

Easter Hope Bearing Fruit

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[0 : 00] Please keep open your Bibles at that page, page 956. As Matt said, this is beginning a sermon series that I'll be preaching through Colossians over the next seven weeks. And keep open the Bible reading and let me pray as we begin.

Lord God, we thank you for the word of truth, the gospel of grace that we have heard, that for those of us who are believers, we have embraced with faith.

We thank you for the faith, hope and love that spring in us from your gospel. And we pray today, this Easter day, the day of resurrection, that this word of truth will indeed bear fruit and grow in us and through us for the glory of Jesus Christ.

Amen. Easter, of course, is a season of hope. Hope. That's probably the dominant theme that the media has picked up on.

Dominant because many of the Christian leaders have been speaking about hope. The archbishops, Catholic and Anglican and other church leaders, probably this year, maybe more than most.

[1 : 16] Hope is the key theme that they have spoken about. Of course, that comes in a context of a global financial crisis, of bushfires and other world disasters.

And so people speak that Easter is the season of hope and like a green shoot on a tree in King Lake or Marysville or something like that, there is the hope beyond some crisis or beyond some disaster.

And so people say that hope springs eternal.

Although those of us who are pessimists are never quite sure about that, I think. What have we to look forward to in our life? Are we people of hope or rather despair?

People say and traditionally people have said without hope we die. So let's think tonight about hope. And what does Colossians teach us and in the light of Easter, the resurrection of Jesus, about hope?

[2 : 38] Hope is often little more than wishful thinking. Some people are hopeful as sort of dreamy optimism. You know that fairly banal song at the end of the life of Brian, always look on the bright side of life as they're facing death.

That's as deep as hope gets for many people. Hoping that your team will win, which it never does in my experience. Hoping that tomorrow will be a better day than today.

Often it's not. Hoping that we'll get better. But often we don't. Etc. A green shoot after a bushfire is not really that strong a sign of hope.

Yes, of course, trees regenerate. But the dead don't come back to life. The houses are not instantly rebuilt. We can't rewind the disaster. People's lives are scarred forever.

Despite a green shoot on an otherwise dead-looking tree. And that's where Christian hope comes in. Because it's not just wishful thinking. It's not just a dreamy optimism.

[3 : 47] It's not being blind to difficulty and pretending that things are good or getting better. Christian hope is sure and certain and definite.

And that's not how we use the word hope in general speech, it seems to me, these days. We talk about hope as though, yeah, I'm sort of hoping that it'll happen.

But it may not. It probably won't. In fact, it's very unlikely to happen. But Christian hope says this will happen because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The hope of resurrection life, the hope of heaven, the hope of being sinlessly perfect in the presence of God for eternity, is not just a dream.

It's not just a wishful thought. It is definite and certain because Jesus rose from the dead and is alive. And the certainty of that Easter Day event in the past means that the certainty of our future is

just as certain.

[4 : 53] It's absolutely rock solid, guaranteed and sure if we place our faith in Jesus. It's not just, well, I'm hoping I'm going to get to heaven. It's not just, well, I'm hoping somehow my life will get transformed.

But we can be certain about it. Sure about it. More certain than the weather will be nice tomorrow. More certain than they'll play football tomorrow.

Regardless of who wins. We can be absolutely certain about our ultimate destiny because Jesus rose from the dead and is alive.

That's what Christian hope is. The symbol for hope is traditionally an anchor that comes out of Hebrews chapter 6. An anchor is a pretty solid thing. You see, our hope is anchored in heaven by Jesus, our forerunner, who's gone there ahead of us.

And Paul, when he writes Colossians, has quite a deal, in fact, throughout this letter to say about Christian hope. But not just at the theoretical level.

[6 : 03] Not just at the theological level up in our head. But actually a hope that is certain that actually changes our lives now here in the present.

It's a powerful idea. This Christian hope is certain because nothing can thwart it. Nothing can stifle it. Nothing can destroy it or derail it or take it away from us.

Absolutely certain hope. This is how Paul describes it in this letter to the Colossians. He speaks later in chapter 1, a passage we'll look at next week, I think.

