

We Do Not Lose Heart

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Date: 19 November 2023

[0:00] We're going to begin our worship now by singing to God's praise in Psalm 116. We're singing on the Scottish Psalter version, page 395, singing from verse 1 to verse 8.

The tune is Coals Hill. I love the Lord because my voice and prayers heeded here, I while I live will call on him who bowed to me his ear.

We'll sing from verse 1 to verse 8 to God's praise. I love the Lord because my voice and prayers heeded here, I while I live will call on him who are to be this year.

O let the wars and sorrows hear about me, I will sing from verse 1 to verse 8 to verse 8.

I belong to the Lord as if his actions duperule so. I ■■■ me in mode of silence.

[1:37] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. I lift my morning, my strong tears, my feet from falling free.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. I will come to God in a short word of prayer. Let us pray. Let us pray.

[4:07] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. we do to come together as a people here, meeting and greeting one another, enjoying to see each other and enjoy each other's company. But we thank you above all that we come, not with each other in mind in particular, but with you in mind. We come thankful that you call us to yourself, that you encourage us, that you are the one who strengthens us day by day. And we thank you that you have promised to be with us as we do come together. And we pray your blessing on this day and upon all that we do in our worship and in our times at home, in our times of fellowship and in Sunday school and creche and tweenies and all that goes on today, Lord. We thank you for everyone who is involved and who is here, but remembering those unable to be with us, even tuning in online as well, and thankful that together we can come and praise your name. So may you be with us, Lord, and lead us in all that we do. Bless your word to us. We thank you for it, that we can open up your word and read of the wonders of who you are and all that you have done for us. And so teach us through your word,

Lord. May we learn from it and not just for today, but for every day of our lives, that we would live by your word and by your truth. So bless us all together, we pray, and go before us, pardoning us in all our sins as we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, before the young ones go out to the Sunday school, I just want to share a few words with you. I'm sure you all have different interests, things that you enjoy doing day to day, and maybe you're a big fan of people or teams or things like that. People like to follow football teams, people like to follow bands or singers, people like to follow film stars and things like that, people who are important and who we hear a lot about. And if I was to ask everyone to put up their hands, who here supports the greatest Scottish football team, Aberdeen? I'm sure everyone would be putting up their hands. Maybe not. Well, other teams will have lots of followers as well, but there's a difference between being a follower and being a fan. So what's the difference? Well, if you think of some football teams or you think of some pop stars or bands or film stars, they maybe have fans and they'll have followers. So take, for example, a team, a football team like Manchester City.

A long time ago, many years ago, they maybe didn't have so many fans and followers because they weren't successful. But in these last few years when they've been winning everything, a lot of people have started to be fans of them and to follow them. So all around the world now, they've got people who take an interest in how their results are going and how they're getting on.

But the difference between a fan and a follower is a fan may be only there while the things are going well, while the team is winning. There'll be a lot of fans who will follow at that point. But when things start getting hard, when the results don't go their way, these fans, they just go to another team, another team who's maybe successful and winning. But those who are real followers of the

team, they'll stick with them through the ups and downs. And they are the people who are really committed.

[8 : 10] And when we look at the Bible, it reminds us that when we look at the life of Jesus, there was times in his life when a lot of people were interested in him. As he was going about day-to-day life, people were hearing his teaching. They were seeing him do miracles, things that were impossible. Jesus did like walking on water, feeding the 5,000. There was all kinds of miracles that Jesus did. And people were really interested in this. There were many fans, if you like, following him, thousands of people following him. But when things started getting more difficult, when Jesus started to teach them about things being hard and life not always being easy and trials will come, he found that many of these fans, as it were, turned away. They didn't want to know.

