

# The Only Hope For Your Groaning Soul

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let's pray. Father, I praise you for your faithfulness to your people.

! I thank you for the precious souls that you've pulled together here by your providence to hear your word. I ask, Lord, that you will give us the gift of faith that we can see you by faith now and trust in your providence.

We need the hope of your promise. We need Christ more than anything else in this life. Please do your work in our lives, Lord. We ask for your glory. And in Christ's name, amen.

Today is a special day. Today is about death and life. When death touches us in this life, it's only natural that we would groan.

Death has touched different ones of us in this life in different ways. We have sickness. We have brokenness. We have really hard news that we have to process.

[ 1 : 21 ] We have relationships that are very broken. And it's only natural to groan. What does that word groan mean? It's a deep, mournful sound uttered in pain, sorrow, and anguish.

Has your soul groaned recently? 2 Corinthians 5.2 says that we groan in this tent, desiring to put on our heavenly dwelling.

It's natural to groan while we're in this body and this life. So, beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ and dear friends that are in earshot today, visitors that God brought you here in his perfect timing for his purpose.

What I've been praying for this week is this, that by faith you would be able to latch on to your only hope. In life and in death, it's the only hope for a groaning soul like yours and like mine.

That's what we get in our passage today. We have one of the most glorious promises of all of Scripture, given here and elsewhere, but maybe nowhere more clearly as right here.

[ 2 : 39 ] But what comes before this glorious promise are some of the greatest groanings anyone in the Scripture has breathed out. My first question for you is this, do you know what it feels like to groan without hope?

Do you know what that feels like, to groan in your soul without hope? There are many sources of groaning, but our passage gives us three really clear right here. Let's see them together.

And if you're familiar with Job, he's a man who's suffered in every way you can imagine on this earth. What he lays out in a really concise way, one for each verse, it's like three sharp barbed prongs poking through this suffering man.

You could even say it's like a trident that speared him like a creature, being hunted by a spear. Look at what he says first in verse 19, relational suffering.

All my close friends abhor me, and those whom I love have turned against me. To abhor. You can hear the root there.

[ 3 : 51 ] It means that his friends consider him now a horror. They have rejected him. He's detestable. He's been cast off. Those who were once close, they now loathe him and despise him.

He's rejected. He's been abandoned. And talking with some of you, my dear friends, these weeks, I know some of you have felt deep rejection and abandonment in different times in your life, maybe even as a child.

That's what Job is talking about. Some of you are suffering today, bleeding, relationally. Like Job, maybe there's one important relationship in your life right now that needs redeeming.

Well, relational suffering is the first one, but there's two more. Look at verse 20. Next, it's physical suffering. He says, My bone clings to my skin and to my flesh.

He's using poetic language to describe extreme thinness due to his muscles wasting away. A person who suffers for a long time experiences this.

[ 5 : 09 ] The muscles deteriorate. It describes a state where the bones are now visibly prominent under his skin. You see how this man is describing himself in the strongest terms possible.

The physical suffering he's endured. And then he uses a phrase. He says next in verse 20, I have escaped, referring to death, by the skin of my teeth.

Now, Now, in this clause, the author uses this word in Hebrew, And it literally means the bone on which your teeth are set.

This bone right up here. And so some have interpreted this phrase to mean, I am left with only my skull. See what Job is saying?

He said, I escaped death, but just barely. I'm still alive, but I'm like a talking skeleton. I've suffered so much. I've become horrifying.

[ 6 : 07 ] I'm the very picture of death. That's his physical suffering. In verse 3, I'm sorry, verse 21, he's describing physical torment and suffering.

I know there are many here who have had bad news about illness and sickness and many reasons to stress lately. And some of you right now are on pain medicine and you're in constant pain in your body.

It's death touching you while you're still alive. Some of you are used to not sleeping well. You can feel your ligaments, your muscles, your skin, or even your hair slowly deteriorating.

And it's natural to grieve these physical losses that we suffer in this life. We groan with Job. Well, the third type of suffering is in verse 21.

He's begging his friends who are giving him counsel. And he says, have pity on me, have pity on me, oh, you my friends. But he's not even focused on the friends. Look at what he says next in verse 21. For the hand of God has struck me.

[ 7 : 19 ] Verse 22, why do you persecute me as God does and are not satisfied with my flesh? See, Job has a high view of God. He knows God is sovereign.

And it's a high view of God's providence. God is the one allowing these things to happen to him.

And that's the correct view of God. I hope we have that view. God is all powerful.

Nothing happens except through him. And within the parameters of his will, even our physical and spiritual and relational suffering. Some of you are in the middle of spiritual suffering.

Like Job in verse 21, you know that anything you suffer, God has allowed even for you and your life.

These months, these years, for some of us, this week has been very heavy spiritually, hasn't it?