Christ in us, the hope of glory. That is, the presence of Christ in a believer is, if you like, the down payment or deposit guaranteeing future glory.

Christ in us, the hope of glory. Later on in the letter in chapter 3, he'll say, we are raised with Christ. That is, our future hope of being part of the resurrection life has already broken into the present, he'll say in chapter 3.

[7 : 14] We are raised with Christ. That's how certain our future hope is, that we can say here and now, we are raised with Christ. When we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus of 2,000 years ago, if we trust it, there's a sense in which we are now, here and now, raised with Christ already.

Therefore, Paul says in chapter 3, set your minds on things above, where in one sense we already are. That's how certain Christian hope is. And so in today's passage, in chapter 5, the beginning of chapter 5, verse 5 rather, Paul says, the hope laid up for you in heaven.

That is something that is real. It is there for us already. That hope is Jesus, primarily.

Jesus is our hope, because he's raised from the dead. Jesus is now in heaven, alive. He is our hope, laid up in heaven for us.

And all that flows from that, ultimate eternity with God, a sinless perfection in the presence of God, etc. Because Jesus is there now.

[8 : 32] He is our hope. A sure and certain hope. That is a destiny that is definite. Not just wishful thinking.

What I'm trying to underscore here is that we must think of Christian hope, not in the sort of vague ways we use hope in our everyday language, but recognise that Christian hope is certain, guaranteed, assured.

We ought to have confidence in it, because that's where Jesus is. He is our hope, laid up for us in heaven. We are raised in Christ, and Christ is in us the hope of glory.

Paul uses both ways. I mean, it's a bit hard to try and put it all together. How are we in Christ and Christ in us? But we're so bound up with Christ through faith, that we've been raised in him and he is in us.

That is the hope of glory. And so at the heart of this passage tonight, is that expression at the beginning of verse 5. Your hope is laid up for you in heaven.

[9 : 43] It's there. It's real. It exists. It's certain. Because Jesus is risen from the dead.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Sometimes people accuse Christians of being too heavenly minded to be of any earthly use. I think that's a false accusation, to be honest.

And I think we'll see that over the course of these weeks ahead, as we look at this letter. Paul says, set your mind on the things above. Think about heavenly things. Be heavenly minded.

But he's not doing it so that we somehow escape from this world. He's not doing it so that we're somehow cut off from the world or we end up in a little Christian ghetto away from the world.

But rather that as we set our minds on the things above, as we focus and fix our eyes on Jesus, the hope of glory laid up in heaven for us, as we'll see in tonight's passage, that hope, that sure and certain hope, will actually transform us and change us here and now.

[10:51] It will make us be actually of earthly good because we are so heavenly minded. And we'll see that tonight. But we need to remember again, it is because this hope is certain that it will change us now.

You see, if hope is merely wishful thinking, you know, I hope somehow that Richmond will be in the grand final before I die.

This year, maybe. But let me tell you how strong my hope is of that. I'll be on holidays on the last Saturday of September. I won't be in the country.

But you see, if my hope was absolutely certain that Richmond will be in the flag, I may well have short my holidays just a couple of days to be here, to be there.

You see, it would influence me now. But because my hope is just sort of a vain hope, a wishful thought, then it doesn't actually change me now. But you see, when hope is certain, when it's definite and real and guaranteed because Jesus is really risen from the dead, then it will actually impinge on how we live now.

[12:11] And we'll see that tonight in this passage. That's what Paul is writing about in these verses. He's writing to a church in a place called Colossae. And he begins, as he so often begins his letters, with a prayer of thanksgiving for them.

In our prayers for you, he says, in verse 3, actually to a church that he doesn't know, he's never met, at least most of them. He's never been there, as far as we know. We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Why? Because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.

Faith, hope and love. There they are. He's heard about them from this church. And that's why he gives thanks. Because it's evident in their lives, they have faith, hope and love.

But note the connections. He's heard about their faith. That is, their faith is public. Not just as a public profession of faith, but it's known that these people are living in faith in Christ.