This sounded too difficult. And there was one point in Jesus's life when, as he was teaching and he was seeing people turning away, he was saying to some of the disciples who were with him, will you also go away? But their response was this, to whom else can we go? You alone have the words of eternal life. They were followers of Jesus. Not just fans who were there for the good times when everything was going well, but who stuck with him, who stayed with him, who followed him. And that's a reminder to ourselves today as well. Ask yourself, are you a fan or a follower of Jesus? Are you only here to hear about the good things and to enjoy the good times? Or will you truly follow Jesus? Follow him, especially maybe when things get hard and difficult, because he promises to be faithful to us, to be with us each and every day. So don't just be a fan who's there when things are good.

Be a follower and know that Jesus is with us through the ups and downs of all our lives. So may God bless these thoughts to us. We're going to say the Lord's Prayer together now.

Amen. Amen. Our Father, who art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

[11 : 01] We're going to sing again to God's praise this time in Psalm 70. Again, it's in the Scottish Psalter version, and the first version of the Psalm on page 309 of the Psalm books. Psalm 70, the first version.

Lord, haste me to deliver with speed. Lord, succor me. Let them that for my soul do seek shame unconfounded be. We'll sing the whole of this psalm to the tune dense, and we stand to sing. Lord, haste me to deliver with speed. Lord, succor me. Let them that for my soul do seek, Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[13 : 40] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. And we can read the whole of this chapter together.

Amen. Amen. Amen. So we see coming into chapter 4, we have the word, therefore, for, so Paul here is continuing, the writer of the letter, Paul is continuing to explain what it is to know the glory of God as he speaks about it there, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

So we pick up our reading in chapter 4. Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart, but we have renounced disgraceful underhanded ways.

We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth, we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. In their case, the God of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

[15 : 19] And for what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

For God, who said, let light shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed.

Perplexed, but not driven to despair. Persecuted, but not forsaken. Struck down, but not destroyed. Always carrying in the body the death of Jesus.

So the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake. So the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

[16:23] So death is at work in us, but life in you. Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, I believed and so I spoke.

We also believe and so we also speak. Knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.

For it is all for your sake. So that as grace extends to more and more people, it may increase thanksgiving to the glory of God.

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.

As we look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

[17:26] We ask that God would bless that word to us. Let us again just join together in a word of prayer. Our Father in heaven, we give you thanks that we are able to call upon your name.

That in prayer we have that great assurance that we are not just speaking words to ourselves or to those who are gathered around us. But that we offer up our prayers to you as the Lord and God who has made the heaven and the earth and all that we see around us.

As God who has made us for a purpose. As the one who is God over all. And the one who, as we have been reminded in our reading here, has given his son.

We thank you that you did indeed not spare your son, but that you sent him into this world and sent him with a real purpose. Your love was shown to us in the very fact that Jesus was born in this world.

That he came and lived here among the people of this world. And that he taught and showed himself not just as an ordinary man, but as the son of God.

[18:45] And we thank you that the Bible reminds us of his power. And his power not just in the miracles that he did around his people then.

Showing them things that were so impossible to do. But above all, the power that he had to give life. And not just life in a way in this world, but eternal life.

The greatest gift of all. And so we thank you that we have your word. And may it help us in every circumstance. That whatever we are going through in life.

Whatever our past experience or present experience. That we would realize that your word gives us such great hope. A future to look forward to.

That as we put our trust in you. That you are the one who is able to heal hurts. And to help us in times of anxiety and fear. The one who is able to guide us when we feel lost in this world.

[19:47] The one who is able to give us strength when we feel weak. We thank you for everything that you do for your people. Everything that you do as we come calling upon you.

And so we pray, Lord, that you will bless your word to us today. And bless all that we do in your name. We thank you, Lord, that the gospel is full of good news.

In the midst of all the bad news that we see around us and hear around us. And how we all need to hear your gospel. How we need to hear this good news.

And to all the ends of the earth, Lord. People need to hear about Jesus and the goodness and mercy that he is able to show. And we pray, Lord, that around the world today.

In the midst of times of terror and war and conflicts near and far. We thank you that you are a God of peace. And we pray, Lord, to have mercy.

[20:45] To have mercy in the midst of all that's happening in our world. And to turn the angry hearts, the sinful hearts, the wicked hearts. To turn them from their evil ways.

