for us who are looking to launch out of this church and to land our lives among some foreign soil. This passage, I believe, is one of the greatest passages in all of Scripture. James Montgomery Boice said that this passage is a mountaintop paragraph. It is the Everest of the letter, and thus the highest peak in the highest Himalayan range of Scripture.

Now the reason he says such a thing and the reason I believe that this passage is one of the greatest in all of the Scripture, is because the promises that this passage contains are so all-encompassing that it stands ready to help in virtually every circumstance we find ourselves in this morning. There is not one person in here today that will find Romans chapter 8 to be irrelevant in their current situation.

Whether you are looking to be launched out of here and to engage in unreached people groups, or whether you are going to engage your neighborhood here in Birmingham. Whether your marriage is strong and vibrant or whether your marriage is literally imploding. Whether things are going great or things are going horrible. Whether you’re on the mountaintop or you’re in the valley low, this passage of Scripture is all-encompassing and it is ready to serve us in whatever circumstance we find ourselves in.

Five Truths for God’s People on Their Journey to Glory

And so the question is, “What motivates God’s people? What motivates God’s people to cling to Him, to draw near to Him in life’s most challenging circumstances?” It’s in light of that question that I want to read Romans chapter 8. I’m going to begin with verse 28, but we’re going to be looking specifically at verses 31-39. The Word of the Lord says:

"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised— who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or

nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, 'For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.'

"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Now what is Paul doing here? Specifically, Paul is putting a bookend on a major section of his letter to the Romans. What he is doing is putting a bookend on the major section between chapter 5 and chapter 8, a major section of the book that speaks to the hope that we have in Christ. For those who have placed their faith in Christ, we have received His perfect righteousness. Based upon that truth, we have a hope.

Paul is concluding this section with a joyful explanation of our security in Christ. Our security in Christ. So listen to me. He's explained that the gospel guarantees that those who are in Christ will safely be brought home to glory. This means that one day each of us who are in Christ will one day be safely brought home to glory. However, it doesn't guarantee that the journey home will be marked with ease and comfortable living. It doesn't mean that this journey home will be void of suffering. And it's this tension that the Apostle Paul is writing to in Romans chapter 8.

John Piper says it this way. He says, "What is this section of Romans meant to accomplish in you? It's meant to make you unshakably secure for the sake of suffering in the Christ exalting path of obedience. The point is to build into your life God wrought, blood bought security to help you suffer well." So do the people of God have a future hope of glory? Yes, absolutely. We just read in verses 29 and 30 that our salvation is secure. Paul uses strong words such as "foreknew" and "predestined" and "called" and "justified" and even "glorified." Paul uses such words to show us that God has been at work from eternity past and is at work until eternity future securing our salvation in Him.

Then Paul asks in verse 31. He says, "*What then shall we say to these things?*" Ladies and gentlemen, what Paul says in light of these things is simply breathtaking. As I've studied this passage of Scripture, I've come to see five motivating truths—five motivating truths for God's people on their journey to glory.

Because God is our Sovereign Protector, all of our enemies will fall.

The first one we see in verse 31. He says, "*If God is for us, who can be against us.*" If God is for us, who can be against us? Now if you just take the second of that question, it becomes very answerable, doesn't it? "*Who can be against us?*" Well, many people can be against us. Many things can be against us. In fact, many people and many things are against us.

You see, the Bible explains that we have three great enemies. Three great enemies. This world is an enemy to the people of God. This world that is set in direct opposition to God and His ways creates an enemy for God's people. Jesus says in John 15, He says, "*If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.*" That's strong language by our Lord.

Not only this world, but also our flesh. Our flesh is against us. Paul says in Romans 7, "*For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what*

is right, but not the ability to carry it out." You can bank on this. Your flesh is against you, and you cannot escape its influence in this life

So not only this world, not only our flesh, but also Satan and all of his demonic forces are against God's people. First Peter 5 describes Satan as *"a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."* So we have three great enemies. We have three formidable enemies. But what are these enemies when it's put together with the statement: *"God is for us."* God is for us. Hear this. Because God is our Sovereign Protector, all of our enemies will fail. All of our enemies will fail.

