

No Rivals in Our Redemption

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[0 : 0 0] next week to begin a new sermon series in a new book of the bible to be announced i know what it is i'm not still trying to figure that out i've been working on it now for about a month and god willing next week we'll start in that new book of the bible verse one just one verse i'll give you a hint it's the foundation of everything that could be any verse in the bible i know but for today let's do today let's talk about what we're going to see in god's word if we can we ready is it me do i click or do you guys start me off i mean no rivals in our redemption no rivals in our redemption let me ask you a few questions do you have a biblical perspective on life now you're a christian you're here you're wanting to worship you're wanting to praise god for those of you who are indeed christians do you have a biblical perspective on life you'll be tempted to say well i think so pretty sure i do well listen to this do you pursue perceive and practice life from a biblical framework your view on life has everything to do with your hopes dreams expectations and desires in life so as your hopes dreams expectations everything that you want in life is tied to your pursuit and perception and practice of life from a biblical framework or not we need to delve a little bit more before i jump into this next book of the bible into these matters of what we do with our desires how do we think biblically about our hopes and expectations about life in general about the things that we want to see and accomplish in life but also as we have hopes dreams and expectations toward others especially the people in this room you also have unsafe friends and family members as do i you have certain expectations dreams hopes toward them and for them is it couched biblically are you thinking about your unbelieving friends and family members biblically and is that making a difference in how you relate to them even from a distance how about the way you do your job the way you think about being married the way you go about pursuing life the bible says hope deferred makes the heart sick but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life the scripture also says a few verses later in that same chapter a desire fulfilled is sweet to the soul but we can all relate to both of those i think we've all had hope deferred and it's made our hearts sick and we've all known the sweet savor of hopes and expectations fulfilled that's proverbs 13 verses 12 and 19 if you've ever been heart sick you were probably experiencing dashed hopes and unmet expectations in your life when we hope for and expect certain things in our relationships and they don't happen it makes our heart sick toward others doesn't it heart sickness brings on depression despondency and disillusionment in your relationship with others among other things that we can experience

like sinful anger on the other hand when our hopes and expectations are fulfilled the scripture tells us it's a feeling in reality sweet to our souls and relationships now what's the key scripturally biblically speaking what's the key to keeping this in balance keeping this interaction healthy i'll speak more about this and develop it as we go ground your hope and expectations in Jesus not others simply said difficultly done yes a lot of times people in our lives don't cooperate with that design a lot of times our own hearts don't cooperate with that design learn to live heavenly minded learn to live heavenly minded and learn to live for heavenly treasure rather than being earthly minded and living for earthly treasure again simply said it's hard to do what you and i hope in we will live for yes what we hope in we will live for so i'm asking you this morning to begin by evaluating very quickly in your mind just doing a quick inventory in your heart and head do you have a biblical perspective on life are you pursuing perceiving and practicing life biblically how would you know how would you measure what standard would you use to help you assess that this morning as we sit here before the Lord here's what we want to do you and i want to avoid putting our hope in earthly things that pass away and yet we are constantly tempted to do that and we are constantly sinning in that reality ungodly expectations in our relationships set us up for failure and they derail godly service to one another unfulfilled expectations can be powerfully powerfully detrimental to your life they can ruin our unity as a church and they can destroy love in relationships that you have formerly known as being very close now i've experienced this in my life i'm sure you have too when people bring certain hopes and dreams and expectations to a relationship and they go unfulfilled and it stays that way for a while it can make you bitter and resentful can it not so we're talking about dangerous ground here but we're also talking about ground that's very familiar to all of us as human beings it's one of the reasons that i want to address it going in on the heels of what i did with you in the last three sermons it was a series talking about being devoted to Jesus and living a life dedicated to him this is a sermon that will continue to help you measure in that regard realize then my friends that hopes dreams and expectations can be biblical they can be helpful they can be fulfilling i'm not preaching against those things here's what i'm preaching against and i'm warning against it's against our hopes dreams and expectations becoming idols in our lives assuming a place in our hearts that replace our devotion to God even in a moment they become idols that disillusion us with others and divide our hearts in our walk with God that's what we want to guard against your hopes and dreams and expectations even as a young boy a grown woman a young man your hopes dreams and expectations