[13:23] Paul's heard about it. He's giving them thanks. And he's heard about their love. No doubt expressed in some new and practical ways now that they've become Christians.

We don't know how it's expressed, but presumably there is care for the weaker, the poorer, etc. A mutual love amongst their fellowship and maybe for non-believers in their community as well.

Paul's heard about it. It's obvious. It's evident in their lives. But here's the connection that's important. He's heard about their faith and their love. And at least their love is because of their hope.

That's the crucial word at the beginning of verse 5. Now I know in one sense I'm getting right down to individual words, but it's so important to grasp this. Their love and probably their faith are because of their hope that is laid up for them in heaven.

Now how do we understand this? What's the importance of this connection? Their faith, if it's connected to hope as I think, derives from resurrection hope.

[14:34] That Jesus is there in heaven, the hope of glory, etc. That is, the resurrection of Jesus has brought them hope that is influencing their faith.

But also love. How does love flow from hope? Hope is something that sort of is a bit vague to pin down, but why does Christian hope create love?

And that's what I want us to grasp tonight. That's what I said before about our hope being so certain that it impinges on the way we live now. It changes us now. You see, when we know for certain, when we grasp the certainty of Christian hope that heaven is our destiny, that we're saved by grace because of Jesus dying and rising, we will be there though we don't deserve it.

It liberates us to love now. It impinges on our life now. That is because that is my destiny, heaven is my destiny, I can travel lightly on this earth.

I see how fleeting and temporary it is. It liberates me to love others because I know that that hope for me is a gracious hope, not something I need to earn or deserve.

[15:53] I'm not in competition with anyone to get there and therefore I'm free to love. I'm liberated from serving myself because I know that the gospel that guarantees me future hope means that I'm saved by grace and out of that flows love for others because of the love that's come to me in the

gospel of hope.

I may not have expressed myself as clearly as I'd hoped but what I'm trying to help you see is that because Jesus' resurrection is certain and guarantees our future destiny, which we don't deserve, is an act of God's grace and love to us in Christ, then it actually changes me here and now. It makes me love. It works in me. If Christ is in me the hope of glory, then the evidence of that will be love here and now.

Love of other people. Love of brothers and sisters in Christ. Love of non-believers in the world as well. I'm not in competition with people. I'm not trying to get on top of people because the destiny of heaven, which is so certain and is eternal and perfect, is worth everything.

That is, this world pales into insignificance by comparison. I'm not trying to create heaven on earth because it's guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus.

[17 : 25] I'm not trying to have my sit on the fence or eggs in both baskets, if I can use a sort of expression like that on Easter Day. That is, because that's certain. This world is not unimportant but I'm not trying to score points in this world.

I'm not trying to gain enough a hand in this world because it's fleeting and short. That is, my mind is fixed on the glorious, definite, certain future that the resurrection of Jesus guarantees for me. And therefore now I'm freed and liberated and transformed by this glorious gospel of certain hope to love now. It changes us.

If hope is real for you, then you'll be a loving person. You see, sometimes because we confuse Christian hope and think that it's, well, yes, I sort of hope that I'm going to be there but just in case I'm not, I'm going to have a foot in this camp, a foot in this world.

I'm going to try and strive in this world. Then we're actually enslaved still and we don't love as we ought. The love of the Colossians stems from their hope.

[18 : 41] That's what Paul is saying in verses 4 and 5. I've heard of your love which comes because of the hope that's laid up for you in heaven. That's the crucial thing to understand.

And I'm trying to help you grasp if it's not already the case that Christian hope is certain because Jesus rose from the dead. It's an event that we can celebrate.

We can look back in history and rejoice that death and sin have been conquered in the resurrection of Jesus. But actually it guarantees the future and therefore changes the present.

And that's what Easter hope is meant to be like. Bearing fruit. What's caused this hope for the Colossians? This is the next connection in this prayer of thanksgiving.

Paul has heard about their faith and love. Their faith and love come because of the hope that is laid up for you in heaven. How have they come to grasp that hope? Verse 5 continues.

