

Hope for the Disappointed

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[0 : 0 0] Good evening, can I have my welcome to Steph's and Jeff's. It's nice to see you here tonight. For those who don't know me, my name's Andrew, one of the ministers here at Holy Trinity. And as we've been doing over the last couple of weeks, this is a bit more of a topical talk.

And so we won't be working our way through a particular passage, but it'll be a few verses that I'll put on the screen for you as we think about this topic of hope for the disappointed.

Because as Steph has mentioned already, we face disappointments in life, don't we? Like this guy who bought a DVD on dealing with disappointment, but when he opened the box, the box was empty.

I think it's a really tough way to try and teach someone to deal with disappointment, just have an empty box. But more seriously, we face disappointment with work, whether that's schoolwork or uni work, paid work or even housework.

And that disappointment with work often comes because of its futility. You know, you put all this effort in and you don't quite get the results you want or don't get the appreciation you're after.

[0 : 5 9] Or if you were going for a job and now it's going to be replaced by AI or whatever it is. Or you clean your room, but it gets dirty again. Or we face disappointments with our plans where things never seem to go smoothly.

I don't know if that's you, but that's certainly me. You know, you plan to do some online gaming with your friends, but then the internet goes down. You decide to go out brunch with all the girlfriends, but the cute outfit that you wanted to wear is in the wash.

You hope to sleep in on the Saturday morning and then someone gets up early to mow the lawns next door. I mean, plans never seem to go smoothly, do they? Or relationships.

You know, whether it's people who've let you down or not having a partner that you wanted or losing someone you love. Or there's disappointment with wealth or lack of it or health, which sometimes fails and for many people at our church, never quite gets back to normal.

We're also disappointed with our worth and purpose. You know, if you fail to get the results you wanted at uni or school or fail to get the job you're after, you can feel like a failure.

[2 : 0 6] Like you don't have much worth and much purpose, for that matter, if you can't find a job at all. And all of that is a bit depressing, isn't it?

Aren't you glad you came tonight? But the point is, we all face disappointments in life. And the Bible says the big reason for that is because we live in a beautiful but broken world, don't we?

You only have to turn on the news to see it. Yes, there's lots of things beautiful like laughter and food and friends and family. But there are broken parts of it as well.

Like sickness and sadness and other people's selfishness, which impacts you. Or just life's repetitiveness, you know. Could I go to school again this week?

Actually, not tomorrow. We all face disappointments in this world because we live in a beautiful but broken world. And so is there any hope in the face of this disappointment?

[3 : 05] Any solutions to deal with them? Which is point two in your outlines. Well, I want to kind of identify two sort of solutions that people try. And they're only sort of solutions because they only sort of work.

And the first solution or sort of solution people try is to do what the guy did in our first reading, actually. And that is to chase after the things of this world to find satisfaction and contentment.

And so in Ecclesiastes chapter 2, in verse 1, he said to himself, Come, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good. You know, what is satisfying? What is rewarding?

Where I can find fulfillment and contentment. But immediately, verse 1, he says, but that also proved to be meaningless. And by pleasure, he means parties. So verse 2, there's laughter.

Verse 3, there's cheering with wine and so on. And then he kind of tried to do projects to find fulfillment and contentment. So verse 4, he undertook great projects, built houses, planted vineyards, gardens, parks, all kinds of fruit trees, made reservoirs of water to water them.

[4 : 17] And then he tried possessions, which is often what our world does, isn't it? Amassed silver and gold for himself. Acquired male and female singers, you know, perhaps sing to him as his alarm clock in the morning.

I don't know. A harem as well. And became greater, verse 9, than anyone in Jerusalem before him. In fact, in verse 10, he says, I denied myself nothing my eyes desired.

I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my labor. And this was the reward for all my toil. And so he says, the second half there, it worked for a moment.

He did take delight in his work. There was a reward of fulfillment in his toil. The problem was, this reward of contentment and fulfillment just didn't last.

Because he goes on to say in the very next verse, verse 11, Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done, and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was...

[5 : 25] What's it say? Thank you for one person. All of you, everything was... Yeah, a chasing after the wind. Futile, in other words.

Have you ever tried to chase after the wind? You can't do it, can you? It's futile. It's pointless. And so also, he's trying to find lasting fulfillment in the things of this world.

It's futile. It's pointless, meaningless. Why? Well, two reasons. First, because the things of this world themselves don't last, do they? Our money goes.

People often say of money, easy come, easy go. But in my experience, it's only easy go, right? You've got to work hard at your part-time job or during the week to get it, and then the bills come in, or you've got to pay your parents back this, or whatever.