becoming idols that disillusion and divide all right let me put that up on here we want to safeguard against that that's what we're aiming at the question then is this how can you and i given the fact that we're gathered together as a church family and i'm speaking to you as a church family i'm not speaking to you simply as individuals i'm trying to draw you in now to a together mentality about facing off with this issue how can we serve the lord together to help prevent all of that in our life as a church family as a church family how can we live more in the expectations dreams and hopes of scripture for our church for each other for what god's doing in our lives and in the way that we relate to each other how can we do that together the answer is this we want to be sure to ground our hopes and expectations for life and for each other in a growing love for the lord jesus again it sounds so simple and straightforward well it is straightforward how can we pursue loving jesus together how can we make something more tangible in the way of being devoted to him as a church family so that we promote unity in the bond of peace well here's what i want to offer this morning it's a very simple and straightforward outline in the way of answering a very simple and straightforward question there are three ways that i want to bring to you that we can guard our hearts in a godly focus guarding our hearts in a godly focus and and working together against earthly rivals as we love god in each other so we have something that we want to promote and we have something that we want to caution ourselves away from we want to promote a godly focus in life as a church family and we want to move away or move against these earthly rivals that take up residence in our heart and move us in the direction of hoping for dreaming for and expecting things that are not grounded in the truth that can happen so quickly in our lives all right the first item that i want to share with you for this outline that i'm going to give you this morning is pursue life again a very simple and i'll have peas here pursue life what am i talking about pursue life seek and savor life biblically for god's greater glory i am not up here saying that we shouldn't enjoy life ecclesiastes tells us that we're to enjoy life enjoy the wife of your youth he says enjoy your friends enjoy the fact that you can eat and drink and that god is making provision for you in your life there's nothing wrong with enjoying our lives christians should be the most joyful people on the planet regardless of circumstances whether you have much or you have nothing paul said i have learned to be content in all things because he made jesus the focus of his life so pursue life biblically for god's glory pursue god's glory and honor through prayerful hearts so that's that's the way that i'm going to emphasize accomplishing this first item that i'm sharing with you you're going to do this through prayer prayer will help define and shape and form your pursuit in life prayer prayer will help form your desires hopes dreams and expectations in life you pray because you're needy i pray because i'm needy we need god or we wouldn't pray that's the basis of what i want to offer you this morning

so pray for god's will and pleasure and that helps us connect the here and now of our everyday with the not yet of our eternity did you hear how i said that praying for god's will and pleasure helps you and i connect the here and now the messy reality of our daily lives with the everyday and the not yet of our eternity we have an everyday and a not yet of our eternity to look forward to in other words we're not defined by this planet folks we can't be as christians we have been saved out of the reality of this sin cursed world and yet left in this world to be a light you and i are defined by jesus christ and our new identity as citizens of heaven not citizens of earth it is a it's a wonderful miracle isn't it it's breathtaking for us to meditate on that this prayerful hope focuses our hope of heavenly priorities and biblical realities happening in our daily life it's a certain hope so this isn't the kind of hope that we define that uh you know i hope it rains this week because i planted that new grass mitch and i don't want it to die listen this guy and i prayed and prayed when he put my sod in for me lord please don't let this sod die right it's not that kind of hope this is a certain hope this is a hope that's built on the promises of god it's a hope that grounds me in something outside of and beyond myself it's faith it's faith in the certainty of god coming through as god based on what he said that's the kind of hope i'm talking about if you'll look at matthew chapter 6 i told you we'll be in a number of different scriptures i know this is unusual for me every once in a while i'll do something like this that'll allow me to have some talking points with you from some scriptures that i wanted to share on a certain theme matthew 6 beginning in verse 9 and you'll recognize what's going on here verse 8 says so do not be like them people who are meaningless in their prayer life for your father knows what you need before you ask him now there's a great truth isn't it before you even pray your father knows what you need before you ask him verse 9 pray then in this way our father who is in heaven hallowed be your name your kingdom come your will be done on earth as it is in heaven give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors and do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from evil for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever amen notice what he follows this up with for if you forgive others for their transgression your heavenly father will also forgive you but if you do not forgive others then your father will not forgive your transgressions very important folks God and his glory is our hope