[19 : 47] You've heard of this hope before in the word of the truth. That is the gospel. Paul's underscoring the certainty, the truthfulness, the reliability or the authenticity of the gospel that they've heard.

You've heard it. It's in the word of truth. It's in the gospel. And it's come to you. It's been preached to you. You've embraced it with faith and believed it. And indeed not just you.

One of the things about the Colossians is that they're being tempted to follow some false teaching. So Paul wants them to know the second half of verse 6 that the same hope or the same gospel they've heard that's produced their hope is doing the same all over the world.

Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God.

Notice how Paul then describes the gospel. He's described it as the word of truth and now at the end of verse 6 he's described it as the grace of God because that's what in essence the gospel is about.

[20 : 50] It's because of the gospel of grace and a guaranteed future that we are liberated to love and bear fruit now. And Paul is saying this gospel is changing you.

That is your love is evident. Implicit behind this and that'll come out a bit later on in chapter 2 is don't go after some other gospel therefore.

That is the validity, the power, the authenticity of this gospel of grace, this word of truth has borne fruit in you already. It's evident in your love and it's doing the same around the world.

Why go after another gospel? Is implicit and will become explicit later in this letter. Notice how he describes bearing fruit and growing in verse 6 an expression that will come later in this chapter as well.

Again it's evidence for the validity of the gospel that they have heard and embraced. It's not only bearing fruit and growing amongst them but all the way around the world.

[21 : 53] Extensively in effect Paul is saying. How did the Colossians hear the gospel? Here's the next and final step of the connection in a way. Not through Paul. He's not been there as far as we know.

But you heard or learned this in verse 7 from Epaphras. Our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf and he's made known to us your love in the spirit.

Paul is wanting them to recognise that Epaphras' ministry is reliable and faithful as his message was so the messenger. So again he's trying to undermine the temptation to go after some other teaching.

So notice the connection. Epaphras preached. They learned and embraced the gospel that bore hope and the hope is bearing love and fruit in their lives now.

And that's the connection that flows through this thanksgiving prayer. We could if we knew enough take it another step that Epaphras somehow learned all this and that may have come from Paul.

[23 : 00] But we're not told that explicitly I think here. Colossae was a town that's about 120 miles east of Ephesus.

It's inland in Turkey. These days it's nothing actually. It's really a mound a hill a paddock. I remember the first time I went there I'd hired a car for the day and not an easy thing to do in Turkey let me tell you in the middle of winter and couldn't find it.

And we picked up a hitchhiker who couldn't speak English and in this sort of comic farce in a way he eventually worked out what we were trying to do and find and directed us there and there's nothing there to see.

It's a hill and there's little bits of columns a couple of times in the ground and that's it. Colossae is no more sadly. But it was actually a very cosmopolitan city in Paul's day one as I say he probably didn't go to it's not all that far from Laodicea about 12 miles up the valley the Lycus Valley.

Paul is giving thanks for a people he has never met probably most of them people he doesn't know and yet he can express a deep prayer of thanks for such people.

[24 : 12] It's a challenge I think to the way we pray for Christians and churches even if we don't know them. He's expressing in this prayer of thanks that faith and love will be known will be evident they should be evident in the life of a church and he's giving thanks to God that in the Colossians case that is is faith and hope and faith and love rather evident in our midst is a question to ask.

Later on Paul will say in chapter 3 that Christians ought to be people who yes express love but other parts of the fruit that goes with love will be things like kindness and meekness and patience and forgiveness the clothing that we wear as Christians because we're wearing the clothes of above he'll say in chapter 3 we'll get to that in a few weeks time that is Christian faith and our behaviour ought to be evident and public one of the sad things I think about Victorian era of England and Church of England and Christianity in general is that people confused personal and private and so faith became privatised and not public but yes it's personal but not private it's personal and public it ought to be that our faith is evident and known and seen as is indeed our love and other fruit as well well Paul's thanksgiving flows then into prayer as is so typical of Paul and perhaps so atypical of us so often our prayers are merely petitions asking for things but yet in the scriptures and the psalms as well as Paul thanksgiving abounds and there's actually connections here it's out of the thanksgiving that Paul then prays see in verse 9 for this reason that is because I know of your faith and your love because it's evident because it comes from Christian hope because you've embraced the gospel you know what grace is because of all of that