It's been a battle. And in our weakness, we're most vulnerable, but that's where the enemy, the accuser comes in, whispering in the ear. And he wants to accuse God to us.

[ 8 : 23 ] He wants us to believe the lie. God is either not loving, not good, or not all powerful. And that's why when we read in Romans 8, verses 23 and 22, we agree.

We feel this. The whole creation groans and labors together with birth pangs until now. And we groan within ourselves. Amen? Do you know what it is to groan in this life?

Maybe some of you here today only knows what it is to groan in this life without hope. And I hope this is the last day that that will be true for you.

Don't you long for your groaning to be replaced with hope. I hope you long for the groaning in these moments like this week for me, which were so heavy spiritually.

I need it to be replaced on a daily basis, on an hourly basis, my groaning replaced with hope. Now, because Job is in the genre of literature, that's poetic, we don't get a narrative.

[ 9 : 42 ] We don't really get any insights or testimony, but we can't miss this. There's a massive shift of tone between verses 22 and 23. You're going to want to look closely at your own copy of God's Word.

Job 19, look at verse 22. What we just left off. God is persecuting him. God has struck him. That's verse 22.

But now look at verse 23. Oh, that my words were written. Wait, hold on. Which words is he talking about? Now we see an escalating permanence to what he is excited about.

Oh, that they were inscribed in a book, not just written on a scrap and blown away, but I'm talking in a book that's going to be published and kept in a library. But that's not permitted enough.

Look at verse 24. Oh, that these words were engraved on a rock with an iron pen and lead for how long? Forever. This is what needs to be permanent.

[ 10 : 44 ] And it's not the suffering. That's what's common to all men. It's a revelation. And look at verse 25. He says, For I know. He knows something.

Something happened to Job between verse 22 and verse 23. I know something now. What does Job know?

What gave him this sudden hope despite these threefold reasons for groaning? I'm using this word hope.

And I don't mean it in a cheesy way and some abstract feeling. No. Hope. Real hope is faith in God's promises. That's all that hope is.

Do you receive God's promises by faith? Hold on to that. This hour. Who was it that spoke truth to Job and gave him God's promise?

[ 11 : 40 ] Who was it that ministered to Job so that he can say, I know. Look at verse 25 to get the answer. For I know that my Redeemer.

It's Job's Redeemer that ministers to him and speaks a promise of God to Job in the hour when he needed it the most. It was his Redeemer.

Well, what does it mean to redeem? What is a Redeemer? And who is Job's Redeemer? To redeem means to purchase back something, to ransom it, to liberate or rescue from captivity or bondage.

See, this describes Job. Job was in poverty, but the Redeemer will supply all his needs for life and godliness. Job is in bondage to suffering, but the Redeemer will set him free from affliction.

Job was enslaved to misery and held captive to depression. But the Redeemer is the one who comes and gives him hope, faith in God's promise.

[ 12 : 48 ] Who is this Redeemer? I need to know this Redeemer. You need to know this Redeemer. The Bible tells us that Redeemer, the Redeemer, is God Himself.

In Psalm 78, 35, it's Most High, Yahweh. He, the God of Israel, is the Redeemer. Isaiah 43, 14 says, The Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One.

The Redeemer is God Himself. Now, the Old Testament also hints at how there's a distinction. It's a glimpse of the holy three-in-one God.

Isaiah 44, 6, Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, and His Redeemer, the Lord of hosts, I am the first, and I am the last.

Besides me, there is no God. So who is the Redeemer? It's the Holy God, the first and the last. The God, the King of Israel, and His Redeemer.

[ 13 : 57 ] How will this be? What a mystery. This mystery can only be appreciated in the person and the work of Jesus Christ.

Truly divine, God Himself, the second person of the Trinity, who took on to Himself a body. God the Son, incarnate, who took on the flesh to turn our groaning into hope.

Don't you long for your groaning to be replaced by hope through the Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Well, how is such a hope possible?

Brothers and sisters, dear friends, it's my great privilege and pleasure to proclaim to you the work of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer. Jesus Christ replaces groaning with hope because first He suffered to redeem you and me who believe in Him.

The Redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ, think of how He endured relational suffering to redeem you who believe in Him. Like Job in verse 19, Jesus Christ, He felt the sting of rejection.

[ 15 : 14 ] Those He loved, His disciples, they all turned against Him. And this fulfills what God had promised in Isaiah 53.3. Jesus Christ was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief.

grief. All hid their faces from Him. And it wasn't just those disciples in the first century. This includes you and me who rejected Him.

We confess bold, I can only approach the throne of grace because of His work in my place. We behold the man upon the cross, my sin upon His shoulders.

Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers. Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, endured relational suffering so that we could be right with God.

The Redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ, also endured great physical suffering to redeem you who believe in Him. Even more so than Job in verse 20, Jesus Christ suffered physically for you and for me.

