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Rick Myatt

HOW LIFE MIGHT BE LIKE LOST

1 Timothy 1:1

Laurie and I were talking recently about our favorite Christmas movies. There are a number that I like, but to me *A Christmas Story* is still the classic, even though TNT won’t run it for 24 straight hours this Christmas like they have in the past. The story, of course, centers on 8 year old Ralphie Parker, who has put all of his hopes in getting a Red Ryder BB gun for Christmas. It is all he can think about. He obsesses about it. It occupies his dreams, causes him to come up with clever strategies like putting an ad for it in his mother’s magazine, he makes it the subject of his “What I Want For Christmas” essay at school, and, eventually, he manages to tell Santa about it. He just has to have this rifle. All of his happiness hinges on getting it. He feels stymied at every turn because at every mention of it someone says to him, “You’ll shoot your eye out.” The great day finally arrives. Christmas at last. Ralphie and Randy tear into their presents. There are some good ones, and some miserable ones like the bunny suit pajamas from his aunt that made him look like a deranged Easter bunny, a pink nightmare. But in the end Christmas turned out to be a disappointment because the one thing that Ralphie really hoped for didn’t show up. There was no Red Ryder rifle. Oh, wait. After all the presents have been opened, Ralphie’s dad points out one last, hidden present. Hallelujah! Just when all seemed lost, there it was. The Holy Grail. The cherished, hoped for, dreamed of Red Ryder range rifle. Ralphie’s joy is unbounded. And, of course, he almost shoots his eye out. That story stands as a cautionary tale for us. The narrator tells us it was the greatest Christmas present he would ever receive. But just a bit of reflection enables us to see that Ralphie’s life would not be affected one iota by that gun. He would play with it some, and then he would put it away like every other toy. Does that not suggest we should think carefully about what we hope for and how important it actually is? The topic today is hope.

Today I want you to notice one little phrase. In 1 Timothy 1:1 Paul introduces himself as, “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope.” Appropriately, hope is a common theme this time of year. It is appropriate because at Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, and Paul here says he is our hope. If that’s true, then we are celebrating the birth of hope at Christmas. But what does that mean? In what way is Christ our hope?

HOPE IS CRUCIAL

We hear a lot about hope this time of year. Does hope really matter? We all know that it matters enormously. There are a couple of reasons why hope is so important. First, Martin Luther said, “Everything that is done in the world is done by hope.” We know that’s true, We will never attempt anything if we know there is no chance at all of it actually succeeding. If we have even a faint sliver of hope, we will give it a try. If there is no hope at all, why waste the time and energy? When our son, Toby, graduated from college he still had this little tiny, faint hope that maybe, somehow, he could play professional football. He had defied the odds in college when he walked on to his school’s division I football program when it seemed impossible, and he made that team. Maybe he could do it again. He was working out like a maniac. He had a target for speed he felt he would need to hit to even have a chance. He worked and worked, but finally fell just short of that speed Mark he needed to hit. At that point he felt there was no hope, so he gave up. Ironically, several years later I was looking at the speed averages for players who got drafted at his position, and I saw that he actually had bettered that average.

The point is when he felt he had no hope, he concluded it was a waste to even try, so he didn’t pursue it. Eventually he would hit on the idea of becoming a doctor. We had a friend who was a doctor, who discouraged this idea, saying the route he wanted to go would be futile. She tried to dissuade us and him. Fortunately he paid no attention to that person, because he believed there was hope. Because he had hope, he tried, with the result that today he is indeed a doctor.

Not only is hope essential for us to even attempt something, it is also important to enable us to persevere. There’s a truth about life we all know but would rather forget. It is that generally good things don’t come easily. Most things that are worthwhile in life will be difficult and will require perseverance and endurance. The reason for this is that we have an enemy who wants us to always take the easy way because it will end up being negative for us. What that means is to do or get anything good in life we will have to endure. But again, if we lose hope, it is almost certain that we will quit. Suppose a friend decides he needs to lose 20 pounds. So he begins a reasonable diet and exercise program that is aimed at trimming a pound a week, aiming at sustainable weight loss. After a week he has lost a pound. Wonderful! After 2 weeks he has still lost a pound. The third week he gains a pound. After a month he is right where he started. What is likely to happen? He loses hope and gives up.