God and his glory is our hope why did Jesus teach us to pray this way as his followers his learners his disciples because this is a prayer of participation these are glorious and wonderful things going on in heaven which we are guaranteed to be a part of for eternity listen now your new spiritual identity as a Christian is the most important and self-defining thing about you you have been raised up with Jesus Christ and you have been Christian seated with Jesus in the heavenly places Ephesians 2 6 Colossians 3 1 through 4 there are several places in scripture where this spiritual reality is set forth for you in the mind of almighty God spiritually you are fixed in Jesus you are seated in the heavenlies with Jesus and when Jesus comes back you will be married to him in glory that reality is already fixed in the mind and heart of almighty God so that it is a reality it isn't something that we just look forward to it's fixed it's a fact about you you are seated with Jesus in the heavenlies right now wow praise God and God holds that position for you in his son so that there's no power or might in heaven or the universe that can undo it this is who you are this is something that's wonderful and beautiful about this new spiritual identity so you and I are raised up and seated with

[17 : 09] Jesus in the heavenly places and that expresses listen now that expresses your citizenship in the domain and sphere of God your new self your new life are so assured and real that they are already a fixed reality in heaven will yours you will soon take your place with Jesus in a new and glorified body so friends as as a citizen of heaven living now because that's what you would say to me I think that's what I would say to somebody that was telling me this Jeff that is wonderful that is a beautiful wonderful hope a fixed certainty for our future but I live now I live in the mess of now I live in the agedness of my body I live in the challenges and trials of relating to other people and making a living and navigating all the things that are coming at us constantly yeah well as a citizen living now in your new spiritual identity you are called and empowered to mirror in your everyday life on earth the praise the honor and the glory being given to

God in heaven you see that this is a prayer of participation you are praying that you will participate in what's already going on in heaven now what's stopping you what's preventing you from getting on and I don't mean to sound trite I'm just going to say it this way in the way of communication what's preventing you from getting in on the party going on in heaven now it's a celebration is it not God is being celebrated in the glory of his might in heaven he lives in you what's keeping you from honoring glorifying praising and being fully and wholly devoted to God now so that your life expresses the glory the character of God in this life what is it you say Jeff it's not one thing that I understand that I understand that well those are the things that we want to nail down and bring to God in prayer we'll keep developing this together in Christ Jesus God is loving and blessing you each day by opening your heart to heavenly treasures and realities otherwise you would trade chase the things of this earth and play in the mud the rest of your life you'd be down in the dirt and filth of your own heart the rest of your life but God is opening your heart to the treasures of heaven in

Christ Jesus every day what are you doing with that what are you doing with God doing that in you you thankful for it you sure how are you showing him how are you demonstrating your gratitude to God just for the simple reality that he's opening your heart to the treasures of heaven and he hasn't left you to play in the mud and muck of this world and in your own heart for the rest of your life that's a treasure friends isn't it it's a gift God is teaching you to cherish what he cherishes to value what he values to live like you are a citizen of heaven and a child of the heavenly king this is royal stuff the growing heavenly values of your heart are reflected in your prayers your hopes your dreams your expectations in this life each day that's where it shows up as God's spiritual children you and I are to desire what he most desires for us in our day to day living did you hear that as God's spiritual children you and I are to desire what