[ 16 : 33 ] He became horrifying. He became the picture of death. He fulfilled Isaiah 53, 5. He was wounded for our transgressions.

He was bruised for our iniquities. And He was oppressed and afflicted because only by His stripes could you and I be healed. Jesus Christ did not escape death by the skin of His teeth.

But He died and He was buried to pay the penalty for our sin. We sing, Come, O sinner, come and see Christ, the Lord upon a tree.

See the crown of thorns adorn the King who labors to breathe in agony. Come, O sinner, come and see what our God became to set us free.

The Redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ, endured spiritual suffering to redeem you and me who believe in Him. Like Job in verse 21, Jesus Christ suffered spiritually when He took our guilt to satisfy God's justice and to atone for our sin.

[ 17 : 45 ] He fulfilled Isaiah 53, 4 through 6, We esteemed Him stricken and smitten by God and afflicted. The chastisement for our peace was upon Him.

It was the Lord God who laid on Jesus Christ, the iniquity of us all. And of all the sufferings that our Lord endured, this spiritual suffering to bear our guilt before His own Father, the Holy God, was the greatest.

We sing, how great the pain of vile sin. The Father pours His wrath on Him because so deep is the Father's love for us, so vast beyond all measure that He should give His only Son to make a wretch His treasure.

Do you see how Jesus Christ fulfilled and related to each one of the sufferings known to man under the sun captured in these verses in Job?

And He did this to preach the gospel, the glorious news as the Redeemer. Here's the great truth for today. Here's what every believer will want engraved in stone forever.

[ 19 : 09 ] verse 25, I know my Redeemer lives. Amen? Today is a day of death defeated.

The Lord was alive then. Job knew this. My Redeemer lives. He's the Ancient of Days. Jesus Christ died and was buried, but we know He lives today.

Amen? And we know in Jesus Christ there is everlasting life. That's the only way that such a hope is possible.

Well, the good news in this passage has really only begun. There's so much more now because of Christ's finished work for you and for me.

I want to ask two more questions from this passage. What is a Christian's hope at the end of this life and what is a Christian's hope in the life to come?

[ 20 : 16 ] So first, what is a Christian's hope at the end of this life? We don't know when that will be for you or for me. God's word is true about the past. Jesus Christ fulfilled all that God said He would.

He lived, died, was buried, and now He lives and He is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. We know our Redeemer lives by faith now, but one day we will know this by sight.

God's word is also true about the future. Look at verse 25. My Redeemer, Job says, He shall stand at last on the earth.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son, and His glorified body, He is coming back. Verse 26 says, And after my skin is destroyed, these two thoughts are what answer our question for today.

The Christians hope at the end of this life. We have hope in this life because Christ is coming back. And we know there's good news for us after my skin has been destroyed.

[ 21 : 27 ] So the moment of your death in this life. And that phrase, after my skin is destroyed, literally means after my flesh is struck off of my body.

What the Bible teaches we get in Genesis 3.19 that when you die, you return to the grave. ground, for out of the ground you were taken, for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

The Bible also teaches as our confession summarizes that because our souls are immortal in their substance, our souls neither die nor sleep. When the body dies, a Christian soul, according to Ecclesiastes 12.7, immediately returns to God who gave it.

but the Bible is very clear. This is only true for those who are in Christ. Well, what about the souls of those who are outside of Christ? The souls of the wicked are cast into hell where they remain in torment and utter darkness reserved to the judgments of the great day.

the Bible says that Jesus will come and He will judge the living and the dead as the King of all the earth and of the spiritual realm. Revelation 14, 10-11 says, those in hell will drink the wine of God's wrath poured full strength into the cup of His anger, tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

[ 23 : 06 ] And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever and they have no rest day or night. Amen. After your soul leaves your body and your skin is destroyed, where will you spend eternity?

Heaven or hell? Besides these two places, the scripture acknowledges none. There are only two responses to the Redeemer.

this day, you will say one or the other. You will say He is no Savior or you'll say my Savior, my King. In Luke 23, we have the scene of what Christ accomplished in human history. The Lord Jesus Christ paying for the sin of His people on the cross and on either side of Him a criminal.

And in God's providence, their responses are the call for all who will hear the good news of the work of Jesus today. The first criminal mocked Jesus and he said, aren't you the Christ?

[ 24 : 38 ] Save yourself and us. And in his mocking, what he's really saying is you are no Savior or else you'd get yourself off of that cross and me. That's one response that you are no Savior, no Redeemer.

But there's good news for criminals like you and me that deserve death and that's the response of the second man in verse 42. He turned to Jesus. He turned to Jesus and looked at Him paying for His sin on the cross and said, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

And in those words, that criminal is saying, my Savior, my King. Jesus said to this man who He redeemed, truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.

See, that criminal's body died and was buried or disposed of. But Jesus said to him, today you will be with me in paradise.