It's easy go. Or our possessions break. You know, you drop your new phone on the cement, or whatever. Or you park your car at Tunsil Square Coles, and then come back to see that someone's taken a trolley down the side of your car and scraped it.

[6 : 34] Just to mention a random example that I'm not still bitter about. And our work needs to be done again and again and again, doesn't it?

I mean, imagine you only ever had to clean your room once. That was it. It stayed clean. No more pestering from your parents.

How brilliant would that be? But it's not like that, is it? Our possessions, our work, our wealth, and of course, our health just don't last.

And so the first reason this is only a sort of solution is because the things of this world don't last. But the second reason is because even the contentment they bring does not last.

I mean, have you ever got something new which brought you great satisfaction, and then over time it started to lose its shine, and the satisfaction you now get from it has waned?

[7 : 34] Have you ever had that experience? Usually it's when you see a new model or something come out, a new game or a new piece of clothing, and the old ones just don't have the same satisfaction anymore.

The contentment doesn't last. I remember hearing a guy share his testimony at this service some years ago. I can't remember who, I'm sorry. But I remember his journey started with noticing his auntie in Singapore who owned property and luxury cars.

She was rich. But this is what he said. He said, She has everything she wants, but is one of the most unhappy people I know. You see, even the contentment from these things does not last.

Or speaking of Singapore, I remember this guy, Philip, along with his brother Robert. Together they own a massive company far east, I can't remember the name of it, worth \$15 billion.

Okay, just a little bit of money. \$15 billion. I think it's, they're the actual family that Crazy Rich Asians movie was based on. And yet, before he was a Christian, Philip said he was still \$15 billion, but yet I was always in search of a better life, a better purpose, a better me, a better everything, until he found Jesus.

[8 : 56] The point is, chasing the things of this world is only a sort of solution in the face of disappointment. Yeah, it may bring us some satisfaction, some contentment for a while, but it just doesn't last.

That's why people have to keep chasing these things, keep looking for something better, or something more. I mean, have you ever heard anyone say, I have enough money, I don't want any more.

Anyone? No. And so another solution, people try in the face of disappointment, rather than chasing after those things like the guy in Ecclesiastes, another sort of solution is just to accept it.

They use a phrase made popular during the lockdowns of COVID. This is when I first started to hear it, and we started to say it to everyone. You know this phrase? It is what it is.

Yeah. It is what it is. It started during lockdowns. You know, you get turned on the TV, hear Mr. Dan Andrews, and if he was in the suit, you knew it was bad news, and we all went, it is what it is.

[10 : 06] And yet this too is only a sort of solution. Yes, there are some things in life we just have to accept. If we try and rail against it and not accept it, it just ends up making us bitter and miserable.

So, you know, some things we can't change, we've just got to accept. So there's truth in that. But that phrase on its own offers no hope. It will ever get better.

It kind of just says, it is what it is, tough luck, lump it. It's just more of a depressing resignation than an uplifting contentment, right?

But these are the common sort of solutions people choose in the face of disappointment. You know, they chase after more stuff to try and make them feel better, fulfilled content, or they just say it is what it is with a kind of depressing resignation.

But I think Jesus offers us something better. He offers us life that comes with an uplifting contentment that does last and a certain hope that it will get better.

[11 : 19] Point three. In our second reading, Jesus uses picture language where he is like a shepherd and his people are like sheep. And he says in verse 10 that the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

I have come that they may have life and have it to the full. But to give us this life, in verse 10, he had to, in verse 11, lay down his life for us.

You see, we may have been disappointed by others, but at times we have all been a disappointment to others and to God.

At times we have not treated God as God. Even though he enables us to live and gave us this world, we at times ignore him and mess up this world.

The Bible calls this sin. But Jesus lovingly laid down his life for us at the cross to pay for our sin, to pay for all the times we've disappointed him so that we can have this life to the full.

[12 : 31] That's why he's called in verse 11 the good shepherd, that he would be willing to do that for us. I don't know if you heard about that guy in Liverpool in the UK where he took his car and rammed that parade a few weeks ago.

Did you remember hearing about this on the news? Or whatever you do for reporting and stuff. So he took his car, rammed it into a parade and the latest, I think it was 79 people were injured.

Thankfully no one was killed. He's in custody now. He's already appeared before the magistrate once. I'm not exactly sure where the court case is up to. But imagine for a moment he's found guilty because, you know, clearly he is.

So many witnesses. And then the judge issues his sentence. The death penalty. Now I don't think the UK has the death penalty but just imagine for a moment.

And yet, one of the 79 injured stands up in court and says, I'll take his place. Then lays down their life and dies so that Liverpool man can live.

[13 : 39] I mean, what kind of crazy love must this person who was injured by that guy have to have to do that? To take his place?

