

Romans 8:23-25

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[0 : 00] You can be seated. Please turn with me in your Bible to Romans chapter 8. We're looking today at Romans chapter 8, verses 23 to 25, but I'm going to start reading at verse 18. Romans chapter 8, if you're looking at a pew Bible, is page 944.

Let's read these verses together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now, and not only the creation, but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope for who hopes for what he sees.

But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for your Word. We thank you for the Apostle Paul who wrote it so many years ago.

Thank you for preserving it and giving it to us, for those who have translated it into our language so we can readily understand it. And we pray that your Spirit would do accomplish the work that you desire in our hearts as we hear your Word today. In Jesus' name, amen. Well, this morning's passage is about hope. It's about the hope that Christians can have. And it's a very relevant topic because in our present world, hope seems to be increasingly difficult to grasp. If you read contemporary philosophers, existentialists, nihilists, postmodern and deconstructionist thinkers, they talk about the absurdity of life, the arbitrary nature of language, the breakdown of meaningful metanarratives, large stories that make sense of the world. Last year, the New York Times Book Review asked two contemporary fiction writers which topics were underrepresented in their field.

[2 : 54] One of them said, joy. We seem to have decided that despair, alienation, and bleakness are the most meaningful and interesting descriptors of the human condition. We are suspicious of the joy and fullness of life. And it's not just philosophers and fiction writers. More and more people are despairing of ever finding lasting joy and hope. For the first time since the 1930s, the overall life expectancy in the United States has decreased. And the primary reason for this is the dramatic increase in the number of deaths of despair caused by drug overdose, alcohol abuse, and suicide.

Suicide is now the second leading cause of death among 15 to 34-year-olds in this country. Last year, the Los Angeles Unified School District, the largest public school district in our country, reported 5,000 incidents among its students of suicidal behavior or deliberate self-harm such as cutting.

More broadly, the number of Americans diagnosed with major depression is steadily increasing, 14 million as of last year. And for the first time again in generations, most younger Americans believe that they will be worse off, not better off, than their parents.

One writer said, a society which believes in a worthwhile future saves in the present so as to invest in the future. Contemporary Western society, both governments and individuals, spends in the present and piles up deaths for the future.

And we think you only live once, so you might as well get what you can for as long as you can. One, we struggle to identify a meaningful and enduring source of hope for the future, that will govern our present experience of reality.

[4 : 48] What is it that you hope for? What is it that keeps you going from one day to the next? Is there an enduring source of hope that gives meaning to your life in the present from day to day?

Or is the object of your hope constantly shifting from one thing to another to another? Or have you lost hope? You've resigned yourself to just existing without really having something to live for.

This morning's passage tells us that Christians live in hope. We hope for what we do not yet see, and we wait for it with patience.

This morning I want to look at three things. I want to look at the glory that awaits us, the struggle to keep waiting for it, and the power we have to wait with eagerness and patience.

First, the glory that we're waiting for. Our future hope as believers in Christ Jesus. What is it that Christians can confidently hope for? What Paul says in verse 23, we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

[6 : 08] Now you might say, well, wait a minute. How are we still waiting for our adoption and redemption? I mean, didn't Paul just say, if you look back in verse 15 and 16, that we are already adopted?

We have received the spirit of adoption. The spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. You know, we're not waiting to see whether God will graciously receive us into His family as His children.

We're not sort of like being in temporary foster care, where you have a place to stay for now, but you really belong to somebody else. No, the Bible says in John 1, 12, to all who received Christ, to those who believed in His name, God gave power to become children of God, born of God.

We can be secure in our status as God's adopted children, welcomed into His family, and our status as God's children is secure. And you might say, well, haven't we already been redeemed?

We've been adopted. We've already been redeemed, right? Romans 3, 24 says, we're justified by His grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 1, 7, in Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our sins.

[7 : 23] But this verse, verse 23, says that we are waiting for these things. What does that mean? Well, the word that's translated here, adoption as sons, it's a combination of two words, the word son and a verb that can mean make, become, or put in place.

In other words, it means being made a son, becoming a son, taking one's place as a son. All right, often this word refers to a child being adopted into a family.