Your soul united to me. This is called the intermediate state. The body has not been resurrected but the soul is with God.

[ 26 : 04 ] Your soul with Jesus Christ if He is your Savior and your King today no matter when you die. We need to think more about this truth, don't we?

Well, the Christians of another century thought the same. William Gurnall said, let our hope of heaven master our fear of death. Why should you be afraid to die who hope to live by dying? That's our hope as Christians at the end of this life. But it's not the end of the good news. It's not even the greatest promise. The greatest promise comes in the next couple verses.

The question for us is this, what is a Christian's hope in the life to come? See, there's more glory here. There is a life to come after that intermediate state.

Look at verse 26. And after my skin is destroyed, this I know that in my flesh I shall see God.

[ 27 : 09 ] Romans 8, 23 shed some more light on this great truth.

we groan within ourselves eagerly waiting for the adoption. What is it? The redemption of our body. Our confession puts it this way, summarizing the teaching of scripture.

All the dead shall be raised up with the self-same bodies and none other although with different qualities which shall be united again to their souls forever.

forever. The Bible teaches that our bodies will be resurrected and united to our souls that are with God already. Romans 8 verse 11 says, God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his spirit who dwells in you.

1 Corinthians 15, 42 so it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable but it's raised imperishable. What is sown in dishonor is raised in glory.

[ 28 : 38 ] What is sown in weakness is raised in power. How can this be? Because I know my Redeemer lives because Jesus Christ is the firstborn from the dead.

there's a great hymn by Charles Wesley that captures this truth. In hope of that immortal crown I now the cross sustain and gladly wander up and down and smile at toil and pain I suffer now my threescore years till my deliverer come and wipe away his servant's tears and take his exile home. this is the greatest hope for Christians and it's a hope that we will get in the life to come that I shall see God verse 26 the church has striven to appreciate this wonderful promise that's mystery but it's it's such a great hope for the Christians we need to ponder it deeply in the past it's been called the beatific vision and that just means the blessed vision or the blessed sight of God look at verse 27 I shall see my redeemer for myself he's saying my eyes not another eyes my eyes shall behold him in 1st John 3 verses 2 and 3 we read beloved we are God's heirs now and what we will be has not yet appeared but we know that when he appears we shall be like him because we shall see him as he is what a glorious truth for all eternity a theologian named Samuel

Parkinson was meditating on this great truth he wrote in that blessed vision our comprehension and vision and delight which are all finite will be perpetually maximized and as our capacity for vision and comprehension expands so will our delight each level of enjoyment of God will be topped by the next and the life to come David in Psalm 17 verse 15 was captured by this great truth behold I shall see your face in righteousness oh God when I awake the resurrection I shall be satisfied with your likeness our Lord Jesus Christ he will redeem his people in every way every source of groaning will be healed in the life to come relationally

Christians will be so at peace with God and with his bride all of his people with him yet for all eternity our shalom our relational peace will still be deepened physically believers bodies will be glorified so that with your own eyes your own vision you will see God and the lamb and yet that sight of God and the glorified body will be perpetually maximized throughout eternity to come spiritually our union to Christ will be immediately unhindered by any remaining corruptions and still with more to come for all eternity our souls will experience continuously greater wholeness in Jesus Christ and with all of this greater delight in our communion with the holy God amen what a redeemer we have we've been able to meditate on the most glorious truths that God has given us in his word and I love how this wonderful portion of scripture actually ends with a response how can we respond to such a promise from our great

[ 33 : 06 ] God look at verse 27 oh how my heart yearns within me you see the full redemption my heart my inner being now yearns with a new type of groaning second Corinthians 5 2 indeed we groan in this tent desiring to put on our heavenly dwelling the hymn says so let this feeble body fail yes let it faint and die for I shall drop this mournful veil and see my Lord most high we can say with Job this I know by faith that in my flesh one day in the life to come I shall see God whom I shall see for myself my eyes shall behold him how do you know this I know this because I know my redeemer lives

I know he's redeemed me his holy spirit causes me to know this and to trust him and he shall stand at last on the earth revelation 5 6 paints this for us near the throne of heaven I saw the lamb standing as though it had been slain and every creature which is in heaven and on earth and under the earth and all such as are in the sea and all that are in them I heard them saying blessing and honor and glory and power be to him who sits on the throne and to the lamb forever and ever don't miss out dear friends run to Jesus Christ your redeemer let your soul groan today but with this groan of 2 Corinthians 5 2 because

God has stirred your soul so earnestly to desire to be clothed in your new body and well suited for the new heavens and the new earth so that with your own eyes in that resurrection body you will get to see at last your God and your lamb our great and only hope and so as 1 Thessalonians 4 17 reassures us we will be with the Lord forever oh may your soul so grown within you today may your heart yearn for this sight of God let's respond to him in prayer