And yet, isn't that exactly what Jesus has done for us? You see, when it comes to how we've treated God, we are actually like that Liverpool man. And Jesus is like the injured one.

The one we've mistreated. And yet, in an act of crazy love, he takes our place. Lays down his life for our sin so that we can live if we believe in him.

And the life he brings, verse 10, is life to the full. That is life eternal.

I mean, you can't get any fuller life than eternal life, can you? And this eternal life is life with God that starts the moment we believe in Jesus. And it comes with all these great things which bring lasting and uplifting contentment in the face of life's disappointments.

[14 : 52] And so, what are these things? Well, let me give you them with some examples so that you know that they work. So, for example, life with God comes with great worth. Our worth is no longer found in our success, in our relationships, in our wealth.

It's found in Jesus. For if Jesus loved you with that crazy kind of love, then doesn't it tell you you're worth a crazy kind of amount?

It does, doesn't it? And this great worth, crazy kind of worth, stays the same no matter what. No matter how successful we are in life, no matter what our results are at uni or school, no matter what kind of relationships we have or don't have, it still stays the same crazy kind of amount.

And so if you're disappointed with what you can or can't do in life or whether you've succeeded or failed or whatever it is, if you're disappointed like that, then you can look in the mirror and you can say to yourself, you are worth a crazy kind of amount because God tells you you are.

Jesus died to prove that you are. And that helps us to find some contentment in the face of our disappointment, you see. Or life with God now comes with great purpose that's no longer attached to our work, it's attached to Jesus and living for him.

[16 : 23] And this is actually freeing because you no longer have to put all this pressure on yourself to find the perfect job to fulfill your ultimate purpose in life. And lots of young people I know, they kind of put all this pressure on themselves to get this ideal job and if they don't get it, they feel like they've lost their purpose, that they were made for this.

But actually no, you were made for Jesus, to live for him. Or if you stop doing what you once did because you retire or because of your health or because you get made redundant or whatever it is, you don't then lose your purpose because living for Jesus stays with you all the time.

It might look different at different stages of life but we always have a great purpose which can also bring us an uplifting and lasting contentment in the face of disappointment.

Our life with God now comes with great peace that helps us when our plans fail because God knows the bigger picture, he knows more, he's in control and he still works to grow us for our good.

I'd like a member at our 1030 congregation who was been waiting for surgery for three years as a public patient. They finally got a date two weeks ago.

[17 : 44] Three years waiting, got a date, excellent, made some plans around it. The day before they rang the hospital, her name had fallen off the list. Can you imagine waiting three years, you get the date and then suddenly plan fails.

I was messaging with her but she was still able to say, this was the day after, so pretty close, she was still able to say she's okay. In fact, she texts back and said, God obviously needed the surgeon for a much greater reason.

Imagine that. In other words, knowing God sees the bigger picture helped her to have great peace, which in turn gave her an uplifting contentment in the face of her disappointment.

Our life with God now comes with great presence to help us through our struggles, whether they're health struggles or financial struggles or even accommodation struggles. For as we read in Hebrews chapter 13, where it talks about being content, because God has said, never will I leave you, never will I forsake you.

God is present with us to help us. And this help can be in terms of providing for us. So in one of my Bible study groups, we've been praying for a single mum who's had to move house, the landlord selling the house, looking for new accommodation, and it's pretty tough out there to find affordable accommodation, right?

[19 : 11] And then she messaged a week ago to say that they'd found some just in time. And it just so happened that someone else from the congregation anonymously gave her \$2,000 to help cover the bond.

God was with her, helping her, in this case providing for her. Or he's with us to help us by strengthening us. Another guy I know used to come to our church before moving, had gone through lots of struggles in life, and he said if it wasn't for God's strength, he doesn't know if he'd be here.

His favourite verse in the Bible is this one from Philippians, I can do all things through him who gives me strength. It's his favourite because he has experienced it time and time again.

So much so that he ended up getting a tattoo of it on his left arm. Not that I'm suggesting you get tattoos of it, no, you do what you like. I think we've got a tattoo artist with us, they can do it after the service, no, I'm just joking.

Of course the context here in Philippians is actually contentment. The very verse before that talks about Paul learning the secret of contentment. It's a process that he's learnt over time.

[20 : 24] And what is the secret of contentment? Well, it's verse 13, doing all things, relying on God's strength, you see. The point is God's great presence is always with us to help us through struggles, which also brings an uplifting contentment in the face of disappointment, you see.

A life with God now even comes with great belonging that helps us when our relationships are not what we want them to be. Because we belong to God's family with hundreds of brothers and sisters.

brothers, as we heard about last week, I think. And yes, the brothers and sisters can sometimes let us down, that's true. But more often they build us up, help us out.

