

## What is it that we hope for?

Romans 8:22-27

Good morning and welcome to worship on this beautiful Sunday morning. As always, it is such a joy and privilege to be able to gather, even in this way, to worship the Lord, and this morning's call to worship is exactly that, it is one of praise, of worship and a reminder of our solid hope found in the Lord – from Psalm 121:

**“<sup>1</sup> I lift up my eyes to the hills — where does my help come from? <sup>2</sup> My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. <sup>3</sup> He will not let your foot slip — he who watches over you will not slumber; <sup>4</sup> indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.**

**<sup>5</sup> The Lord watches over you — the Lord is your shade at your right hand; <sup>6</sup> the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. <sup>7</sup> The Lord will keep you from all harm — he will watch over your life; <sup>8</sup> the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.”**

Let us open in a word of prayer.

**Opening song: Christ our hope in life and death - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oibli1rz7mw>**

Our scripture reading this morning is taken from Romans chapter 8. In this chapter, Paul is teaching about the future glory which is in store for those who are in Christ Jesus. However, the future glory which Paul speaks about here, I believe, comes in two parts. This first is a truth that we all know about and are fully aware of, and it is one that we rejoice in each and every day. It comes to us in verses 18-21, just a few verses before what we will be looking at this morning. That is the fact that we are truly, already sons and daughters of the Most High. This is such a beautiful thought for us. Already, we have been assured that we are, as Christians, part of the family of God and that by the sacrifice of Christ Jesus, we have been brought into the glorious freedom that the Lord has promised. This is of course the present “*future glory*” that we as believers have experienced. Yet Paul seems to make it clear to us that there is a whole lot more to this future glory. And so, at this point, Paul moves on to the second part of this future glory. We read now from Romans 8:22-27:

**<sup>22</sup> We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. <sup>23</sup> Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. <sup>24</sup> For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.**

**<sup>26</sup> In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. <sup>27</sup> And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.**

What we see in verse 22 is the personification of creation as a woman in labour waiting for the birth of her child. Of course, this is amplified in that creation is not simply waiting for something to happen but is instead groaning for this outcome. In the beginning of this section, Paul gives us an indication of what this

is when he says, *“The creation (referring to both the animate and inanimate) waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.”*

Furthermore, it is not only the creation that groans, but we ourselves, referring to those who are in Christ, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons and daughters, the redemption of our bodies, that is what Paul says and it seems a slight contradiction to what our present condition or status is. Like I have previously mentioned, Christians are already sons and daughters of God, this is of course something that we are truly well aware of. So why then do we groan inwardly in anticipation of our adoption?

What we must understand is that this is now not a reference to the “present future glory” we spoke about earlier but rather, this is reference to what comes next. You see, our future glory as sons and daughters of God has already begun. Colossians 1:13-14 says, **“<sup>13</sup> For he has rescued us [past tense] from the dominion of darkness and brought us [past tense] into the kingdom of the Son he loves, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”** Yet we also know that, because we are still in this world, the full realization of this future glory has not yet been seen. We of course, had our hopes in this redemption, in salvation, but it is not hope that brings about salvation. As Ephesians says, we are saved by faith. We are not saved by hope, but hope accompanies salvation.

Our hope was of course grounded in the gift of salvation, but more than that, our hope now continues to be grounded in what is to come – that is the full realization of our inheritance which is in Christ. It is the redemption of the body on the day of the resurrection, which we await patiently.

I believe that many of us get stuck in the first part of this future glory which Paul speaks about. We have, for so many years, placed our hope in the “present future glory”, that is to say that we continually hope for salvation, we continue to hope that God will call us into His family. And this is not wrong, in fact, this is certainly a necessity for each one of us. But at times, we become so comfortable in this step that we forget about what is still to come. Friends, we are already adopted by God into His family, and we praise Him for that glorious gift. But we continue in hope as we wait for what is still to come, that is the fullest realization of our groaning in the Spirit, that we would see our adoption as God's sons and daughters made perfectly complete when Christ Jesus returns.

Let us pray.

**Song of praise: Cornerstone - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3HH\\_1Zbs&ab\\_channel=TheCommissionedTheCommissioned](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3HH_1Zbs&ab_channel=TheCommissionedTheCommissioned)**

Lincon Hardouin  
Trinity, Lynnwood  
23<sup>rd</sup> May 2021 – Pentecost Sunday