And to turn them to following the paths of goodness and righteousness. As you teach us in your word. So we pray, Lord, that you will look down upon us this day.

Look down upon our world and upon your people. To all ends of the earth. And hear the prayers of your people. That you will transform our lives and our hearts.

And all our nations, O Lord. To know your blessing and your peace. We thank you for our people here as a congregation. For our town. For our islands around us, Lord.

And we pray for all our people, Lord, today. That you will draw near to all who need you in different ways. As we think of those who are mourning and grieving at this time.

[21 : 44] Even in this past week. As we think of the Mackenzie family following the passing of Alistair. So suddenly this week, Lord. We pray for your comfort to them.

Your help to them. Especially as they prepare for the funeral tomorrow, Lord. We pray that you will surround them and uphold them. And be their refuge and their strength.

We pray for those who are in hospital. For those who are in homes. Those who are confined to their own homes as well, Lord. Going through different experiences and times of ill health.

Or different needs, Lord. We pray that you will bless them. And surround them with your goodness and your mercy as well. We ask, oh Lord, for our young people. That you will watch over them.

Thankful for all who come so regularly, week by week. Looking ahead to this week even. And this evening we thank you for the youth fellowship. At Jonathan and Allison's house this evening.

[22 : 38] We pray for that time. And for Hannah as she comes to speak. May you bless that. May you bless the Presbytery camp this coming weekend as well, Lord.

We thank you for all who have signed up for that. And may it be a time of real encouragement and blessing. As the children and the leaders gather together over this weekend, Lord.

We pray for protection and for your blessing on them. We pray for the Christmas club coming up as well. As invitations are sent out. That we would see a good response to it.

And that you will help us to again remind ourselves and remind others of the gospel. The good news of Jesus coming into this world. And we pray that you will help in all of these things.

That your blessing will be upon it. So Lord, may you continue with us throughout this day. Bless us in homes and families. Lord, look after us and all our loved ones as we commit ourselves into your hands.

[23 : 35] Take care of us and pardon us in all our sins. As we think of things that we say and do that we shouldn't. And the things that we don't do that we should.

We pray, Lord, that you will help us. To know that you are a God of forgiveness and help in our every need. So hear our prayers as we ask them. In the name of Jesus.

For his sake and glory. Amen. Let us again sing to God's praise. Before we turn back to look at the passage that we read.

We're going to sing in Psalm 146. Page 191. Psalm 146. We'll sing from verse 5 down to verse 10. The end of the psalm. The tune is Sussex. Blessed is the one who truly looks for help to Jacob's God. Blessed is the one who places all his hope upon the Lord.

[24 : 34] We'll sing from verse 5 down to verse 10. To God's praise. Amen. Blessed is the one who places all his hope upon the Lord.

Blessed is the one who places all his hope upon the Lord.

He who made the earth and heaven and the seas with all their sword.

■■■ McMahon's prayer. Blessed is the one who believes foe as if the fisherman will ever changeost Him in a traumatizing land.

Chapel is the one who ■■■■ about theundenys and heavenly celestial prays. He releases those in prison, to oblige the Lord his side.

[26 : 02] For tomorrow, by God he races all delights in righteousness.

He protects and cares for strangers when it will stand the forest.

He trusts the wicked girls, so the Lord to endless days reigns to every generation.

Praise to God, O Zion, praise. Well, let's turn back to our reading in 2 Corinthians chapter 4.

And you notice at the beginning of the chapter, chapter 4, in verse 1, there it says, Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart.

[27 : 21] And then if you go down to verse 16, that phrase is repeated. We do not lose heart. So there's this phrase that we have in this chapter.

And I want to focus on that phrase, we do not lose heart, but looking at it particularly from verse 7 down to the end of the chapter. There's an American painter who was called John Sargent.

He lived in the late 1800s and died in the early 1900s. He was a famous painter in his day. And he once painted a picture, a painting of roses.