I remember a couple of years after starting at HTD, we were living in a house where the childcare centre is just next door. It was quite an old place. The bathroom was literally falling apart, tiles were literally falling off the wall.

I was trying to put them back on, but I'm not a very good handyman, so I just kept falling back off again. Anyway, my family and I went away on holidays for two weeks and we came back and another church family who's a builder had renovated our bathroom for us.

[21 : 32] We walked into a new bathroom. It was ridiculous. That's what family does. I'm not suggesting, by the way, you join God's family, you automatically get a new bathroom, but you get the point, right?

We're family who help each other out. What's more, we have a heavenly father who will along with our big brother Jesus will always keep their word to us and never break it.

Just like we heard from Alex, which as Alex said was a massive help in the face of his relational disappointment. And so this too brings us uplifting and lasting contentment.

And lastly, this life with God now comes with great hope for a better future. that helps us when we suffer. I hope we heard about two weeks ago. I hope that when our bodies die, our souls will live through death into heaven.

And when Jesus returns, he will raise our buried or cremated or whatever bodies and make them perfect bodies, fit for a perfect world to come. To enjoy life with God and each other even more than we do now.

[22 : 44] And as we heard, this hope is proved certain by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, for which we have historical evidence. People often say that we Christians have blind faith.

That's not true. Don't let them fool you. No, no, Christians have a reasonable faith. It's based on reasons and evidence, you see, like the resurrection.

And because of that, our hope is certain such that we don't lose heart. And so we read in 2 Corinthians, for example, therefore we do not lose heart, though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day, for our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

I know in the moment our troubles do not seem light and momentary, do they? They often seem very painful and long. But that just highlights how much greater this eternal glory will be, you see.

I was talking with a member from Nine O'Clock Church this time recently who has faced several disappointments in life. Some years ago he was diagnosed with a degenerative disease which means his mobility will only get worse.

[23 : 55] And I've seen it happen. He used to be able to walk in a church, then he had a walking stick, then he had one of those kind of pushers, if you've seen those, and now a wheelchair. And then last year he was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a type of blood cancer, which can only be managed, not cured, and recently he's been in and out of hospital with hardly any energy to do hardly anything he used to do.

And last weekend was his first granddaughter's wedding, which he had to miss. It was disappointment after disappointment after disappointment.

And yet when I speak with him he can still smile with contentment because he has this hope it will be better. Oh sure there'll be bad days and there are bad days when he's down, but then he keeps remembering where he's going.

A glory that far outweighs his suffering and that it will get better. In fact the reason I chose those verses is because they're the very ones he's quoted to me before.

You see we all face disappointment in this world because while it's beautiful it's also broken and so what do we do? Well we can try and find fulfillment and contentment by chasing the things of this world, but they don't last.

[25 : 20] Or we can simply say it is what it is with that kind of depressing resignation, but there's no hope in that. Or we can trust in Jesus who offers us life to the full. Life eternal with God that starts the moment we believe and comes with all these great things that bring contentment when we face disappointment.

Such that we may still say it is what it is, but we can say it with great hope and contentment. And so the first question for us tonight is do you want that?

Do you want this? If you do then believe in Jesus. Accept his crazy kind of love that saw him die for your sin. And you can start your life with God now and find an uplifting and lasting contentment with hope in the face of disappointment.

If you'd like to know how then please speak with me or Steph or Mark or Jeff or anyone else you've seen up the front tonight. We'd love to help. And for us who already believe then the question is do we actively remember this?

Sometimes we miss out on contentment because we forget what our life with God comes with. Or we take it for granted. And we fall back into the ways of the world by you know searching for fulfillment and chasing these things or you know being resigned it is what it is with no hope.

[26 : 39] But we're to remember our life with God comes with great worth and purpose. Great peace and presence. Great belonging and hope that it will get better. We're to actively remember these things and I deliberately use the word actively because we're to work at it to remember it.

And so the next time you're facing disappointment you know when you start finding yourself wallowing in it or dwelling on it force yourself to turn back and look to the life that Jesus has given you.

To your great worth and purpose. Your great peace and presence of God. The great belonging and hope you have. Force yourself to remember and turn back to God.

That you might find an uplifting and lasting contentment. all because of Jesus. Let's pray. Heavenly Father we thank you so much for Jesus and the life to the full he gives us.

Father thank you that this life starts the moment we believe and comes with great worth and purpose. Great peace and presence. Great belonging and hope that it will get better.

[27 : 54] And so Father help us in the face of disappointments to actively remember all that we have because of our Lord Jesus our good shepherd.

Help us we pray in his name. Amen. you