The reasoning that Paul gives us is if God is for us, then nothing can successfully oppose us. So you need to feel this morning. Wrap your mind around this truth. If by God's grace, through faith in Jesus you've been made right with a holy God, then that God is for you, and nothing can be against you.

In this transition from living life and doing ministry in Birmingham to living life and doing ministry in the Middle East, it included selling our house and moving into some temporary housing. Over the past month we've transitioned into some temporary housing, and with that transition came a little bit of uneasiness at bedtime for our four children. So a few weeks ago we put the kids in bed and we'd walk back into the living room and my wife and I were kind of hanging out, and I'd hear my 3-year-old start crying. So I run in there and I say, "Buddy, what's wrong? Why are you crying?" And he said, "Daddy, I'm scared. I'm scared, Daddy." And I leaned down and I got real close to him and I said, "Buddy, you have nothing to fear." And I pointed through his door, through the hallway, and I said, "Daddy's sitting right through that hallway in the living room. And I'm sitting right there and I will not let anything happen to you. So you can lay your head on your pillow and you can close your eyes and you can rest well." And he kind of grinned and I gave him a little kiss on his forehead and I walked out.

Literally as I was walking out, it hit me that to definitively say, "Nothing can happen to you," means that I not only need the resolve to protect my 3-year-old, but I need the resources to protect my 3-year-old. And the thought hit me, in the worst of circumstances, something could in fact happen to him. If something bigger or somebody stronger comes through me, they can get to my 3-year-old. But the reality is—and listen to me, ladies and gentlemen—when God our Father says, "I'm for you, and nothing can be against you," you can rest assured that He not only has the resolve to protect you, He has the resources to protect you.

A.W. Tozer said, "With the goodness of God to desire our highest welfare, the wisdom of God to plan it, and the power of God to achieve it, what do we lack?" Church, what do we lack, when we have a God who is for us? He is our Sovereign Protector. Therefore all of our enemies will fail, which leads to a very important question. How do you determine if God is for you? That's an important question for us to wrestle with this morning. Some people would say, "Well, I feel like God is for me," or "Someone told me that God is for me." And those are very poor ways of answering that question.

How do we know if God is for us? I think what happens in verse 31, when it says, *"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"* What happens is it's propelling us back into the context to answer the question, "How do we know if God is for us?" In verse 28 it says this: *"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."* So synonymous with "God is for you" is that "All things are working together for your good." Right?

How do we know if all things are working together for our good; therefore, God is for us? Well, the text answers that question. It says, *"For those who love God."* So the question today is not "Do you feel like God is for you," or "Do your circumstances hint that God is for you?" The question is "Do you love God?" And not some God that this world has created or some God that your mind has created, but the God Who has revealed Himself in His word. Do you love Him? But also it goes on to say, *"For those who are called according to his purpose."*

So the question is, "Is your life in alignment with the purposes of God, or is your life in rebellion to His purposes?" Ladies and gentlemen, if you love God, and if your life is called according to His purpose, then the Bible says, "All things are working together for your good." And that means God is for you. God, the Creator of the universe, the One Who spoke everything into existence by the power of His Word, the God Who rules over every square inch of this cosmos is for you. Therefore, because of God's power, nothing can successfully come against you. That's good news this morning. But it continues on.

Because God is our Supreme Provider, all of our needs will be met.

In verse 32, Paul says, *"He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?"* Oh, that the church would stand in awe of this verse. He *"did not spare His own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?"* All things! So the second motivating truth this morning for us is this: Because God is our Supreme Provider, all of our needs will be met.

Paul uses interesting logic here. He starts out saying, "Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the greatest thing that God could have given you." There is no more precious, there is no more valuable, there is no more glorious of a gift than Jesus Christ, and He gave Him to us. And He didn't just give Him to us; He gave Him over to death so that our rebellion could be paid for in full, so that we could be rescued from the judgment that was due our sins.

So first, Paul describes the Gospel. "God did not spare His own son, but gave Him up for us all. God gave us His Son." That is the central truth claim of Christianity. In order to be a Christian, you believe that. You bank your life on that. And you begin to walk out in faith in light of that truth, that God gave us His own son. And then from there, Paul reasons, from the Gospel, that God's goodness towards us is very real in our hurts, in our pain, in our trials. He says, *"How will he not also with him graciously give us all things?"* What Paul means is that He will most definitely give us all things. He's done the greater—namely, given us His Son. Certainly He will do the lesser; give us all things.