And in the ancient Roman culture, it was the son who received the privileges of full inheritance. And so, Paul is saying that all God's children, men and women alike, receive the full privileges of an inheritance, a spiritual inheritance in Christ.

But here this word, becoming a son, being made a son, doesn't just refer to God's initial act of receiving us into His family. That's what was referred to back in verse 15 and 16, but also to God's final goal, that as His children, we would become, as verse 29 says, conformed to the image of His Son, Jesus.

What are we waiting for? We wait for the day when we will see Jesus, our Savior, face to face, as He is. When we will be made completely like Him, when we will reflect that beautiful image that God's children were meant to bear.

[8 : 49] From the very beginning, we wait for the day when we will take our rightful place as heirs of God's kingdom and rule over God's creation in the new heavens and the new earth. That's what verse 19 and 21 speak about.

The revealing of the sons of God, when creation itself will attain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. You might ask, what exactly is this glory?

That word comes up a lot in the Bible and quite a bit in this passage, verse 18, verse 21. What is this glory of God's children that Paul is talking about? Glory is a multifaceted concept, but one aspect of glory is being praised and publicly approved of.

God's children are promised the glory of being known, loved, and even praised by God Himself. Many years ago, C.S. Lewis gave a sermon entitled, The Weight of Glory.

It's well worth reading. You can find the full text online for free if you Google it. But listen to some of what he says about this, about glory, the promise of glory. He says, nothing is so obvious in a child, not in a conceited child, but in a good child, as its great and undisguised pleasure in being praised.

[10 : 08] Not only in a child either, but even in a dog or a horse. It is the humblest, most childlike, most creaturely of pleasures. The pleasure of a beast before men, a child before her father, a pupil before his teacher, a creature before its creator.

And that is enough to raise our thoughts to what may happen when our redeemed souls, beyond all hope and nearly beyond belief, learn at last that we have pleased him whom we were created to please.

There will be no room for vanity then. We will be free from the miserable illusion that it is our own doing. We will most innocently rejoice in the thing that God has made us to be.

And the moment which heals our old inferiority complex will also drown our pride forever. The promise of glory is the promise almost incredible and only possible by the work of Christ that some of us, that any of us who really chooses shall actually please God.

To please God. To be a real ingredient in the divine happiness, to be loved by God, not merely pitied, but delighted in as an artist delights in his work or a father in a son.

[11 : 23] It seems impossible. A weight or burden of glory which our thoughts can hardly sustain, but so it is. In our first reading this morning, Peter said, the tested genuineness of your faith will one day result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

This is one thing that we're hoping for, taking our place as God's children, heirs of His kingdom, glorified. But second, Paul says, we wait for the redemption of our bodies.

You know, we have redemption through the blood of Christ. We can know the forgiveness of our sins, but Paul says, we're looking forward to the day when our bodies will be fully and finally redeemed.

Think about what that will be like. Our bodies will no longer be enticed by the deceitfulness of sin, no longer defiled by our past participation in it.

No longer drawn to repeat ungodly and destructive patterns, our bodies will be cleansed and renewed and purified and resurrected. Our bodies will no longer bear the ugly scars of trauma, shame, and abuse.

[12 : 39] Revelation 21 says, the former things will pass away, and the one who is seated on the throne will make all things new. And He will wipe away every tear from our eyes, and there will be no more mourning or crying or pain.

Our bodies will no longer be prone to weakness and sickness and decay, no longer vulnerable to disability and dementia and disorientation. We will be fully and finally healed, whole, vigorous, and strong.

Listen to C.S. Lewis once again. He says, we are to shine as the sun. We are to be given the morning star. Scripture gives us these promises. In one way, God has given us the morning star already.

You can go and enjoy the gift on many fine mornings if you get up early enough. What more, you may ask, do we want? Ah, but we want so much more. We do not merely want to see beauty.

We want to be united with the beauty we see, to pass into it, to receive it into ourselves, to bathe in it, to become part of it, but right now, we can't. We discern the freshness and the beauty of the morning, but they do not make us fresh and pure.