I keep praying for you is what he's saying in verse 9 onwards for this reason that is because of the things I've given thanks for because you've heard and embraced the ministry of Epaphras since the day we heard it we have not ceased praying for you regularly praying again that's I'm sure a challenge for us when we pray so little and so infrequently to pray and keep on praying and to keep on giving thanks Paul says we've not ceased praying for you and asking and this is the key thing that he prays for in verse 9 that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding basically that's his one prayer for the Colossians he'll elaborate on that in the verses to come as we'll see what he's doing there is praying that they may continue in what has already been happening that is they already know

God's will that's being evident in their lives of love but he's praying that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in effect so that it's about keeping on it's about persevering it's about

growing and keeping on in the sort of trajectory or the path that you've begun you know God's will already there is knowledge and wisdom and understanding already I want you to be filled with that so that it will keep on growing and growing and growing and growing and bearing more and more and more fruit so I'm giving thanks for what's already evident and I'm praying that that will just keep on growing and blossoming in the future that's the connection between the thanksgiving and the petition of verse 9 he's praying that they will know God's will it's not the knowledge of God primarily it's the knowledge of God's will that's something that I find Christians are always trying to find what is God's will for me what is God's will for my job for marriage for ministry how should I serve is God's will that I do this or that in my life or moving house or whatever people often in a sense collapse the idea of God's will into those small but rather important decisions in our life I don't think that's what Paul has in mind here he's not praying that they be filled with the knowledge of God's will so that they know about houses and jobs and marriages and so on that's that's secondary or tertiary in his thinking the big picture of God's will is about how we relate to God in our life and he's going to elaborate that in the verses that follow what is Paul then why does Paul pray this verse 10 I pray that you'll be filled with the knowledge of God's will so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord fully pleasing to him notice there too in effect it's what we've already seen in the thanksgiving it's not about being knowledgeable it's about leading a worthy life there is a connection between theology or the gospel or right thinking and behaving that is our right thinking about the resurrection and the certainty of future hope will mean that we lead loving lives now that's what the Colossians were doing here the same idea that is being filled with the knowledge of God's will will mean that we please God in our life that is it influences our behavior our character our words and speech and actions and motivations that's how it should be in this all through the scriptures it is that is it's not just sort of the accumulation of knowledge so that we can win some Bible quiz but actually it's the knowledge of God's will that flows out in the way we live fruitful fruitful loving pleasing lives worthy lives for

[30 : 42] God that's what Paul is praying notice how he prays in verse nine at the end the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding this is not some philosophical idea in the next chapter Paul will say in chapter two verse two and three I want their hearts to be encouraged and united in love so that they may have all the riches of assured understanding and have the knowledge of God's mystery that is Christ himself in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge now we'll come to that passage later in a couple of weeks or so when Paul says here I want you to be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding Christ is at the center of that Christ is God's wisdom and understanding that's what Paul is saying in effect in chapter two verses two and three that is it's Christ centered this understanding but as I've said it's also about living and not just head knowledge this is the language also of the Old Testament when Paul says lead a life worthy in verse 10 literally it's to walk a life and so often the Old Testament is speaking about walking in God's ways and the connection with wisdom and understanding and walking in God's ways is made most explicit in the book of Proverbs time and again the book of Proverbs like Psalms and other parts of the Old Testament is talking about knowing God's will so that you do it so that you walk in God's ways and that will be an expression of wisdom and understanding so Paul is very practical here in what he's praying it's theologically informed but it's not about philosophical ideas it's about leading a worthy life walking a worthy life and it's not static that's the other thing to note these are Colossians for whom Paul is giving thanks he's commending their lives of love and faith but implicit in his prayer is keep going and keep growing Paul could easily say none of us will ever make it before the Lord's return so for all of us no matter how mature or in or young we are in the faith keep going and keep growing would be what he would say yes I give thanks for what I've seen and the life that's changed but keep going and keep growing that's what he's praying here for the Colossians now what is the worthy life look like what is a life pleasing the Lord look like there are four things that flow they're all actually what's called participles in the verses that follow two of them come together in the next verse or the end of verse 10 rather firstly that you may bear fruit in every good work as you grow in the knowledge of God bearing fruit growing but notice it's bearing fruit in every good work that is it's activity about it and growing in the knowledge the two are going together because the knowledge of God will flow into good works and it's the same connection that was back in verse 6 back in verse 6 it was just as the gospel in effect is all around the world growing and bearing fruit here the prayer is not so much the extensive nature of growing and bearing fruit in all the world but