I know this is amazing news for some of us. For some of us, this lands as very good news. That not only will He supply our ultimate needs, but He will only bring into our lives that which is good for us. When I say that, it lands on some of us as very good news. But there's some of us in here that that lands on us as very confusing news. Very confusing news because in life, some very tragic things have happened. Some very difficult circumstances have happened. So when I stand up here and say, "Not only will He supply your ultimate need, but He will only bring into your life things that are for your good," it can be very confusing. If that's the case, why did I lose my loved one? Why is my marriage imploding? Why are my kids in rebellion? Why was I diagnosed with this terminal disease? Why did I just lose my job? If God is only bringing good things into my life, why are these hard things happening?

I don't want to offer any trite answers, because that will not serve the people of God well. But I do want to encourage you in this: as Christ followers we are always compelled to look to the cross. To look to the cross. One author has accurately said, "The cross displays God's

generosity.” So the undeniable truth of Romans 8:32 is this: If we can trust Him with the greater, our need for provision of sin, if we can trust Him with the greater, our need for provision of sin, namely, “God did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all,” then we can trust Him with the lesser—our need for perseverance in suffering. God completely supplies all we need in Christ Jesus.

J.I. Packer, in his classic work, *Knowing God*, says it this way. “Paul is telling us that there is no ultimate loss, no irreparable impoverishment to be feared. If God denies us something, it is only in order to make room for the other things He has in mind. The meaning of “*he will give us all things*” can be put thus. One day we shall see that nothing, literally nothing, which could have increased our internal happiness, has been denied us, and that nothing, literally nothing, that could have reduced that happiness has been left with us.” What higher assurance do we want than that? God is our Supreme Provider.

Because of God’s ultimate ruling, we will never be found guilty.

And as if that were not enough, Paul continues on in verse 33, and he says, “*Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies.*” It’s as if Paul is summoning us into the supreme court—not of the United States but of the universe. And as we’re summoned into the supreme court of the universe, sitting on the bench is the infinitely holy, infinitely worthy, just judge. And Paul hurls a question out there. “Is there anyone at any time that can bring a charge against God’s elect that God leave us eternally condemned? Eternally guilty?”

That might not be a question that we think through on a regular basis. It might not even be a question that you’ve thought through in your life, but I will suggest to you that it is one of the most pressing questions for us to consider. Is there anything that we have done in our past, is there anything that we will do in the future that can come against us, that can be brought against us that will leave us eternally guilty?

Brothers and sisters, we understand that one sin—one sin—is an infinite offense to an infinite holy God, deserving that we be found guilty, only to pay an infinite price for that sin. Our Lord said that the greatest commandment of them all is to “*love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind...* and to “*love your neighbor as yourself.*” He set the bar high, so high that not one of us can attain that type of perfection. And Paul says, “Is there anybody that can come into the supreme court of the Universe and hurl an accusation that can make it stick, and that we would be found guilty for all of eternity?” And he answers it, “*It is God who justifies.*” *It is God who justifies.* Because of God’s ultimate ruling, we will never be found guilty. Did you hear that? Because of God’s ultimate ruling, we will never be found guilty.

If we have been united in Christ—that is, by God’s grace, through faith in Jesus, we’ve made right with God—if we have been united in Christ, then God has justified us. And the doctrine of justification simply is this: that He has removed our rebellion. He has removed our rebellion. And not just removed our rebellion, He has imparted Christ’s righteousness. He has imparted Christ’s righteousness. So on that day that each of us will stand before an infinitely holy God, that infinitely just Judge will look down on those who are in Christ and declare you not only guiltless, but perfectly righteous in Christ. That is good news this morning.

Because of God's saving work in Christ for us, we will never be condemned.

And he continues on in verse 34, and he says, *"Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised— who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us."* So the question is, "Who is to condemn us?" Listen to me. Because of God's saving work in Christ for us, we will never be condemned.