It was just a small painting, but it became very precious to him, became very important to him. It was a painting that was praised by art critics as something that was so beautiful and so delicate in so many ways.

And he had offers, large offers from people to buy the painting, but he never sold it. He considered it his best work.

[28 : 28] And he was proud of it. But the reason that he kept it was this, that whenever he felt discouraged as an artist, whenever he felt that he was losing his focus or felt that he was a failure as an artist and just couldn't paint anything, he said he would look at that painting and remind himself that I painted that.

And very often that would take him back to his focus on the gifts that he had, the gift that he had as an artist, and he would continue to paint very beautiful paintings. In a sense, maybe that's how we are with God's Word.

There's a temptation for us at times when, as I was saying with the young ones, when we're fans or followers, when the going gets hard, when things are difficult, that we can look at God's Word and think, there's nothing there for me.

That doesn't make any sense to me. And the temptation is to turn away from it. When the reality is that by having God's Word, it should be the opposite.

So that when there are times when we are feeling discouraged, when we are feeling downcast or disheartened and things that are going on, that we recognize that God has given us this Word.

[29 : 52] That we recognize what he has done for us, what he tells us in this Word, that he gave his Son. And we recognize, God did that for me.

So we are to come back to God's Word again and again, and here to find encouragement in our lives, strength in our lives.

This passage, chapter 4 in 2 Corinthians, as we look at this chapter, it reminds us not to lose heart, not to turn away from God's Word, but indeed to come closer to him day by day, even in the most difficult circumstances.

And we all know the kind of days that we live, that we live in. And it's so easy to lose heart, so easy to be dismayed in all that we see going on around us, or even in our own lives and experiences too. And above all, we see people and nations all over the world turning away from God, saying there is no God, we don't need God, God isn't real.

[31 : 07] People are not interested in the things of God, and so we can lose heart and think what we are doing, whether it's preaching or evangelism or just living our lives in our communities among people, we can lose heart as if nothing is happening, nothing is changing.

But this passage reminds us what we have, that we have a treasure. We have something that is priceless, something that is precious, something that we need to hold on to firmly for ourselves, but also to show to others as well.

And that's exactly what Paul was doing in this city of Corinth. You're going back 2,000 years here to the city of Corinth, a place that was in many ways a new city, a city that had been built only about eight years before this.

It was a Roman city occupied by Romans, soldiers and authorities, and to be a Christian in this city was a challenge because the Romans hated the Christians.

And if they tried to do anything that was putting the Lord up before people, they were very often persecuted or worse, they were put to death.

[32 : 35] So it wasn't an easy place to live in, and so people could have easily lost heart. But Paul comes to them, the apostle sent by God to come to this city, he comes saying to them, do not lose heart.

And he goes on to tell them why. We see Paul reminding them here as to reasons for them not to lose heart and for ourselves not to lose heart today.

That we have this ministry, this gospel, this treasure in jars of clay, as he says in verse 7. So that verse itself reminds us we have a great treasure, the good news of Jesus, but he says in jars of clay.

So there's something fragile there as well, and we are indeed a fragile people. This chapter is kind of marked in three stages.

We do not lose heart, he says in verse 1, because of this powerful word of God that we have. Then in verse 7, we don't lose heart, even though that we are weak.

[33 : 54] And then in verse 16, we don't lose heart, because we have something precious to look forward to as well. So we're going to focus just for a time on verse 7, down to the end of the chapter.

And there's three things that we've given here to remind us why we shouldn't lose heart. And the first is, in our weakness, we can know strength.

Secondly, we see in our pains, we can know his protection. And then thirdly, we'll see that though, as it describes here, we are wasting away, we too are watching for something better.

So the first thing we want to see here is, though we feel weak, there is still a strength for us. We're reminded here of our own weaknesses, first and foremost.

How do we go on in hard times? How do we go on when the going is tough? And especially as Paul is here speaking about showing forth the glory of God, telling others of the good news of the gospel.

