

# Flourishing Expectations

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[ 0 : 00 ] So of all of the, some of you I'm sure are gardeners, I am not, but I have had experience with gardening that my mom had me do when I was growing up. So if you're a gardener or if you just have a lawn that you have mowed, what is the most, let me ask a question, what is the most resilient weed that you have ever encountered? What was that? Horsetails. Okay there's one, horsetails. Was that a dandelion?

You know that would actually be my answer too and maybe it's just my limited experience in gardening and dandelions drive me nuts. They're not only for garden, not only for gardening but for lawns as well. They just seem, they just grow so well don't they? They seem to be custom designed to grow beautifully and in any sort of, any sort of North American climate. So whether I, whether I used to live in Indiana, whether I lived in Langley, whether I live here, and dandelions grow great. They grow everywhere and they are so frustrating. They are so frustrating to weed out and it's not just because of those puff balls of seed, right? That you know you drive the lawnmower over them and that just creates more problems as the seeds just get everywhere. Or maybe you've got young kids and they just think it's the greatest thing to spread dandelion seeds all over your lawn by blowing on the puff balls, right? That's not what makes dandelions so effective, is it? What makes them so effective is their roots. Just about every one of us has probably tried pulling up a dandelion. What happens when you try to just grab a dandelion with your hands and pull it up? It snaps right off, right? Now that creates a problem because sure you broke off the top of the plant, but the root is still in the ground. The root is securely fastened in the ground and the dandelion just grows right back. In no time at all, the dandelion is back as long as the root remains established in the soil. And that is what disciples of Jesus Christ are meant to be.

Not annoying weeds, by the way. We're meant to be securely fastened in the ground. We're meant to be dandelion Christians. We are steadfast, fastened into the soil, able to grow back even when we have been mowed down by suffering, even when we have been mowed down by temptation, even when we have been mowed down by doubts, even when we have been mowed down by oppression. Our roots must grow deep.

The Apostle Paul once wrote these words in Colossians chapter 2 to the first century church in the town of Colossae. He wrote to this church, So like dandelions, when our roots run deep, you and I flourish. Because we are stable and steadfast, we are growing. And the result, just like a dandelion comes up from the ground and produces a golden crown, we overflow with a golden crown of gratitude to Christ Jesus into whom we have deeply sunk our roots.

[ 3 : 41 ] That's what it means to be a dandelion Christian. And several years before Paul wrote this letter to the Colossian church, Paul was traveling through Greece.

And he was proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ to not only his fellow Jews, but to Gentiles that he encountered in the towns of Greece in Macedonia. And one of the cities in Macedonia where Paul proclaims the good news of Jesus Christ was the city of Thessalonica.

And there Paul planted a small but thriving church. He planted a little dandelion. And almost immediately afterwards, he was driven out of town by an angry mob.

And Paul was worried about what had happened to the Thessalonian Christians. And so what Paul did is, after he'd been driven out, he sent his co-worker Timothy to find out what had become of this church, what had become of these dear brothers and sisters in Christ that he loved.

And in the New Testament book of 1 Thessalonians, we're going to read an excerpt from his letter. And he's going to describe to us his response when Timothy came back, when Timothy came back with good news.

[ 5 : 01 ] And so turn with me to 1 Thessalonians chapter 3, verses 6 through 13. Now, if you're using one of the blue Bibles which our ushers handed to you, that's on page 987.

Page 987, I'll be reading from the English Standard Version, 1 Thessalonians chapter 3, verses 6 through 13. So why don't you follow along in your copy of Scripture as I read these verses. Amen. But now that Timothy has come to us from you and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us as we long to see you.

For this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction, we have been comforted about you through your faith. For now we live. If you are standing fast in the Lord.

For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you? For all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith.

[6:14] Now, may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all as we do for you.

So that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints. This is the word of the Lord.

So this is Paul's response. And verses 11 through 13 in particular are the very heart of this letter. They're the very heartbeat of this letter. We're gonna keep coming back to them over and over again in the weeks to come.

They are Paul's response to the good news that Timothy brings back. And in verse 6, Paul explains that this good news is good news of your faith and love.