[13 : 53] We cannot mingle with the splendor of the sun that we see, but it will not always be so. He says, when human souls have become as perfect in voluntary obedience as the inanimate creation is in its lifeless obedience, and this is the promise when we're conformed to the image of His Son, then we will put on its glory, or rather, that greater glory of which nature is only the first sketch.

We shall eat of the tree of life. The whole person is to drink joy from the fountain of joy. The rapture of the saved soul will flow over into the glorified body. We cannot even imagine this.

We cannot even imagine the glory that we will have. the security we will feel in being known and loved and approved of and even praised by God who made us by His grace.

It's not because we merit this. It's a gift from beginning to end and to share in that beauty that we only glimpse and long for in this world.

Consider the bodily experience of a baby, an embryo, a fetus developing inside her mother's womb. Now, even though none of us remember being in our mother's womb, research shows that a baby developing in her mother's womb can actually experience many things.

[15 : 22] At only eight weeks, the fetus responds to touch around her lips and cheeks. Around 11 weeks, she begins exploring her own body and her surroundings with her mouth, hands, and feet.

Ultrasounds show babies at this stage touching their buttocks, holding on to the umbilical cord, turning, walking up and down the amniotic sac wall on the inside. At 13 weeks, our sense of taste is

developed.

A fetus taste buds look just like those of a mature adult. At 20 weeks, the ears are well developed. At 26 weeks, the unborn child responds to sound and vibration. Some studies even indicate that infants seem to recognize some of what they have heard while they were in the womb, after they come out.

of the womb, whether it's a piece of music or a certain book. But then contrast that experience of a baby developing in her mother's womb to a child born into the world and growing into an adult. Seeing, breathing, eating, crying, cooing, speaking, crawling, walking, running, thinking, feeling, communicating ever more deeply.

[16 : 32] Here's the point. compared to the resurrection life, the glory of the promised life in the world to come, compared to the day when our bodies will be redeemed and we will be fully conformed to the image of Christ, our experience in this present world is only the prenatal stages.

That's why Paul says in verse 18, I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing. We can't even fathom what this glory will be like when we become the glorified, fully alive children of God in the resurrected world.

And just as much as you cannot explain, there is no way that you can explain to a fetus developing in a mother's womb how glorious it will be to emerge, how glorious it will be to breathe in the air and taste delicious food and see a brilliant sunset and speak to a fellow human being and contemplate the greatness of our Creator.

So much less can we fathom the glory of the resurrection life that Christ promises to all who trust in Him in the world to come.

But so real it will be. That's our future hope. It's glorious. We can't see it. We can't even fathom it, but it's going to be glorious.

[17 : 58] But as Paul unpacks the glory that awaits us, he also acknowledges the struggle to keep waiting for it.

This is our second point. Struggle to keep waiting. Verse 24. In hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what he sees, but we hope for what we do not see. One commentator pointed out Paul seems to repeat himself three times here, making a rather obvious point. But Paul isn't stuttering, and he's not repeating himself while he tries to figure out what to say next.

He's intentionally acknowledging and underlining that living in light of the Christian hope is hard because we don't see that which we hope for.

No eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor heart imagined what God has prepared for those who love him. And as we live in the murky shadows of this present evil age, the hope that Christ promises can at times seem distant and vague and even unreal to our clouded spiritual eyes.

[19 : 16] I've been reading the Chronicles of Narnia with my kids recently, and earlier this week we were reading a chapter in The Silver Chair. In that book, Jill and Eustace and Puddleglum have embarked on a dangerous journey through the wild wastelands of the north in order to find a lost prince that many other people have disappeared trying to find.

But Aslan has sent them on this mission. Aslan had directed them to search for a ruined city of the ancient giants, and he had told them to follow his instructions carefully to repeat them morning and evening every single day so they wouldn't forget them.

But they've been traveling for many days, and the weather's getting colder and colder, the terrain is getting more and more difficult to navigate, every night they're sleeping on the ground, huddling together under blankets, and waking up with frost on top of the blankets.