[35 : 16] That was what the church in Corinth was there for, to proclaim the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the glory of God in Jesus Christ. And yet there was times when they found it difficult.

There was times in their own experience when they felt weak, just as we all do at times. We are just jars of clay.

So we have a treasure in jars of clay. So we think of ourselves as those jars of clay. What kind of image does that bring to mind?

Jars of clay in these days in Corinth were important. Jars of clay were used for carrying all kinds of things, water, wine, important things for their lives from day to day.

But it wasn't like they were just mass produced. If you broke one, you just got another one. It wasn't quite that easy. So very often you would see jars that were chipped and fragile and cracked and very easily broken.

[36 : 28] So these jars, it's not an image of strength but of weakness. And every day that goes by for ourselves, we are reminded that that is what we are like too.

We are a fragile people. We have our own chips and cracks. We're very fragile in so many ways. We sort of go on in life in that way.

So we feel our own sense of weakness. But yet what Paul says to them here is, but we have this treasure in jars of clay to show the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

So Paul and those who are with them, they've known their own fragility. They've known their own weaknesses. They've known their own challenges. They too are jars of clay.

But he says we have this surpassing power that belongs to God. So he's reminding the people in his day and himself too and ourselves today as well that we can have courage and perseverance in the midst of everything that comes our way.

[37 : 51] That is how we should feel ourselves. Even when we are discouraged, we don't lose heart. Even when we're disappointed, we don't lose heart.

Even when we're wanting to quit, we don't lose heart. There are so many challenges for you. And for me. And Paul was coming to them with this message.

This message of hope. Do not lose heart. Has anyone come here today saying, you know what? I really hope today that the minister preaches a word that will leave me feeling downcast.

That will help me to lose heart. I really want to be discouraged this morning. I'm sure no one has come feeling like that.

You come here to see that no matter what is going on, that there is good news. To come here feeling that you want to be discouraged or leave feeling downhearted.

[39 : 03] It would be like going out to eat in a restaurant and going with the approach, I want to go to this restaurant so I get food poisoning. Or I want to go to this restaurant because I've heard the food they serve is rubbish.

You don't go with that in mind. You go to eat and be satisfied and be filled. And that's why we should come here today as well.

That's why we come to God's word, to recognize that we don't lose heart in his word. We don't turn away from it because here we have something that fills us up and leaves us feeling a sense of hope and encouragement.

that we have a treasure for ourselves, this hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the one who gives life to us, even as jars of clay, fragile, cracked, chipped as we are.

Despite all that is wrong and weak about us, we have one who is powerful and able to help. And he reminds us of that later on in the book of 2 Corinthians chapter 12.

[40 : 19] That great verse that says, but he said to me, this was to Paul himself, in his own weakness, he said, God said to him, my grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness.

Paul, we often think of as the great apostle, such a strong faith, yet he too was just a jar of clay, fragile, weak at times, and needed the grace of God.

So do we. But we have that promise, my grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness. So we do not lose heart because we are weak, because we have the power of God.

The second thing we see here is we have pains, but we're protected. Paul describes here the reality of the Christian life in verse 8 down to verse 12.

He speaks there of different things, and it's quite a vivid picture, isn't it? He says, we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed. Perplexed, but not driven to despair.

[41 : 39] Persecuted, but not forsaken. Struck down, but not destroyed. There is pain even in following Jesus.

When you think everything is going to be well and good for us, there is still times of pain and many different kinds. And imagine you were to take these words as a job description and to think this is what your job is going to entail.

And you look at the kind of words that Paul is using here. He describes being afflicted, squeezed, and under pressure all the time.

He describes this as coming from every side, so from every way, direction, and place, and occasion. This is ongoing. He then says perplexed.

It's almost to be lost. You don't know which way to turn. You don't know which way to go.

Persecuted. The idea behind persecuted is almost being hunted like an animal where people are out to get you.

[42 : 48] You're struck down. It's almost like you're just feeling as if everyone is on top of you, beating you down. So there's a very vivid picture for us here.

