

Sunday, July 19, 2026

Patiently Hopeful

Romans 8:12-25

Do you realize it's been a year since we moved into our new home? I actively try to remember that this is more than just a place we come to on Sunday. I still walk into this sanctuary with fresh, excited eyes – anticipating what God will show us.

In His perfect timing, God fulfills all of His promises! We patiently, hopefully, waited for a home that we could afford, that had easier upkeep, that would allow us the finances to serve our community and our world ... not just keep the doors open for another week. And here we are!

It feels good to know that we are able to worship with our loved ones who can't be physically present. I believe God gave us the guidance to use the internet to His advantage – so that everyone can experience God's presence together.

And we continue to be patiently hopeful that our congregation will grow so that we can serve more fully in the way we imagine God wants us to serve!

I'm patiently hopeful that our world will be more peaceful, safer, more compassionate ... I'm patiently hopeful that our eyes will be opened wide so that they we are fully aware of God's guidance in how we are to be a part of improving this world.

I want to see equality for all God's children. I patiently, and not so patiently, hope for a world that believes that to love your neighbor as yourself will ultimately bring about a peace that will shake us to the core!

Let's look at the word "hope." As children, we hoped we would get what we want for our birthdays. As young adults, we hoped we would get into the college of our choice, or get the job of our dreams ... we hoped to find the perfect home for our family. As we get older, we hope for a healthy life, for a car that runs well, for our children, family and friends to be happy.

That's how I understood the verb "Hope" for many years. In fact, the Miriam Webster Dictionary uses this as its first definition: "To want something to happen or be true and think that it could happen or be true."

And as a noun: "The feeling of wanting something to happen and thinking that it could happen: a feeling that something good will happen or be true."

Hope was always a wishful thinking kind of attitude for me. Until one day, I realized the true meaning of hope!

In fact, if you do a search for "Hope" on the internet, the first thing that pops up is this:

v. verb

1. To wish for something with expectation of its fulfillment.
2. To have confidence; trust.
3. To look forward to with confidence or expectation.

We hope that our children will be successful.

n. noun

1. A wish or desire accompanied by confident expectation of its fulfillment.

The biblical definition is "confident expectation." Without hope, our lives lose their meaning; without hope, when we're dead ... we are just dead. As Christians, we put our hope – our trust – in God, that God might provide the protection and help we need; that we might be free from all fear and anxiety.

Our hope is in Christ, who fulfilled all the Old Testament promises. Our hope is in Christ, who died that we might live; who took our sins to the cross so that we could receive the free gift of salvation.

In Romans 5:2b-5, we hear: "*And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our suffering, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character, and character, hope. And*

hope does not disappoint us; because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given.”

As we endure through our suffering, our hope is strengthened! And in our life-times we’ve seen suffering – people have lost jobs have homes, have been sick and have died. There’s been fear and confusion. But through it all, we have had the hope that there would be change.

And then we come to Patience. As kids, how many of us were patient before a special occasion arrived? Whether it was a vacation, a birthday, a visit from a friend or even an ice cream cone – a child just isn’t easily patient!

I have a lot more patience now, though. Toby and I have patiently – okay, not always so very patiently – waited for our next vacation, which is coming in a few days. I’ve tried to be very patient as our seemingly constant home remodeling and re-organizing has seen very slow progress over the years. I, thankfully, have a lot of patience in traffic and in doctors’ offices.

But think of the patience of Paul, of many other early Christians and, sadly of many Christians today. They are patient through persecution. They are patient through true pain endured because of their faith. I think about the many stories of loss, of sadness, of suffering that we hear and we realize how undeservedly blessed we are. When I think what others have, and still, endure for Christ, I realize all we have for which to be grateful!

Patience is a key element of our faith. It shows our trust in God. The older we become, the more we wait - the stronger our patience grows. As the awareness of the presence of the Holy Spirit within us grows, our faith in our Heavenly reward grows, too.

We need to bring that hope and patience and faith to the rest of the world. It’s not always easy to do that, so we must live our lives so others see what we have.

We place our trust in God that we are physically and financially able to help others. We trust in God for His provisions.

And then we hope – biblical hope here: confident expectation – that God will work through our gifts of food, of our time, of our voices, of our money, to bring the message of salvation, the saving grace of Jesus Christ, the moving of the Holy Spirit to the lives of those in need so that they, too, might know they are not alone and that we are all loved.

Maybe you’ve been through a difficult time ... maybe you’re going through one right now. Maybe a friend or relative is suffering. Maybe your family has struggled over the years to get to where you are now. Know that there is hope for each of us. That the sun appears brighter after the storm, that hope is more apparent after the trial. Trust in the knowledge that we don’t walk this way alone.

There are so many things we pray for – an end to the breakdown of marriages and families; an end to crime; an end to racism; an end to drug and alcohol addiction; an end to the decay of our society; an end to oppression ... the list goes on. And we have to pray to be shown how we can be a part of the change in this world that everyone hopes for.

I remember telling my granddaughter Chloe about my hope chest – it was a foreign idea for her! When I graduated high school, I was given a cedar chest to keep all those things I collected for when I would eventually be married. I hoped to be married and I prepared for it.

We should all have a Hope Chest ... a place to save all those things that we hope for in Christ. In Job 6:8, Job says, *“Oh, that I might have my request, that God would grant what I hope for...”* We hoped to be able to joyfully gather together in a new sanctuary, and here we are! What else do you confidently hope for? You know I’m a believer in keeping a joy journal, why not keep a hope chest, a hope journal, too? Hope is powerful because it turns us toward God.

Today’s passage asks the question, *“Where is our hope for redemption?” “Where is our hope for being saved from sin?” When will the right prevail, righteousness win out over wrong?*

Well, we know our hope is in Christ and we are to be patiently hopeful that all will happen in God’s perfect timing. Until then, we are to do the work set before us, serving, loving, teaching, reaching, speaking out for those without a

voice – being the hands and hearts of Christ for all those who cry out for him. We are to fulfill the great commission – always sharing our faith.

In Romans, Paul said that *“in hope we were saved.”* The moment we believed in Jesus Christ as our Savior, we were saved, we were changed, we become more and more the person God desires us to be. Then Paul said, *“Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.”*

So, we are hoping, confidently expecting, that day when we will see God’s kingdom.

One very important reason that we wait in patience for God’s kingdom to be realized is found in 2 Peter 3:9, *“The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”*

I believe that this is one of the ideas behind today’s parable. The weeds are not burned until the harvest, because God is patiently waiting for everyone to repent and turn to Him. 2 Peter 3:15 say, *“regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.”*

So what’s going into your Hope Chest?

I patiently hope to hear many voices fill this sanctuary; I wait for day when our voices fill this room; I hope for the day when children overflow the Sunday School; and I yearn for the day that everyone will truly believe the words Jacob spoke ... “Surely the Lord is in this place.” I pray for the day when many voices cry out, “Abba! Father!”