In order for us to do anything, get through school, get a college degree, have a successful marriage, have families, raise children, have a good job, have a church that actually ministers to people and honors God, live a life that honors God, the list goes on endlessly, we need hope. Without hope we won’t do any of it. We won’t even try to do it.

A second aspect of the importance of hope is reflected by something said by Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky. He said, “To live without hope is to cease to live.” One of the saddest things that could happen to a person is that they become hopeless. As we saw, hope is essential to continuing on. When a person is truly hopeless they are on the verge of giving up on life. To be hopeless is to be left with despair. Life isn’t worth living when we feel hopeless and despairing. Despairing people will be bitter, cynical, angry, unhappy people, and might give up altogether.

Psychologist Dr. Shane Lopez, a leading expert on hope, says hope is not an emotion, but an essential life tool. It seems he is correct. In his book, *If You Want To Walk On Water, You Have To Get Out Of The Boat*, John Ortberg cites a fairly amazing study that was done of 122 patients who had suffered heart attacks. The researchers classified the patients by their level of hope. Of the 25 most pessimistic, least hopeful patients, 8 years later 21 had died. Of the 25 most hopeful patients only 6 had died 8 years later. Loss of hope increased the death rate 300%. This caused Ortberg to conclude, “It is better to eat Twinkies in hope than broccoli in despair.”

WE NEED KNOW WHAT OUR HOPE IS

There are two small words, two prepositions, that we use in speaking of hope that are very important. These two words raise two questions that we absolutely must answer. The prepositions are “for” and “in.” The questions are, “What do you hope for?” and “What do you hope in?”

There is a lot of syrupy, fuzzy thinking about hope, especially at this season of the year. We hear people extolling hope, talking about how much we need it, saying how wonderful it is and how we must not lose it, and claiming the Christmas season can restore it. They say we must never lose hope. But all too often people seem to think hope itself is the elixir we need. Simply the act of hoping is what matters. But viewing hope that way is foolish. That would be a little like someone saying it doesn’t matter what you breathe, as long as you breathe. Just breathing is what matters. So air, pure oxygen, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, water, it’s all good as long as you breathe. That is a way to get dead. The idea is fatally flawed.

Hope is huge for us, but hope in the wrong thing can be as spiritually disastrous as breathing carbon monoxide. We need to think about what we can reasonably hope for, and then we need to think about what we put our hope in to bring about that desired end. Otherwise hope ends up being a fool’s paradise.

WHAT CAN WE HOPE FOR?

Obviously we all hope for a myriad of things. Several years ago when I was having trouble with a torn tendon in my elbow I tried everything the doctors could suggest to avoid surgery. I tried physical therapy, hoping it would help, but it was a total fail. The doctor suggested a platelet rich plasma injection (PRP) and said they have a 93% success rate in cases similar to mine. I tried that, hoping for a good outcome. It failed. Finally I had to have surgery. I hoped it would work. I’m much better, so it did work, mostly. When Laurie and I got married we hoped our marriage would be great. It has exceeded even the hopes I had for it. I hoped our kids would be healthy and have happy lives. I hoped they’d be able to have happy families. I hope for happy, healthy lives for our grandkids. When we bought our current car we hoped it would be a reliable car for many years. I hope our church survives covid. I hope my friends who have covid recover quickly and fully from it. I hope my loved ones like the Christmas presents I’m getting for them. I hope the presents I’ve ordered on line get here before Christmas. I hope this vaccine works and has no complications. I hope 2021 is a huge improvement over 2020. I hope the stores have toilet paper when we go to buy some.

We hope for things every day. It is part of human nature to hope for all kinds of things. There is not much to be gained from emulating Eeyore. “I hope they have toilet paper, but I’m sure they won’t.” It is fine to hope for things. But what are the things that we hope for that are the linchpins of our happiness and our very existence? What can we hope for that are the crucial and necessary elements of a truly full life, and which elements are reasonable to hope for because they have been promised to us by God?

Colossians 1:21 says, “Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds.” We were created for God, made to live with a living connection to him. Being alienated from him, which we all are initially, is something we will feel. We may not even know what it is, but we will sense something is off, something is not right with us.