And it's apparent to us that this is what Paul himself had suffered on many occasions and why he's writing to the church at Corinth as the people there are suffering these things as well.

But perhaps today, these words describe you and your own situation. All of these things, afflicted, perplexed, persecuted, struck down.

You feel at a loss at times. Don't know where to turn. Don't know where to go as everything is on top of you. Well, we have these words here to remind us today, you're not alone and you're not the first and you won't be the last.

This is the experience of many people down through every generation. And perhaps you're saying to yourself now, well, maybe the minister is here to leave me feeling hopeless and to lose heart and to feel discouraged.

[44 : 05] But as we come to the Word, we see that although there are all these difficulties, although there are all these challenges, many of them, we see too that there is hope in them.

We are pained in many ways, but what he reminds us of here is we are protected. That the Lord is with us. Because you notice as Paul goes through this list, afflicted, crushed, perplexed, persecuted.

You see all of these things, but there's another word with them. He says, we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair.

We are persecuted, but not forsaken. Struck down, but not destroyed. And so what's the answer in all of these situations?

It's to remember God with us. Yes, there are times when we feel afflicted in every way, but we're not crushed because the Lord gives us strength.

[45 : 26] There are times when we are perplexed, we don't know which way to go, but we don't despair because God can guide us. We can feel persecuted.

That's people against us in so many ways, but not forsaken. That's God is with us. Struck down, but not destroyed.

And never will be because God is for us. So what Paul is saying to us here is that throughout all our different trials, throughout all of these different experiences, we may have pains, but we are protected.

He is with us. There's a story of a young missionary. His name was William Borden. He grew up in America and he was an heir to a great fortune.

A millionaire. His family was rich. He graduated in college and could have done pretty much anything in his life. But he was converted at a young age.

[46 : 34] And from a very early age in his life, what he wanted to do was serve the Lord. And he got a particular interest in foreign mission. And so, he turned his back on his wealth.

He left that life behind. And he went to Egypt, to Cairo initially, in the hope of going on then to China as a missionary. But he hadn't been in Egypt long, where he was sharing the gospel with the Muslims in that city.

And after about four months there, he became ill. And he had developed a spinal form of meningitis. And after only four months, he passed away at the age of 25.

Many people would say, hey, what was the point in that? Such a waste in so many ways. And yet, if you go to Egypt, to Cairo, there's a graveyard, a cemetery there for our missionaries who had passed away.

There's a gravestone for William Borden. And on it are the words, apart from faith in Christ, there is no explanation for a life as this.

[47 : 55] Apart from faith in Christ, there is no explanation for such a life as this. What does that say?

Well, it says to us that he lived for Christ. His faith was so strong, he was called by the Lord to do that, even though it was for a short time.

The Lord used him. We do not lose heart. Though there are times of pain, the Lord always has a purpose and is always there for his people.

And we conclude by seeing that as you come to the end of this chapter, we see that there is the great hope for all of God's people. In verse 16 down to the end it says, so we do not lose heart.

In the midst of everything that's going on around us and as he says here, all that's going on within us, though we, our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day.

[49 : 10] So Paul is saying these great words for us, do not lose heart. If these were the only words you take today, rejoice in them and the one who is behind them, our Lord Jesus Christ, do not lose heart because he is there for us.

And he wants us or his people here on ourselves today to go on with this sense of a vision of God to remind us that yes, we will have pains in this world, but that there is greater to come.

Now he says it in a way that we could think, what does he know of suffering? When he describes it there in verse 17 as this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.

So we look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, that's temporary, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

It's hard for us to understand all the different things that go on in this world and Paul isn't just putting down on it here by describing them as momentary afflictions.

[50 : 33] He says that so we will see the greater purpose of God in our lives as we put our trust in him. It's a great example for us from the Old Testament.

In the book of Genesis, it's the life of Joseph. Joseph, who had many brothers who were jealous of him. He was his father's favorite.

And his brothers didn't like this, so they sold him, and he became a slave in Egypt. In Egypt, he was falsely accused of things and cast into prison.