what we might say the intensive nature that they deepen and become mature in Colossae that their lives are growing and that they're bearing more and more fruit in their lives there's a cycle in this I think the way the connection is made as you grow in your knowledge you ought to grow in your obedience and as you grow in your obedience then you grow in your knowledge and as you grow in your knowledge you grow in your obedience that is it's a cycle our knowledge of God's will influences greater obedience and as we obey we know God better and it's a cycle going up and up and up that's the Christian life that Paul is describing a cycle to maturity they're the first two what a worthy life looks like the third thing is in verse 11 in our English translation it's lost the connection of participle but it's being strengthened with power Paul here is or the way it's been expressed here is sort of added it on as another prayer but the worthy life the life that pleases God is strengthened with power in verse 11 the first half and it comes from God's glorious power which is derived from the resurrection of Jesus as well also we should notice here the fullness of these descriptions Paul is now speaking about the ideal worthy life in verse 10 he said in every good work or actually the Greek word is all or every and in verse 11 may you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power notice how God actually gives the power to accomplish what he commands as indeed through the scriptures so often he does and this strengthening with power is continuous tense that is you keep on being strengthened and strengthened and strengthened with God's power it's not something that we do once and then we're then we're powerful enough but you will keep on being strengthened with power that's the third thing and the application of that power the end of verse 11 by the way is endurance it's not ease or comfort not success but endurance with patience that you'll persevere and endure even under pressure you'll keep going strengthened by God bearing fruit and growing to the Lord's return to arrival in heaven to when the glorious hope is realized the fourth thing that is a characteristic of this worthy life comes at the end of verse 11 and the beginning of verse 12 joyfully giving thanks to the father literally giving thanks in joy all of these four things have got an added preposition so it's knowledge sorry it's growing in knowledge bearing fruit in all good works strengthened with power joyfully giving thanks sorry giving thanks with joy they're all qualified in some way giving thanks with joy because the word of truth the gospel the hope is to fill us with joy actually through this letter giving thanks is a very strong thing it'll come later on in chapter 2 verse 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith just as you were taught abounding in thanksgiving that's a picture of maturity as a Christian in chapter 3 verses 16 and 17 the word of Christ is to dwell in you richly teach and admonish one another in all wisdom and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms hymns and spiritual songs and in the next verse 17 whatever you do in word or deed do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God the father through him and chapter 4 verse 2 devote yourselves to prayer keeping alert in it with thanksgiving Paul stresses that in this letter we'll come to it no doubt in the weeks to come Christian life the worthy life the life that pleases God will be bearing fruit it'll be growing in knowledge it'll be strengthened by God's power and clearly from the first part of the letter that will the fruit is talking about love and good works and godly character but essential and emphasised in this letter is joyfully giving thanks that is the daily stresses and circumstances struggles and worries and concerns pale into insignificance because our hope is certain if our hope is not certain the present becomes more valuable because the hope is certain thanksgiving should always typify our life I used to be an actuary an actuary is a person who what do they do it's hard to tell they they make up numbers to do with when we die basically and it's to do with superannuation and insurance and risk and so on so it's an actuary who has worked out the calculations that means that you pay x amount of dollars and when you retire at the age of 65 you get all this money back a hundred what it means is a hundred dollars now may be worth more or less in 40 years time when you retire depending on the circumstances in between mortality rates for example the the point I want to say by way of contrast is if our future hope is uncertain money now or things now are worth a lot more but if our future hope is certain and guaranteed and glorious as it is then that's worth much more than now if that is the case as it is then that is so good Christ in us the hope of glory absolutely certain that we should always give thanks because the troubles now strife now our anxieties our fears our failures our difficulties our broken relationships our sins and so on in a sense that they have a sort of smaller value because the real value is a certain hope but if that hope was uncertain it may be a full glory but it's so uncertain it actually makes now here and now worth a lot more if you can understand the sort of analogy I make I know it's sort of actuarial speak in a sense but hopefully you sort of get the picture