It's good news that the Thessalonians are first of all, they are continuing to maintain faith in Jesus Christ. This faith that they are maintaining, we see here, it isn't just some sort of inactive set of beliefs.

[7:33] It's not just a set of beliefs that they can recite. They haven't merely memorized a list of things that they know Christians are supposed to believe and they can just rattle off. This is an active, working trust in Jesus Christ.

And you know it is because he says it is faith and love. It is working trust in Jesus Christ that produces love for God, love for one another, and love for everyone around them.

And this love, because it is combined with faith, it is mentioned in the same breath, this faith. It isn't merely what people in our culture might call love.

People, our culture has just such a shallow understanding of love, so unmoored from any sort of deep faith. We talk about love as if it's merely some sort of emotional experience, emotional connection, it's just chemistry.

Or we might talk about love as though it's just simply a mere human decency and kindness. But when Paul talks about love, he talks about a heartfelt love that can only proceed from faith in the Son of God who loves them.

[8:54] This is the real love that he is talking about. And its roots run deep. Paul is thrilled to hear what he mentions in verse 6. And what he mentions is that the Thessalonians always remember us kindly and long to see us.

So last week we learned that our great expectations of life together in Christ, they encourage us to be present. They encourage us to be with one another, to see each other face to face, not only to remember each other, but to be with each other.

We learned that means that Christians show up. Christians actually spend time with one another. They show up on Sunday mornings. They show up throughout the week.

Our great expectations produce a great love. There's a fellow pastor of mine in Vancouver who a couple weeks back put it this way that really struck me. He said, showing up is shouting, I love you. Showing up is shouting, I love you. And so when Paul sees this faith and he sees this faith that produces real, genuine, lasting, active love.

[10:09] When he sees that these things are produced by their hope, Paul is heartened by the secure roots of great expectations. He is heartened by the secure roots of great expectations.

So Paul tells them this in verse seven. In all our distress and affliction, we have been comforted about you through your faith. For now we live.

If you are standing fast in the Lord. Their hope that roots them in place. Their hope from which their faith and love can sprout.

This hope is both encouraging and life-giving to Paul. It is so encouraging. It is so life-giving that Paul is comforted.

He is heartened. Even in the middle of the oppression, even in the middle of the opposition that he is constantly facing that we talked about last week. And what this tells you, what this tells me is that our great expectations, our steadfastness of hope, they serve to hearten our brothers and sisters in Christ.

[ 11 : 23 ] So if you ever feel that people in our church are lacking zeal, if they are lacking in fervor, or if they ever seem weary and discouraged, one of the best things you can do to help them is to fan into flames your own great expectations of the Lord's return.

As they see your faith and love grow out of these great expectations, they too are going to be comforted, they too are going to feel alive again. This is how our great expectations of the Lord's return ensure a flourishing life of holy love.

Our great expectations of the Lord's return ensure a flourishing life of holy love. This is how they do it. First of all, you and I are heartened by the secure roots of great expectations. Second, we're not only heartened by the secure roots of great expectations, we are grateful for the secure roots of great expectations.

We are grateful for the secure roots of great expectations. So this is also Paul's experience when he receives the good news from Thessalonica.

Paul writes this in verses 9 and 10. For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you? For all the joy that we feel for your sake before God, as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith.

[ 12 : 51 ] So the Thessalonians, they are standing fast in their faith and Paul's response is to thank God for them. Why is Paul thanking God for them? Because Paul knows that it is God who secures them with great expectations.

So back in chapter 1, verse 4, Paul wrote this. We know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you. We know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you.

God has chosen them not simply to call them to faith in Jesus Christ and then just let them be. God has chosen them in order not only to bring them to faith in Jesus Christ but to preserve them in their faith in Jesus Christ.

And he does it by rooting them deeply in hope. Paul sees this hope that preserves their faith, that preserves their love and this hope that he sees fills him with joy and it fills him with gratitude towards God.

So once again, you know, as you look at the people around you, if you ever feel discouraged about our church, if you ever feel that people in our church are like, man, sometimes I see so and so and they seem so joyless and sullen.