God most desires for us in our day to day living Lord what do you desire most for me today well friends what if the answer that comes back not in an audible voice but out of the reality of what your day becomes what if it's suffering what if the answer to that prayer is I have suffering in mind for you today I have a disease in mind for you today what if God chooses to use those things to make you more like Jesus what if it's loss what if it's you experiencing some aspect of loss in your life can God still be glorified in your life can you still know thankfulness joy can you still have a sense of purpose about God saving you and seating you in the heavenlies with

Christ Jesus you won't ever hear Greg or I say that those things are trite or not real or not important they are suffering trials loss it's very important we weep together you and I we have wept tears together in the last six months over loss have we not in this church family and there's more to come what do we do with all of that do we desire what God most desires for us this is all about what I've been saying over the last three Sundays living in God's will for your life as a sacrificial offering to him laying down your life to live in God's will for your life so ask yourself this do I find it good even pleasurable do I find it good and even pleasurable and fulfilling to seek God's glory as my final end to seek God's glory as my highest goal in any situation do your prayers reflect a growing desire for God to be honored in what you say and do in each situation above all else say Jeff is it wrong for me to have a prayer that asks for God to lift his hand in my life on this particular trial or challenge no you find that in the Psalms but is your highest goal in your prayer life more about God help me move through this trial and suffering with faithfulness to you that my life might bring honor and glory to you even as I stumble along and I don't understand the outcome here's what I can know I can know that you're God and I'm not and I can know that I can trust you with whatever this is that I'm experiencing right now for my good and for your glory I just need to remain faithful I don't have to have all the answers I don't even have to have a bunch of wise things to say to you about the suffering I'm experiencing look at Job I just need to be faithful and what that might look like from day to day today God will give you that light as you experience it in your walk with him do you see that all of this has everything to do with hopes dreams and expectations what if your hope dream and expectation is I want to get out of this problem I want this suffering to end my highest goal in my prayer life is God get me out of this God make it stop God change it up well what are you putting your hope in the end of that what if the end doesn't come tomorrow you see the trouble we're in now that's what we're talking about this is really nitty-gritty stuff this is where we live every day all right let me give you this second one we're going to pursue life that is we're going to pursue it in a prayerful manner we're going to perceive life biblically for God's greater glory you can see we're going to interpret and we're going to focus this has everything to do about interpretation but also focus in life biblically for God's greater glory worldly hope worldly hope is grounded in the wisdom and wants of mankind worldly hope desires and measures according to worldly standards for life so they have certain ways they think about church absolutely they do that the unsaved world they have ways of thinking about hoping for and dreaming about marriage just watch the movies

[26 : 24] be careful but look at the movies today and how they characterize marriage great goodness parenting job identity your roles as a man and a woman as a boy and a girl the world is extremely deceived and confused about all of that look at Philippians with me if you would brothers and sisters the book of Philippians chapter 3 we've seen something about how Jesus taught us to pray even though we didn't take that apart we looked at it Jesus teaching us to pray for God's greater glory and will to be done in our lives Philippians 3 Paul's going to speak to this in his life in a very different way he comes to the conclusion of this treatise in chapter 3 about his life pursuit and he says in verse 17 brothers join in following my example and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us now stop right there and let's look at what's he talking about in the way of a pattern join in following you in doing what Paul in having what Paul well go back up in to verse 7 in verse 7 he transitions because in the six verses prior to that Paul is talking about what he used to hope in he's talking about what he used to have in the way of expectations and dreams about his life the goals for his life as a

Pharisee a religious zealot a man who was seeking God as a Hebrew of Hebrews putting his faith in what he thought were the things of God in verse 7 he comes to transition and say but Jesus taught me how to see those things for what they really are in my life what does he say but whatever things were gain to me my goals and aspirations the things that I thought were profitable to me those things I have counted as loss but notice for the sake of Christ more than that I count all things to be lost in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord for whom I suffered the loss of all things and count them but rubbish that I may gain Christ I'm going to read that to you later in it in its entirety but now I just want you to see that Paul is making this transition and the focus is I used to think that these religious things were where it was at now I see that it's not about things it's about a person and that person is the son of God the