They're freezing. Suddenly, in the middle of nowhere, they meet a beautiful woman riding on a horse. They have no idea who she is or where she comes from, but she's right there, right in front of them, and she promises them, she tells them, about a place called the Castle of Harfang.

And she says, in the Castle of Harfang, you can enjoy hot baths and soft beds and bright fireplaces and four hot meals a day. And almost immediately, the focus of their hope shifts.

[20 : 45] Says they could think of nothing but beds and baths and hot meals and how lovely it would be to get indoors. They never talked any more about Aslan or even about the lost prince whom they were sent to find.

And Jill gave up her habit of repeating Aslan's signs to herself every night and morning. At first, she said she was just too tired, but she soon forgot all about it. And though you might have expected

that the idea of having a good time at Harfang might have made them more cheerful, it really made them more sorry for themselves and more grumpy and snappy with each other.

Isn't that the temptation we face when the Christian life gets hard? When the journey seems like we're trudging through a frigid wasteland and we haven't yet seen what we're hoping for.

We don't feel the presence of God near to us in the way we have at other times. We take our eyes off Jesus and the grand mission He has given us and the glorious hope He has set before us and instead we fix our hope on something else.

That seems closer at hand, more attainable, more tangible, more satisfying. Instead of present sufferings and future glory, our priority becomes comfort now.

[22 : 15] Present relief from our losses and crosses and unwanted burdens. So we fix our hope on a job or a relationship that we can see instead of the God whom we can't see.

Sometimes we stay in unhealthy and ungodly dating relationships for way too long for this very reason. at least I have somebody in this world that I can hold on to.

But Jesus says, you may not be able to see me now but I love you more than anyone else in the world ever will. I shed my blood for you. I poured out my life for you.

I'm for you, not against you. Hold on to me. Some of you may be married. Marriage has been hard for a long time.

And you have little hope that the other person will change. And Jesus says, don't fix your eyes on what you can see.

[23 : 31] Trust me. I know what it's like to be married to a self-centered spouse. The church is my bride after all. All of us. So I'm with you every step of the way.

Even when it seems like a frigid wasteland, I'm teaching you to love not as your spouse loves you but as I have loved you. Sometimes we can even redefine in our own minds what the Christian hope is really about.

Some churches say Jesus didn't primarily come to give us eternal life in the age to come. He came to give us our best life now. Other churches emphasize above all else the Christian mandate to pursue social justice, to be the change you want to see in this world.

Now these are important and biblical concerns. Jesus doesn't promise financial prosperity but He does say to His disciples that He's come to give us abundant life. And the Bible does call us to do justly and love mercy and walk humbly before our God.

But Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, if we have hope for life in this world only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

[24 : 53] Verse 18, Paul says, our present existence, sufferings included, cannot compare to the future glory. Yes, this life matters but 70, 80, 90 years compared to all eternity, it's a drop in the bucket.

We need to let our future hope of glory in Christ shape our present reality instead of allowing our present experience and sufferings to eclipse our future hope.

We need to recover the eternal perspective that the Christian church in the prosperous West is in danger of losing. I would dare say that most Christians in the Western world think more about preparing for retirement than about preparing for eternity.

Many people, including many Christians, say things like, I hope I just die in my sleep someday, quickly and painlessly. I want to enjoy my life.

I want to be as active as I can for as long as I can. I want to complete my career, enjoy my retirement, and then when death comes I want to be gone quick, and then, yeah, I'll go to be with Jesus or whatever happens next.

[26 : 14] But that is a far cry from how other Christians in other times and places have approached death and dying and eternity. Francis of Assisi in the Middle Ages said this.

He said, reflect and see that the day of death is approaching. When he became seriously ill, he had dropsy, his body became full of fluid, he insisted that his doctor tell him the truth about his prognosis.

The doctor gave one of those nice answers. He says, by the grace of God, all will be well. Francis says, tell me the truth. What's your medical opinion? I know God can heal me if He wants to, but let's be honest here.

And the doctor said, in my opinion, you probably have about a few months left to live. And he said, thank you. And he rejoiced because he was so looking forward to going and being with Christ.

And he spent the rest of his life praying and praising God more and more and planning for the future of the order he had founded. Or consider one of the Puritans, Leonard Hoare.