Laurie and I are very fortunate because we are very similar and both of us are very laid back people. So throughout our marriage we have not dealt with a lot of big time conflicts. We are human, so we have had our conflicts. As with many marital conflicts they were often about trivial issues and we can’t even remember what started them. But we do remember the sense of estrangement when in the middle of one. The one that stands as a prime example for me was our very first argument as a married couple. It happened on our honeymoon, and it was indeed over a trivial issue. At least it started that way. But I remember driving in our rental car after the argument was over, at least I thought it was over because I made Laurie admit she was wrong. I remember the feeling of knowing that something was still wrong, that there was a wall between us. I hated that feeling. There was distance between me and the person I love most in the world, the most important person in the world to me. It felt awful. I knew I had to do something about that because I didn’t want to feel that way and I dearly did not want a wall between me and the one I love.

When we are alienated from God we experience that same sense. We feel that estrangement, even when we can’t identify what it is. The thing we can hope for is the end to that alienation. Colossians 1:22 says, “But now he (God) has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight.” Our hope is Christ means we can and should hope for reconciliation to God, an end to our alienation from him, which brings a vital connection to him that every human being was created to have and needs badly. That is a big part of our hope.

Titus 3:5 says God saved us “through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.” Verse 6 says this is given to us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior. Verse 7 says, “so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.” Through the grace of Jesus Christ we have the hope of eternal life. This is not hope like, “I hope next year is a lot better than this year has been.” It is hope like saying, “I hope the sun comes up in the east tomorrow.” We are confident that will happen. That is the kind of hope we can have about eternal life in Christ.

In 1 John 5:13 the apostle said, “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may *know* that you have eternal life.” He didn’t write so that we could wish we have eternal life, or so that we can pretend it even though we know it’s really just a myth, or so that we can hope that maybe, just maybe we might get eternal life. He said we can know it for a fact.

Yes, I know, we believe in Jesus so we can go to heaven. It’s that pie in the sky when you die thing. Many people kind of write this truth off as mostly irrelevant. But I tell you the question of what happens after you die is the most important one we ever face. It dogs every one of us, and ultimately is the greatest determining factor in whether we can be hopeful, joyful and optimistic about life, or whether we end with nothing but despair. I’ve said this before but Laurie and I learned this in the most brutal way. When you stand at the grave of your own beloved child at their funeral, you realize this is by far the most pressing issue of life. If there is eternal life in Christ, that devastating separation from your child is only temporary. You will be with that child again. And nothing compares with the value of that.

Here’s a news flash. We are all going to die. Tom Brady seems to be defying age, playing quarterback in the NFL at the age of 43, something that seemed impossible previously. But he’s not going to defy death. Some day it will happen to him. Maybe he’ll play quarterback until he’s 50 and maybe he’ll be healthy until he’s 95, but he’s going to die. Jeff Bezos has more money than many nations, but someday he’s going to die, and all the money in the world can’t stop it. Taylor Swift is absurdly successful, talented, beautiful and rich, but some day she’s going to get old and then die.

Hoping for eternal life in Christ, knowing we have that, changes our whole view of life. It means that life is not tragic. It doesn’t end with sadness and bitterness and loss. It means something better is ahead for us. This means there’s more to us than just this life. In an article in *Forbes* magazine Peggy Noonan wrote, “We’ve lost somehow a sense of mystery about us, our purpose, our meaning, our role. Our ancestors believed in two worlds and understood this to be the solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short one. We’re the first generation of men that have actually expected to find happiness here on earth. And our search for it has caused such unhappiness…If you believe this is your only chance at happiness… then you are not disappointed when the world doesn’t give you a good measure of its riches, you are despairing.” Our hope in eternal life is what restores our sense of purpose and meaning, that saves us from the desperate pursuit of happiness that causes such unhappiness, and keeps us from descending into despair.