[ 14 : 13 ] Maybe they seem to you ungrateful or demanding. We all get that way from time to time. One of the best things that you can do to help them is this.

you can fan into flames your own great expectations of the Lord's return. You can fan into flames your own great expectations of the Lord's return because as they see your faith and love grow out of these great expectations, they will respond with gratitude to God.

They will respond with gratitude to God. If Paul is setting any precedent for us, then this gratitude is going to overflow and it's going to become what we might call intercession.

Paul's gratitude doesn't merely stop with thanksgiving. When Paul prays with a grateful heart, Paul intercedes for the Thessalonians before God and by intercession we mean this, that he speaks to God on their behalf.

That he brings requests to God on their behalf and prays to them. Prays to God for them. Now how does gratitude overflow into intercession?

[ 15 : 33 ] Well maybe we can think of it this way. When you and I celebrate Thanksgiving holiday, we celebrate it how? By consuming massive amounts of food.

Right? So what happens when you fill your stomach with an enormous Thanksgiving meal? Well what happens is your stomach expands. Which is why following Thanksgiving it's like your weight is going to just increase throughout the rest of the holiday season and never really gets back to its old level until just before the next Thanksgiving.

It's because your stomach expands. Your stomach grows because it's expecting more good food to come. Now this happens with you and me in our spiritual lives and in this case it's a very good thing because as we because what happens is as we are filled with Thanksgiving we become hungry much more often than before.

This Thanksgiving, this gratitude expands our stomach, our capacity, our desire, our hunger for good things from God as we review and rejoice in the good that he has already done for us. So if we are failing to pray for one another, if you find that you are failing to remember the needs of other believers or if you're failing, you feel little motivation to intercede for them, if you're failing to ask great things of God, the best way to respond to that is to express our gratitude to God for all that he has done for us.

[17:19] that is the best thing you can do to increase your hunger. And if you want our whole church family to intercede for one another, to overflow from gratitude into intercession, then how do you do that?

You and I fan into flames our great expectations that make us steadfast in faith and love. So Paul's gratitude leads him to pray boldly for two things.

Paul's gratitude overflows into two requests, two items of intercession that he mentions in verse 10. To see the Thessalonians face to face and to supply what is lacking in their faith.

So Paul had been torn away from the Thessalonians prematurely. He was torn away before he could finish instructing them in the way the Christians are meant to live. We saw earlier that he talked about it as though he's orphaned or bereaved, cut off from his family, and he can't instruct them the way a father should.

And so Paul prays that God may reunite him with his family in Thessalonica. Paul prays that he can make them holy followers of Jesus Christ.

[18:43] What's neat is he doesn't just say he's going to pray in verse 10. What happens is in verses 11 through 13 he actually does it. So we can see how Paul prays. This is how our great expectations of the Lord's return ensure a flourishing life of holy love.

First, you and I are heartened by the secure roots of great expectations. Second, we are grateful for the secure roots of great expectations. And third, you and I flourish upon these secure roots of great expectations.

We flourish upon the secure root of great expectations. And this is what Paul prays in verses 11 through 13. Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all as we do for you so that he may establish your hearts blameless and holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

So Paul told them in verse 10 that his first request is this, that we may see you face to face. And in verse 11 that's exactly what he prays.

May our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. So Paul appeals not only to God the Father but to the second person of the Trinity to God the Son as well to our Lord Jesus.

[20:23] Paul appeals to God as our Father. Our Father who loves us. Our Father who cares for us. Our Father who provides for us.

Paul appeals to Jesus as Lord. Jesus who is might. Jesus who has power. Jesus who has authority. To grant to you and me whatever he wills.

Paul is praying to a God who is both all loving and all powerful. And what Paul is asking is this, that God may direct our way to you.

Paul is asking God to bring him back to Thessalonica by the fastest, most direct route possible.

Paul is not satisfied with windy, slow mountain roads.

Paul wants a high-speed tunnel blasted directly through the mountains, free from hindrance, free from opposition, bringing him straight to Thessalonica. He wants an express route.

[21:30] And he wants this because he loves the Thessalonian believers. others. And he wants not only to be with them, he wants to see them flourish under his instruction.