what I'm saying is because because future hope because of the resurrection of Jesus is so certain we can be bound in thanksgiving with joy with joy joy doesn't mean a sort of pleasant happy attitude joy is something deep within us that we should and are commanded to do at all times joy in the face of grief or loss or failure joy in the face of broken relationships in the face of tragedy joy in the face of despair joy in the face of despair joy in the face of suffering and illness and persecution joy at all times giving thanks at all times because our future hope is certain if it's not certain this wouldn't make sense but it is so it does and Paul just to remind them why this joy with thanksgiving should be something that typifies a life that pleases God he says at the end of verse 12 to the rest of the paragraph because God has done these things he's enabled or qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light wow God has qualified me to do it I haven't qualified myself I haven't achieved it God's done it for me secondly God has rescued us from the power of darkness thirdly God has transferred us into the kingdom of his son what astonishing things God has done past tense done completed because Jesus is risen from the dead no doubt about them they are done for the believer and therefore in the present tense in verse 14 we have two things redemption that is liberation from slavery to sin and self and secondly we have the forgiveness of sins if we don't grasp those five things three that God's done and two consequences that we have well we're not going to give thanks with joy are we but because we have those things we will we can despite anything else what a wonderful catalogue that is of gospel grace we are inheritors we're rescued we're citizens of God's son's kingdom we're redeemed we're forgiven and how certain therefore is our hope of glory so no wonder we are always to give thanks with joy that is God's will for us to bear fruit to grow in the knowledge of God to be strengthened to endure and to give thanks at all times sometimes people come to me trying to puzzle God's will for a particular situation getting married having a job or whatever it's worth thinking if you're in that category are you pursuing this description of God's will are you joyfully giving thanks growing in knowledge bearing fruit strengthened to endure because my guess is if you're hung up about God's will for this or that particularity

[45 : 01] this description is not matching you this is primary this is God's will for us for all of us without exception the Easter gospel Jesus death and resurrection guarantees us a certain hope rock solid guaranteed by God nothing can deprive us of it nothing can take it away nothing will diminish its value nothing can separate us from this Easter guaranteed hope of the resurrection to eternal life of the glory that is promised to us certain therefore now here and now we're to be people of faith and love people who are growing in the knowledge of God's will people who are bearing fruit people who are enduring with patience and people who are giving thanks with joy in all circumstances that's God's will for us and he strengthens us to accomplish that because of the power of the gospel of the resurrection of Jesus Christ it's a powerful word this word of truth this gospel of grace as Paul calls it in this passage it's a powerful hope but because it's a sure hope and because it's a certain hope the fruit of love should be seen in each and every one of us if we are believers and this is God's will may God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven we pray so we fix our minds on heaven as Paul commands us in chapter 3 so that we fulfill his will on earth heavenly minded to be of earthly good and we are to model and follow the example of Paul giving thanks and praying unceasingly for others as indeed we can for ourselves so let's pray oh God we thank you for this glorious gospel of grace the word of truth about the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ we thank you that he is alive that he has ascended to your right hand that he lives still that he's coming again in glory we thank you that he in heaven is the glorious hope laid up for us guaranteeing and making certain our eternal destiny which we don't deserve so Lord God as we embrace this hope we pray that we may be people of faith and love bearing fruit growing in the knowledge of your will enduring with patience and being typified as a people giving thanks with joy in all circumstances that pleases you

Lord God we pray that we may please you Amen Thank you questions