Our son, Toby, is in his final year of residency as an emergency medicine physician. You no doubt have heard the stories about how grueling residency is. They are all true. It has been brutal, and it came on the heels of 4 punishing years of medical school. The end is in sight, and what keeps him going is knowing that at the end of residency he will have a very good paying, much more reasonable job that will make for a better life. The years have not all been horrible. There have been many wonderful moments. But I can guarantee you that he does not want to continue a moment longer than necessary in residency. I can also tell you that it is what comes after residency that makes it all worthwhile. And that is how it is for us in this world. It is like we are in a residency, and it is often brutally difficult. There are wonderful moments. But what it makes it all worthwhile is what comes after.

There are other things the Bible tells us that God promises that we can hope for having to do with the point of our lives. In Jeremiah 29:11 the Lord says, “For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” God has plans for his people, and they are good plans. If God has a plan for us that means that there is sense to all this, and that God has something meaningful for us to do. Our lives have a point to them. They are not totally random events that mean nothing and go nowhere. They are accomplishing something, even though we may not see it or know what it is. They are moving along according to God’s plan.

Back in 2004 a television show called *Lost* burst on the scene. It was a huge hit that ran for 6 years. No doubt many of you watched it. The premise was a jet airliner crashed on an isolated island but many passengers survived and found themselves stranded on this seemingly deserted island. The show followed their experiences on what proved to be a mysterious island. It was an intriguing show with many plot twists and turns. At times it introduced elements that seemed to make no sense at all, some even seemed absurd. Laurie and I watched, intrigued, always a bit confused about what was going on and what it all meant. We continued watching even when the confusion got to frustration levels, because we had hope that eventually all would be revealed and we would understand what was happening and why. There would be an answer to what it was all about and where it was going.

In some ways our lives are like that show. Life is intriguing, full of twists and turns, often confusing. Sometimes it makes no sense, and can even feel absurd. We can’t see where it is going. What will keep us engaged is the hope that eventually all will be revealed. We will see what it all meant, where it was going, and it will all make sense to us. Unfortunately, *Lost* turned out to be a big disappointment. It felt to me like the writers of the show kind of painted themselves into a corner with no way out. So their solution was, everybody was dead. They’d been dead all along, and all of the stuff that happened in the show didn’t really mean anything. Is that how life is going to be? We all end up dead and the whole thing doesn’t mean anything? That is real hopelessness. But God promises us that is not what will happen. He promises that he will judge all things and make all things right. He says he has a plan that is at work, and all things will come to an end that will make sense to us. Our lives will have meant something.

Vaclav Havel, the former President of the Czech Republic, said, “Hope is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out.” We can have that hope, that certainty that regardless of how it all goes, life, this world, our lives, will make sense. They have meaning that is eternally significant.

We all hope that everything will go the way we desire, that we and those we love will be healthy and happy and live long. But that is not promised to us by God. In fact, Jesus said in John 16:33, “in this world you will have trouble.” That is the nature of this world. But God promises us he will be with us. That is at the core of the life of Jesus. He is Emmanuel, which means God with us. God came into our world to be with us, and he will not abandon us. He will be with us to comfort us, guide us, and strengthen us in the hard times.

Being reunited with God, having eternal life, knowing our lives have meaning and significance, having God with us to strengthen and comfort us, these are the things that make us able to live in peace and joy, to be fully alive. They are the things that we can hope for according to God.

WHAT CAN WE PUT OUR HOPE IN?

The things we can hope for are priceless. Eternal life, the Kingdom of God, meaning and significance in life, God’s presence with us in the tumult of this world. But that raises the question of what do we put our hope in that will bring those things about? All of us are hoping for an end to the corona virus pandemic in 2021. But what are we putting our hope in to bring about that hoped for end? Right now it is mostly a vaccine. What do we rely on to bring about those priceless hoped for things I just mentioned?