As he strengthens their great expectations of our Lord's return. So Paul told them, he tells them in verse 10 what his prayer would be, that God would permit him to supply what is lacking in your faith. And so in verses 12 and 13, the second request is fleshed out. Paul prays that their faith may no longer lack anything, but instead their faith may overflow and flourish with holy love.

So you'll notice, verse 12, Paul once again is praying to the Lord. And he begins with the words, may the Lord. So it is the Lord Jesus who initiates and who enables this flourishing.

This is something that Paul is very quick to recognize. He doesn't lay it all on the Thessalonians as though this is something that they can do entirely by their own effort, entirely by their own works.

[ 22 : 49 ] This is something Paul knows it takes Jesus to do this. He is the one who does this. A few years after this, Paul is going to write his first letter to the Corinthian church.

And Paul is going to remind them in 1 Corinthians chapter 3 that he and his fellow teacher Apollos, neither of them can cause these Corinthian believers to flourish.

Paul writes this, I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.

In other words, I cannot make you flourish. Your brothers and sisters in Christ cannot make you flourish.

And you yourself cannot make you flourish with faith and with the holy love. It is the Lord Jesus. He is the one who causes you and me to flourish.

[ 23 : 54 ] And that is what Jesus himself told his disciples in John chapter 15. He told them, I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit.

For apart from me, you can do nothing. Whoever abides in me, whoever remains secured in me and I in him, drawing my life from Jesus Christ, the true vine, he it is that bears much fruit.

apart from me, you can do nothing. And our responsibility is not to make ourselves grow and flourish in faith, in love.

You and I can't do that. We don't have it in ourselves to do that. You do not have the ability to reach down deep inside yourself, to pick yourselves up by your own bootstraps, to make yourselves better disciplined, stronger Christians, to secure your own faith, to make yourself produce more love.

You don't have the ability to do that. It doesn't work. I say that not only from scripture but from my own experience. It just doesn't work. Our responsibility is to root ourselves in the Lord Jesus.

[ 25 : 15 ] Our responsibility is to abide in mine. Our responsibility is to plant ourselves and to plant one another in the soil of great expectations. That is the only way that we flourish with faith and love.

By fanning into flame those great expectations of Jesus Christ's return. By dwelling in the future grace that will be ours.

Paul prays in verse 12, may the Lord make you increase and abound. May the Lord make you increase and abound. What we learn here is that Paul is not satisfied with mediocrity.

Paul is not satisfied with mediocre Christians. He isn't satisfied with decent citizens who are just getting along and who are happy where they're at in their relationship with God, who are happy where they're at in their relationship with church.

We talk about contentedness, contentment as a good thing and it is a good thing when it comes to our own possessions and to being content with what God has given us but contentment is a bad thing and a sinful thing when it comes to our walk with the Lord.

[ 26 : 37 ] We should have a divine, a holy discontent with our faith and our love and a longing to see it grow.

Paul isn't satisfied with mediocre Christianity. Paul is not satisfied with decent people who are just decent citizens. Paul is not satisfied with people who will blend into a crowd.

His great expectations for the Thessalonians are that their faith, their love will increase and abound. So their faith is going to be stunning.

Their love is going to be overwhelming. In fact, their love will overflow so much that Paul says it is not even going to be confined to the family of God. Paul says that he wants them to increase and abound in love for one another and for all.

So they don't just have a love for their own family. That's something that is a lot easier, isn't it?

[ 27 : 45 ] To love people who are in your own family, whether it's your biological family or people who are just like you in Christ, to love people who are like you. But Paul says that our love as we are rooted in hope, as we are secured in our faith, as we overflow with love, that our love overflows not only to the rest of the people around you in Squamish Baptist Church, but it overflows to the people who are around you, your neighbors, your co-workers, the people in your community, those who are not a part of the family of God.

And in the case of the Thessalonians, that includes the people who are oppressing them and persecuting them. only a people who are filled with great expectations can brim over with this sort of love.

It is impossible if you do not have great expectations of Christ's return. True, deep-rooted Christian love that overflows not only to your family in Christ, but to unbelievers, not only to unbelievers, but

even unbelievers who hate you and are trying to harm you.