And so here he was, going through all these times of hardship and challenges. His own family had turned against him, and yet many years later, that whole experience was used for good.

His own brothers had to come to Egypt for help, and he had been restored in a prominent position in Egypt, almost like prime minister, as we would call it today. And he was able to show mercy to his brothers and to his family and to help them in a time of famine.

[51 : 41] And as Joseph looked back on his life, as he saw all that had happened in his life, his brothers turning against him, being put in prison in Egypt, all these hardships, he was able to look back and say to his own brothers, you meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.

So he could see that in the midst of everything that happened, God still had good in the midst of it. And that is hard for us to understand at times.

But it's by seeing the eternal weight of glory, as he describes it here, to see that everything in this world, it's temporary. And that's not what we are to chase after, the things of this world that will satisfy us, but only for a short time.

but we are to look to the things that are unseen in many ways for us. But by faith we look to Jesus, and there find the things that are eternal, the things that are permanent, the things that God has

prepared for all his people.

And that is the hope that the Lord Jesus gives to us. the things in this world will pass away.

[53 : 08] But the things of God are permanent and eternal. And that should give us hope. That's what helps us to not lose heart in the midst of all that goes on in this life.

People in this world, they seek after their treasure. You've seen it over generations. You think of the race and space for people to find their way to the roots of creation and all that's behind it.

People are looking for answers in so many places that are just temporary, that are passing away.

You think of people in the gold rush or the oil rush where people are looking to make their fortune in these things.

Again, things that will pass away. You think of people on a smaller scale today who pin their hopes on winning the lottery or something like that.

It'll be life-changing, yes, in many ways, but is it for the better? It's only temporary. We're looking for treasure in the wrong place.

[54 : 20] But here Paul reminds us that we have a great treasure, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, something so precious, so powerful that makes us rich beyond everything else that this world can offer us.

We are in jars of clay ourselves, we're brittle and fragile in so many ways. But to know this treasure, to love this treasure, to love the Lord with all our hearts is to know something that's not temporary or just for a moment, but something eternal and forever.

Yes, we'll have our pains, yes, we are wasting away, but we have a hope in Jesus Christ that's secure for all eternity.

Do you know it? Are you a fan or a follower? Are you only there when the going's good, when things are going well, but when the rubber hits the road, I don't need God.

He's not there for me, I'll just turn away and find my treasure in something else. It won't help. It may help for a time, but it's ever only temporary.

[55 : 54] It's to be a follower, to know that the Lord will hold you and support you and give you that sufficient grace day by day as you put your trust in him.

We are weak, but he gives strength. We are pained, but he gives protection. We are wasting away, but may the Lord help us to watch and look to him for the things that are eternal.

Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, we praise you for your goodness to us, that you are the God who has promised always to be with us, never to leave us.

And may all your people, Lord, even today who are feeling crushed and perplexed, persecuted and afflicted in so many different ways. May your people know your great presence and power with them, that they would know, Lord, that things in this world, no matter how hard they are, are passing by, but that we have something precious to look forward to.

The treasure we have now is what we look to for eternity and that hope of life with our Lord Jesus.

So may you bless your word and bless us and continue with us now in Jesus' name.

[57 : 18] Amen. We'll conclude by singing to God's praise in Psalm 134. This is in the Sing Psalms version, page 175, Psalm 134, the first version, Psalm 134a.

And we'll sing the whole of this psalm. Praise the Lord, all you as servants as you serve with one accord. Praise the Lord, and your night watches in the temple of the Lord.

The tune of Stuttgart and we'll sing the whole of this psalm. Amen. Praise the Lord, all you are as you serve with one praise the Now or Lord.

The temple of the Lord. Raise your hands with endless temple.

To the Lord your broken ways. He who made the earth and heavens bless you from this holy grace.

[58 : 56] After the benediction I'll go to the main door. Now may grace, mercy and peace from God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with you all now and forevermore. Amen.

Amen.