What you put your hope in is crucial in order to move from a wish to a hope that is concrete. Please excuse a football example. I wish to share a couple of contrasting incidents that hopefully illumine this issue. When Toby was in his final year of high school his football team was very good. They played a lot of schools several times the size of their school and defeated almost all of them. In the regular season they only lost one game. It was a close game, but they lost to a team with a dynamic passing attack they couldn’t stop. They won their league and waltzed through the CIF playoffs until they got to the semis, where they had to play once again the only team that had beaten them. Just a few days before the game I had a conversation with the defensive coordinator of Toby’s team. He was a good man, but I wasn’t thrilled with him as a coach. This incident reinforced my opinion. I asked him what adjustments they were going to make to stop their opponent’s passing attack which had caused them so much trouble the first time around. He basically said, “They have a great passing game, but we’re going to play our base defense. We just have to execute better.” I came away thinking Toby’s team was in trouble. His coach’s plan was basically hope. I hope we can just do better. That game ended Toby’s high school football career. It was a heartbreaker game. They lost by 2 points in the last minute, but it was in large part because they simply couldn’t shut down the other team’s passing game. And sadly, it was predictable. Their coach really didn’t have anything to put his hope in.

Contrast that with a conversation I had with a different coach 4 years later. We were visiting our friends, Mike and Dee Riley, up in Oregon. Mike was then the head coach at Oregon State. His team had started the season poorly. They had high hopes for them, but they only won 2 of their first 5 games. The weekend we were there they were going to play USC. SC was ranked number 3 in the nation, was undefeated and hadn’t lost to a conference opponent in 3 years. The game was predicted to be a slaughter. I felt bad for Mike, thinking he was going to have a really bad day. The night before the game after we had discussed the problems that SC presented and the challenges Oregon State faced, I asked Mike what he thought was going to happen the next day. He didn’t hesitate for a second. Confidently, with a grin on his face, he shot right back, “I think we’re going to beat them.” I was stunned, and said, “Given all the things we just talked about, why would you think that?” He briefly explained exactly how they planned to deal with SC and why he believed it would work. He had a plan. The next day his team went out and shocked everyone, pulling off the upset of the year by winning that game by two points. Toby’s high school coach didn’t really have anything to rely on, to hope in, Mike Riley did.

What do we put our hope in? People put their hopes in a lot of things to give them life. People fear being poor, so they put their hope in working hard, in success and making a lot of money. People fear ill health, so they put their hope in eating healthy, exercise, vitamins, doctors. People fear being worthless and insignificant, so they put their hope in achievements and accomplishments. People fear upheaval so they put their hope in politics. People fear being lonely, so they put their hope in relationships and marriage. Unfortunately, none of those things they put their hopes in can bring about those most important things that we all hope for. They can’t reconcile us to God, they can’t make life have meaning and make sense, they can’t give us the kingdom of God or eternal life, and they can’t give us God’s presence to carry us through the turmoil of life. We have to put our hope in something that can give us those things.

That’s what Paul meant in 1 Timothy 1:1 when he said Jesus Christ is our hope. We trust in Jesus Christ to bring us those things we can legitimately and reasonably hope for, but cannot get any other way. Romans 15:12 says, “Isaiah says, The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; in him the Gentiles will hope.” It’s not just Gentiles. All those who hope for the things that nothing on this earth can give us must put their hope in the Root of Jesse, the prophesied descendant of Jesse, the Son of David, the Messiah, Jesus Christ. This is the meaning of Christmas. At Christmas God’s plan to bring hope to any human willing to receive it burst into history in the form of that baby born in a stable. Those passages in 1 Timothy, Titus, Romans all tell us if we put our hope in him we will have those priceless, crucial, life giving things we hope for.

APPLICATION

FOCUS YOUR HOPES

It is fine to hope for the many things that we naturally tend to do in life. We will do that without having to consciously choose it, because that’s how God has made us. However, it is crucial that we differentiate the things that are the essential hopes for life from the things that may or may not be pleasant additions to life that we can live without if necessary.

I hoped that the books I’ve written would sell really well, and I hoped that Laurie and I would have a stellar marriage. Both of those are legitimate hopes. But one of them, my hope about the books, has had no impact on peace, love and joy in my life one way or the other. The other hope, our marriage, has been an overflowing fountain of love, joy and peace. One was critical, the other in the end doesn’t matter much.

We need to be very clear that we have some things God promises us, things that we can and should hope for, that are game changers. Or perhaps I should say life changers. There are many other things we can and will hope for that range from important to trivial, but what we need to put our focus on is the ones that we know we can have because God has promised them.