[27 : 24] He was the president of Harvard. It was before Yale existed. So we can excuse him. He prayed for many years that Lord willing, he would die of a consumptive and lingering distemper.

In other words, a chronic and incurable disease that would gradually progress over a long period of time. Why in the world would he pray repeatedly for such an awful thing?

His answer was, so I can intentionally prepare for eternity. To turn away from the passing pleasures of this present world, to fix my affections on Jesus Christ alone, and to exhort my family and friends to take account of the shortness of their lives in light of the shortness of my own, and to live in light of eternity and not get lost focusing on this present age.

This is the eternal perspective the Apostle Paul had in Philippians 1 when he said, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

My desire is to depart and be with Christ for that is far better. But he said, to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. You see, if you say today, I want to go and be with Christ, that'd be my choice.

[28 : 51] It'd be far better. People start worrying you're suicidal. Paul was not suicidal. It is not the same thing. Paul says, we have hope for this life and the life to come. God's put me here on this earth.

I have a purpose for being here. He says, it's necessary for me to remain here on your account. God's put me here so that I can serve others. He has given me a mission and I'm going to complete that mission and trust Him every step of the way even if I don't see what in the world it is.

But my hope is ultimately fixed on being with Christ for all eternity. So there's a glory that awaits us. There's a struggle to keep waiting for it.

And third, Paul indicates where we get the power to keep on waiting, to wait eagerly and patiently. Verse 23 says, we wait eagerly and verse 25 says, we wait with patience.

We can wait eagerly because we have the first fruits of the Spirit. Verse 23. Paul tells us that though we do not yet see the fullness of the glory that we hope for, we do enjoy the first fruits of the Spirit.

[30 : 06] The first fruits is an agricultural metaphor that's used throughout the Old and New Testaments. Basically, the first fruits is the first batch of crops of the season.

They indicated the kind of harvest that was sure and soon to follow. And Paul says, the Holy Spirit who indwells us as believers in Jesus is the first fruits of our future glory.

The appetizers of the heavenly banquet to come. Ephesians, Paul communicates the same idea using an economic metaphor. He says, the Holy Spirit is the pledge or the first installment or the down payment on our inheritance as children of God.

We have a very real present experience of the Holy Spirit, His goodness and power now. And this very real present experience is simultaneously the guarantee of the future glory that is even greater to come that we hope for and yet do not see.

What does this look like to have the first fruits of the Spirit? Well, it means that the Holy Spirit brings some of the content of our future hope, that glory, into the reality of our present experience.

[31 : 26] Even now, we can begin to know the glory of being loved and approved of by God. And when Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River, the Father's voice spoke to Him from heaven and said, You are my Son, my beloved.

With you, I am well pleased. And when we are baptized into Christ through faith in Him, those words are spoken to us too.

God the Father publicly and visibly claims us as His own. He says, You are my beloved child. I have adopted you in Christ with you. I am well pleased. So you can look back to the day that when you were baptized and remember that God has given you the first fruits of His Spirit.

It's a seal. It's a sign. We can rest in His love for us. We can long for the day when He will say to us at the end of our earthly pilgrimage, Well done, good and faithful servant.

Enter now into the joy of your Master. We can begin to know that glory. We can begin to taste of the heavenly banquet to come. We're going to take the Lord's Supper in a few minutes.

[32 : 44] And when we take the bread and the cup, the symbols of the body and blood of Christ, our Savior, when we feed on Him by faith and ask Him to fill us afresh with His Spirit, we taste and see that the Lord is good and we long for the day when we'll feast with Him in His kingdom.

We can even begin to experience the redemption of our bodies. Maybe you've experienced God graciously restoring your body to health after a season of sickness or stress through whatever means.

Maybe it was a miraculous healing in response to prayer. Maybe it's through natural means that God has provided like exercise and diet and sleep. God has made those things too. Maybe it's through medical treatments and the wisdom that God has given to your doctors.

Maybe it's all three. Whatever the means God uses, we can praise Him for our health and we can look forward to the day when our bodies will be fully redeemed and forever healed.