That's only possible if you have great expectations. And Paul sees this love serving a great purpose for the Thessalonians in verse 13.

He says that he wants their love to flourish and their love to overflow so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father.

[ 29 : 20 ] And so remember from last week, Paul doesn't expect to appear before God alone on the day of judgment at the end of this present age. Paul expects to present the Thessalonians before God the Father and Paul expects them to be judged by God the Father and by the Lord Jesus.

So they are going to be judged by a standard of holiness. They aren't judged by human standards, by standards of human decency that are common in our culture. They are judged by God's standards, his standards of utter, absolute holiness.

holiness. Will they be holy as God their Father is holy? Will they be set apart from all evil? Will they be pure and radiant, loving, life-giving, as blameless as God himself?

That's an impossible standard to meet for human beings on their own merits. Paul wants them to be saved from the coming judgment.

When God removes anything that is absolutely less than holy, when God removes anything less than holy from his kingdom, Paul understands something about our salvation that many Christians have failed to grasp.

[ 30 : 46 ] Because when most people in church, most churchgoers talk about being saved, quote-unquote saved, saved, you know, we usually think about one aspect of our salvation.

We usually talk about the fact that we have been justified. To be justified means this, that you have been declared righteous by God, not on the basis of what you have done.

You haven't earned that righteousness. You haven't been righteous enough on your own. You haven't met God's expectations of you. But you're declared righteous by God on the basis of Jesus' righteous life.

on the basis of Jesus' righteous death. And the reason that God can do that is because by faith we are united with Jesus Christ.

When you are united in marriage with someone, when you sign on to a lease with someone in our culture, you are united with them, bound together with them.

[ 31 : 52 ] Their debts are credited to you, your assets are credited to them. And so it is with Jesus. We have been credited with his righteousness. And he has been credited with our sin and he has taken the punishment for it.

For all who believe in his name. So our salvation is a past event. That's our justification. We are justified. But Paul understands that salvation is also a present process.

He calls it sanctification. We have been declared righteous and now we are being saved as God the Holy Spirit makes us actually righteous. We are not just declared righteous, we are actually righteous, made righteous.

In other words, what God does is he makes us to increase and abound in love. Love is the perfect obedience to God's law. God's law lays out exactly what love looks like, how that plays out in the real world.

So we are made actually righteous, actually holy. In the past we were justified, in the present we are being sanctified. And Paul is looking forward with great expectations to the future.

[ 33 : 10 ] Paul is looking forward to the time when we will not only be justified, not only sanctified, but third of all, we will be glorified. We will be saved by being glorified. So those of us who are justified, those of us who are sanctified, who have been credited with Christ's holiness, who have been made actually holy, we will appear before the judgment seat of God and we will find there not just a judge looking at us to assess whether we are holy and righteous and blameless, but we will find there our God and Father himself, our own Father who loves us and he will look at us and he will see our sanctification, this blameless holy love that is flourishing as we root ourselves in the Lord Jesus.

And he will see our justification, he will see our righteousness that comes from our union with the Lord Jesus and that is how our Lord Jesus establishes us as blameless before our God and Father. And so our God, our Father, steps out from behind the judge's bench and puts on us, clothes us with a glory that is beyond all imagination.

He gives us glorious bodies. Freed from all sin and suffering, perfect and holy love, he renews and restores us and makes us holy and sinless and spotless.

And so our great expectations of the Lord's return ensure a flourishing life of holy love. Not only in the present age, but in the age to come.

[ 34 : 53 ] And that's an age of earth's history that is never going to end. But will go on forever and ever. A flourishing life of holy love, not just for the next 30, 40 years of your life, but for the next 30,000, 40,000, 30 million, 40 million.

Paul writes in verse 13 that all of this will take place at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints. So you and I, we who believe in Jesus Christ, we are going to be fully and finally glorified at our death when we join God in heaven.

Sorry, we will not be fully and finally glorified at our death when we join God in heaven. I need to read my notes a little more carefully here. This is a mistake that many Christians make. We talk about going to heaven when we die as though that's the final state of things.

As though my soul leaves my body, it departs to heaven, and then I just float around in heaven as just sort of this bodiless soul. And in this disembodied state I exist forever and ever.