REMEMBER WHAT YOUR HOPE DEPENDS ON

As you are focused on those most important hopes, never, ever, lose sight of what it is that obtains them for you. Your hope is in Jesus Christ. He provides you with eternal life, the Kingdom of God, real significance and meaning for your life and God’s presence and work in you, all through his grace and for no other reason. That is why he came into this world. If there was another way for us to obtain those things he would have given this world a hard pass. The moment you start thinking something else provides those essential hopes for you, you begin to introduce stress, futility, frustration, fear and failure into your life. Your hopes will not be a source of life for you, instead, they will become a cause of weariness for your soul and ultimately death. So rely on Jesus Christ and him alone, and rejoice in hope.

PREACH TO YOURSELF

In Psalm 42 the Psalmist was going through a dark tunnel. He was dealing with some really hard times. In verse 3 he said, “My tears have been my food day and night.” In other words, he was struggling so much he couldn’t eat. All he could do was cry. In verse 9-10 he says to God, “Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy? My bones suffer mortal agony.” Yikes, mortal agony. So you’re saying you’re not happy. This poor dude was in a really dark place.

In verse 5 he said, “Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?” No doubt his soul could have answered, “Would you like the list of reason alphabetized or just in random order? And you’d better sit down because this is going to take a while.” We’ve all been there. We’ve all had those times when our soul was downcast, and unfortunately, we will be again at some point. But look at what he goes on to say. “Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.” He is having a conversation with his own soul. He is telling his soul what to do. Hey, Soul, you want some cheese with that whine? While you’re at it, how about you try putting your hope in God, which is what you haven’t been doing, and that’s the real reason you’re so downcast.

I’ve always been interested in airplanes and flying, so it’s pretty cool that my son-in-law is a professional pilot. But centuries ago before I had even met Laurie I took a ground school class, for reasons lost in the mist of ancient history. I learned some interesting things. One of them was that about every 15 minutes a pilot has to reset the heading indicator. That’s an important instrument, because it tells the pilot what direction he’s flying. That’s a pretty important piece of information if you actually want to get where you’re going. But due to several factors, including mechanical friction and the rotation of the earth, errors accumulate to make the instrument inaccurate. So, unless he’s flying an advanced aircraft such as Michael flies, the pilot has to reset the indicator periodically throughout the flight. Failure to do that is a way to get lost.

We are a lot like that. As we go through life errors start accumulating in our thinking. In this Psalm putting your hope in God means trusting God to give us what is best in life, and relying on him to provide what we need. This Psalm reminds us that on a pretty regular basis we need to have a conversation with ourselves in which we tell ourselves to put our hope in God. The reason for that is we have a constant tendency to drift off that target and put our hope in something else. When we are downcast it is almost never because we are concerned we might not get eternal life, or our lives won’t have meaning and significance in his eternal plan, or because God is not with us in the struggles of life. It is almost always because we have put our hope in something other than those things God has promised and we don’t feel we’re getting what we hoped for. The result will be a downcast soul. So have the hard conversation, the one where you tell your soul to quit wallowing in its misery and start putting its hope in God. We have to reset the heading indicator. Our world tells we need to listen to our heart. The great 20th century British pastor Martyn Lloyd Jones corrected that, saying, “Don’t listen to yourself. Preach to yourself.”

There was a point in Laurie’s and my relationship before we got engaged to be married where the outcome of that relationship was much in doubt. It was clear that, understandably, Laurie was not sold on me. In fact, for a brief time it seemed like she was thinking seriously about giving me my unconditional release (baseball speak for cutting me from the squad) so she could seek greener pastures. But, apparently she was not totally sure she wanted to be quite so drastic, she asked me, “Are you going to give up?” I asked, “Is there any hope for me?” I know, it sounds kind of whiny and pathetic, but it really wasn’t. I just needed to know if I was looking at a door that was slammed totally shut and locked. She said, “Yes, there’s still hope.” I took that to mean she wasn’t ready to have me totally disappear from her life just yet. I said, “As long as there is hope, I’m not going away.” Because there was hope I didn’t give up, and the result has been the greatest blessing of my entire life. Hope makes all the difference for us. Because Jesus Christ has come into this world, we can do what Paul tells us in Romans 12:12 and rejoice in hope. And that is a source of boundless strength.