Or when we experience a new freedom from formerly besetting sins. When we gain new insights into God's glory and grace. When we receive new power to serve and to speak in the name of Christ.

[33 : 51] All of these are the first fruits of the Spirit. Paul's encouragement to us is, brothers and sisters, let every taste of glory, every experience of the first fruits of the Spirit motivate us to await with eagerness the future glory that God has promised to us and to not tire of hoping and looking forward and anticipating that and enjoying the first fruits of that.

Our passage this morning ends not just with eagerness but also with patience. The end of verse 25. We wait with patience.

That word means with resoluteness, with steadfast endurance, continuing to bear up despite present difficulties. How can we wait not only eagerly but also patiently?

Well, verse 26 tells us that the Spirit helps us in our weakness. Now, Pastor Matt's going to get into that theme next week. I don't want to try to steal his sermon, but I want to make one point that spans the passage Pastor Nick preached on last week and the passage Pastor Matt's preaching on next week and the passage that I'm preaching on this week.

I want you to notice a word that is repeated three times. Verse 22, verse 23, verse 26, groaning. Now, throughout the Bible, groaning is connected with three things, oppression, prayer, and childbirth.

[35 : 27] So, in the book of Exodus, the people groaned in the midst of their oppression in Egypt and God heard their cries. In the Psalms, many of the Psalms, the Psalm writers, the Psalms of Lament, they lay their groanings.

Sometimes it's translated sighings before the Lord. In prayer. And several times in Scripture, groaning is connected with childbirth. Verse 22 says, the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth.

Literally, it's groaning and travailing like a woman in childbirth. Why? Why is creation groaning? Because it's been subjected to futility and it can't fix itself.

Creation is longing to be set free but it can't free itself. And then in verse 23, same word comes up, God's children. We ourselves groan inwardly.

We groan under the weight of our fallenness. We long to be set free but we can't fix ourselves either. But in verse 26, the Holy Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings.

[36 : 34] So here's the picture. The whole creation groans. Within the creation, God's children groan. And within God's children, God's Spirit who indwells us groans.

The picture is of God renewing the whole universe from the inside out through the indwelling Holy Spirit. God's creation, God's children, and even God's Spirit are compared to a woman in labor who through painful anguish brings forth new life.

And the Holy Spirit brings life, gives birth to the children of God and the glorified children of God in turn lead the creation into joyful praise. Now here's the point.

We can wait patiently because even in our deepest moments of anguish and pain, the Holy Spirit dwells within us, bringing forth through our anguish and pain life and freedom and glory in ways that we can't even imagine.

Wesley Hill describes this experience in his book, *Washed and Waiting*. He writes, so much of my life as a Christian has simply been learning how to wait, to be patient, to endure, to bear up under an unwelcome burden for the long haul.

[37 : 58] Taped onto my desk is a quote, Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart.

Having patience with your own weaknesses is something of what Paul was commending when he described the tension of living on this side of wholeness.

When God acts climatically to reclaim the world and raise our dead bodies from the grave, there will be no more weakness, no more disorder, no more temptation, but until then, we hope for what we do not see.

We are washed and waiting. This is our life as Christians, our identity as people who've been forgiven and spiritually cleansed, and our struggle as people who persevere, sometimes with frustrating thorns in our flesh, looking forward to what God has promised to do.

We live in hope for what we do not see. We can wait with eagerness because we have the fruit, fruits of the Spirit. We've tasted that glory that is to come, and we can wait with patience because the Holy Spirit dwells deep within us and is groaning, and in our deepest moments of anguish and pain is bringing life and freedom and joy and glory out of them in ways we can't even fathom.

So we can say with the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians, therefore we do not lose heart. Though our outer self may be wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.

[39 : 22] For this light, 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. Let's pray.

Father, Father, we pray that by Your Spirit dwelling in us, You would renew our hope and fix it once again clearly on You.

We pray that we would trust Your promise of this unfathomable glory that awaits us. We pray that You would be near us in our struggle to keep on waiting for it and not to turn our hopes toward lesser things.

We thank You for Jesus and we thank You for Your Spirit. We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.