And that could not be more false. In fact, that is deeply heretical. That is not at all how we were meant to live.

[ 36 : 13 ] Our glorification, our final salvation doesn't take place until the end of this age when Jesus Christ returns to earth and we are given new bodies, perfectly holy, and we live forever and ever on the new earth, present with our Lord Jesus when he returns to the earth.

Paul writes that at the return of Jesus Christ, he is going to be accompanied by all his saints. Now maybe you're using a translation such as the New International Version that puts it as all his holy ones, that Jesus is coming with all his holy ones.

And I like that a little bit better because it preserves the ambiguity of the original. It's not clear exactly what is meant by holy ones. It could refer to the saints.

In other words, it could refer to believers like you and me. Believers like you and me who have been made holy, who have been made righteous, who have been saved by Jesus Christ.

It could also refer to angelic beings, to the heavenly host. And you know what? It doesn't make an enormous difference which it refers to because here's the idea.

[ 37 : 28 ] The Lord Jesus is coming back and he is bringing the armies of heaven with him. The Lord Jesus is coming back and he is bringing the armies of heaven with him. In other words, Jesus is coming to claim what is his.

Jesus is not only God, he is also the ultimate human being, the one man whom God the father has given complete dominion over all the earth.

From the beginning in Genesis chapter one, that is what God put human beings on the earth to do, to reign over the earth, to exercise dominion, to rule the earth in a wise and loving way.

It is Jesus Christ who receives that promise. It is Jesus Christ who carries that out. He is the one man who is going to return to claim what is his and his arrival is going to spell the end of every nation state.

Which made a big difference if you were living in the first century. And the Roman government wanted you to bend the knee before Caesar as Lord and say that Caesar is a God, he is Lord, he is the one who has supreme control over the earth.

[ 38 : 46 ] The early Christians were killed, were crucified, were burned because they would not bend the knee to Caesar. Because they said Jesus is Lord and Jesus will one day return to set up his kingdom on the earth.

And every opposing institution and every opposing government and all human attempts to preserve our autonomy from God will be brought to an end.

That is the future of our world. And that is the end of the present age and the beginning of a far better one. The Apostle John once wrote about Jesus in Revelation chapter 1.

He wrote this. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom.

He wrote this. He wrote this. He wrote this. He wrote this. He wrote this. He wrote this. He wrote this. He wrote this. He wrote this. Amen. Amen. Behold he is coming with the clouds and every eye will see him even those who pierced him and all tribes of the earth will wait on account of him.

[ 40 : 06 ] Even so. Amen. I am the Alpha and the Omega says the Lord God who is and who was and who is to come.

The Almighty. Those are our great expectations. For most of us in this room those are great glorious expectations that we long for and we pray come Lord Jesus for.

I think for some of us here if you don't believe in the Lord Jesus those are not great expectations. All the tribes of the earth will wail. If you tie yourself to this present age if you love the things of this present age if you want to preserve your autonomy if you want to remain separate from Jesus Christ his return is bad bad news.

But it is inevitable and it is coming. If you want to flourish in faith if you want to flourish in holy love if you want to overflow with joy and gratitude if you want to be heartened with strength and courage if you want those things not only for yourself but you want them for your family here at Squamish Baptist Church and you want them for the town of Squamish and you want them for the province of British Columbia for the nation of Canada and for the rest of the world then you and I would do well this week to return to these words of life to review the promises of God to encourage one another with these great expectations.

For some of us that means that we would believe them for the first time. Let your roots grow deep. Let your roots grow deep in these great expectations so that you can thrive even in the harshest conditions because our great expectations of the Lord's return ensure a flourishing life of holy love.

[ 42 : 18 ] Our God, our Father we come to you we cry out to you that you would grow our great expectations. I know in myself I've let them so often I've not watered them I've not planted them I've not rooted myself deeply in this hope and this promise and I need it because I know that without it I wither away.

O God this is the only way that we know to flourish and this is the only way that you've given us to flourish. Renew our hope renew our longing for you make us hungry for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We long for the day when every eye will see him even those who pierced him. we long for the day when we will be with him forever and ever. Amen.