He asks the question, "Who's going to condemn us?" And the answer is, "Jesus Christ has completely saved His people." If God accomplished our salvation for us, if He accomplished our salvation for us, namely Christ died for us, Christ was raised from the dead, Christ ascended to heaven, Christ intercedes for His people, then our enemies cannot condemn us. Our enemies cannot condemn us. The reality is because Jesus Christ was condemned for our sin, we will never stand condemned. Romans 8:1 says, *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."*

Because of God's love in Christ for us, our hope of glory is certain.

The grand finale begins in verse 35. He says,

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, 'For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Because of God's unending love in Christ for us, our hope of glory is certain. Brothers and sisters, we have a sure hope of glory. This hope is still future. It is still unseen. It is not yet fully realized, but ladies and gentlemen, for the people of God, our hope is certain. It is certain. And how we know this is Paul brings in a list of possible realities that might possibly separate us from the love of God. He says tribulation, distress, persecution in verse 35. These are all pressures we face from an ungodly world.

What about famine or nakedness? This is a lack of adequate food or clothing. What about even danger with a sword? The risk and the actual experience of God, can these things separate us from the love of God? Or to put it another way, if these things are reality in our life, is it proof that we are separated from the love of God?

Now it's very important here to note that many preachers are saying that the essence of being a Christian means that you live life void of these realities listed out in verse 35. Many Christian preachers are stating that in order to be a Christian, this means that you will not face pressures from the ungodly world, you will not go lacking in this life and you will not risk or even experience death. And nothing could be further from the truth.

How do I know this? First of all, the writer of this passage, the Apostle Paul, also wrote 2 Corinthians. If you have your Bible, turn with me to 2 Corinthians chapter 11. 2 Corinthians 11. Here the Apostle Paul is recounting some experiences in his background. He says in verse 23 of 2 Corinthians 11, he says,

Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned.

Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

Paul is not pulling out some hypothetical list in verse 35 of Romans chapter 8. He is pulling from life experiences, and he's bringing them to the table. And he knows full well that the list in verse 35 has no power to separate God's people from the love of God in Christ Jesus. But also, what about Hebrews chapter 11? You don't have to turn there, just listen. Verses 35-39 says,

Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised [speaking of this lifetime].

But then also we see in verse 36, right after the list of verse 35, the Apostle Paul quotes Psalm 44:22. He says, "*Yet for your sake we are killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.*" That's not flattering words for the people of God. Those are serious, serious words. And the sober reality is that the difficulties listed in verse 35 do strike Christians.

As I read through the pages of the New Testament and I hear reports from brothers and sisters around the world, I'm coming to think that the list of verse 35 is actually the norm for New Testament Christians. Whoever told us that to be a Christian means that you're going to walk through a journey to your future glory void of suffering, void of tribulation, void of hardship? The reality is that we are not promised life void of these realities. We are promised victory in the midst of these realities.

I'm convinced that the reason why there are still so many unreached peoples in the world is because as Christians many of us are trying to shield our lives. We're doing everything we can to shield our lives from the realities of verse 35. We're consumed with doing everything we can not to endure an ounce of verse 35. And all the while, 2 billion people have little to know access to the Gospel. We're not just talking about people who are lost and don't know the Lord. We're talking about people who are lost, do not know the Lord, and have no one to tell them the good news. They don't have the opportunity to hear and to respond like every one of us has had many, many occasions in this life.

Two billion people are still unreached with the gospel. And the reality that drives many of us to engage these unreached people groups—specifically Muslims—is because of the large numbers that are still present in this world. J. D. Greer, in his excellent book, *Breaking the Islam Code*, stated that there are 1.9 billion Muslims in this world. 1.9 billion Muslims. And only .05% of Christian workers in this world have Muslims as their focus—.05% of Christian workers around the world are seeking to engage Muslims. And almost one out of every three lost people on this planet are followers of Islam. Why is this so?

I've come to be convinced in my own life that a large part of this reality is because we're trying to shield ourselves from verse 35. We're doing everything we can not to endure an ounce of that list while the rest of the world is lost and dying under the wrath of God. We have the hope of glory. We have the confidence of perfect righteousness of Christ that has been imparted to us and we're trying to shield our temporary lives from this list of verse 35. In light of our hope of glory, and in light of the realities of Romans chapter 8, it doesn't make sense. Listen to me. It doesn't make sense because in verse 37 he says,

"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Listen to me. If there's nothing to separate us from God's love, not any state of being—he says death or life; not any created being—angels or rulers; not any dimension of time—that's things present or thing to come; not any dimension of space—that's height or depth; and if that didn't get everything, he throws out one final all-encompassing statement: not anything in all of creation. If there's nothing to separate us from God's love, then we can freely lose our lives for the sake of His glory among the nations. Freely! Joyfully! Give up this life and all that it has to offer and lose our lives for the sake of God's glory being made known among the nations.

Mark chapter 8 says, *"In calling the crowd to him with his disciples, Jesus said to them, 'if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Whoever would save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.'"*

He says in John chapter 12 says, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life."*

So brothers and sisters, the church at Brook Hills, we can do it. We can confidently do it. We can lose our lives because we are sure that our future hope of glory far outweighs any temporary pleasure offered in this world. We are confident that our future hope of glory far outweighs any momentary satisfactions, any earthly treasure this world has to offer. So the final section of Romans chapter 8 is primarily about our eternal security that believers enjoy, based upon all that God has done for us in Christ. What God has done on our behalf should leave with us an unshakeable confidence in our future hope of glory. And this reality, I believe, motivates us into Christ-exalting obedience. Christ exalting obedience. And this will include us laying our lives down for His glory among the nations.

How Then Shall We Respond?

In closing I want to draw our attention to just a few applications. First off, if you read through this passage, you see that there's no command in this passage. This passage is not about what you need to do for God. This passage is about what God has done for you in Christ Jesus. To quickly run to what we need to be doing is out of step with the very nature of this passage.

But I want to in closing speak very clearly to two different sets of people in this room. First of all, for those who are not in Christ, there are some obvious implications in this passage. For those who are not in Christ, please hear me. God desires your salvation, yes, but in a very real sense, God is against you. Scripture tells us for those who continue in their unbelief, they have the wrath of God abiding on them. For those who are not in Christ, I am pleading with you. By God's grace will you turn from your sin and trust in Christ alone for salvation? You have no hope of future glory apart from a right relationship with God. And you have no opportunity for a right relationship with God apart from the finished work of Jesus Christ our Lord. So I'm begging you. I'm pleading with you. Repent from your sins and trust in Christ today if you're not in Christ.

For those of us who are in Christ, to my faith family, the church at Brook Hills, knowing that we have a Sovereign Protector, knowing that we have a Supreme Provider, knowing that God has made an ultimate ruling in our favor, knowing that we will never be condemned and our hope of glory is certain, let us not cowardly retreat. Let us not shrink back in fear.

Brothers and sisters, to lose your life is not a very natural response. And the cowardly and the fearful will not participate in a future hope of glory. So I am calling us, instead of cowardly retreating, instead of shrinking back in fear, let us confidently risk it all. Let us confidently risk it all. We should step forward in faith. Not every single one of us is called to the Middle East. Not every single one of us is called to plant our lives among the unreached. But I am convinced every single one of us is called to follow Christ in such a way that includes the list of verse 35 to some degree. And so I am encouraging us to embrace a life of following Jesus Christ in the tough times. And I am encouraging us to follow Jesus Christ to the tough people. And, yes, this will include to some degree tribulation and distress and persecution, famine, nakedness, danger and the sword. But it will be worth it. At the end of our days, it will be worth it. And let us not live our life based upon what ten years from now will look like. Let us live our life in light of 100 years from now, when every one of us will be in eternity. How will we have hoped that we would have lived our life at that point, and let us go out from here, and let us risk it all, and let us live by faith and not by sight.

The hymn states:

He giveth more grace as our burdens grow greater,
He sendeth more strength as our labors increase;
To added afflictions He addeth His mercy,
To multiplied trials He multiplies peace.
When we have exhausted our store of endurance,
When our strength has failed ere the day is half done,
When we reach the end of our hoarded resources
Our Father's full giving is only begun.
His love has no limits, His grace has no measure,
His power no boundary known unto men;
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.
(He Giveth More Grace by Annie J. Flint)

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