Lord Jesus Christ and all of my life now is being lived for him in him through him and to him he really is everything to me everything he is my life so much so that everything that I thought I valued before I came to know Christ I count as loss and the surpassing greatness of knowing him just knowing him he doesn't have to give me all this stuff on this earth just knowing him that's enough that's Paul this is what we're being called to Paul says in verse 17 brothers join in following my example and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us for many walk that is live of whom I often told you and now tell you even weeping so this is something that's breaking Paul's heart here's some heart sickness in his life they are enemies of the cross of Christ that's what's breaking his heart I've often told you of these people these people who are enemies of the cross of Christ and I've told you don't pattern your life after what these people are living for why verse 19 whose end is destruction whose God is their appetite and whose glory is in their shame they set their minds on earthly things that's why that's why they have a worldly appetite that's why they have a worldly focus that's why the things of this earth are in every way worth pursuing and they're willing to lay down anything to get them whatever it costs broken relationships broken marriages whatever it costs Paul says don't don't pattern your life after people who are living for this world now folks let's ask a couple of questions based on this look how are you interpreting situations in your life based on what circumstances come at you situations arise in your life relationally or whatever how are you interpreting those things in your life is your is your automatic reaction to the situations in your life especially the negative ones that you've got to fix the problem you've got to solve the issue you've got to get out of that thing or is it your knee jerk to go to the Lord in prayer in those moments and say all right Lord whatever whatever this is and whatever's developing here help me to be faithful help me to stay spiritually focused and help me to be faithful well that's tough isn't it you kind of find yourself getting down that that spiritual road a ways before it maybe dawns on you oh wait wait maybe I should pray about this that's what we want to rectify we want to come way back over here to its Genesis and we want to begin to move through that thing in a prayerful heart remember that was the first point pursue life biblically in an attitude of prayer before the Lord constant attitude of prayer what am I what do I mean by that you're in a constant attitude of dependence on God you're you're you pray about everything brother when I was growing up Brian has a tractor he's got a farm when I was growing up I got to ride on the tractor and plow from the time I was about 10 years old and I remember some of my best times I didn't even know the Lord I was out there on that tractor just praying my heart out I didn't even what am I praying about it whatever but I it was prayer it was worship guess who was at the center yeah right this knucklehead right well God saved me from that I have a whole different attitude and focus on my prayer that's what we're talking about where is your focus who who are you patterning your

life after who are you imitating whose approval is important to you that's a big one these questions get at the contrast of focus that Paul is emphasizing this is about spiritual focus we are not to pattern ourselves after the world so carefully observe take in imitate and pattern your life after those people who are living in the truth Paul taught them in Christ those people aren't perfect either Greg and I aren't perfect but we're called to look for people like that in our life bring those people into our life and walk with those people look here's what the scripture says look at this passage whoever walks with the wise becomes wise do you know what the inverse of that is you know what the antithesis of that is okay all right look the spiritual inertia of this life is self-centered boy I don't have to preach that do I we all live that sin's gravity pulls you and I out of a God orbit into a self-orbit what does that mean well we become the sinner everything revolves around you know it's we kind of like need somebody to tell us it's that's not the way the universe works we know that we just don't want to accept it no no I am the center of my universe just ask me hang around with me for a little while so what counters this truth truth counters this truth counters this does the sun go around the earth or does the earth go around the sun what's the truth

God tells us in his truth he tells us in his word who who his world revolves around and it's not us is it it's his son Jesus Christ again I point you to Colossians chapter 2 start and read there self-orbit then is an illusion it's a deception it's a lie a wasted pursuit into the black hole of your hope ending in you your hope doesn't go any further than the end of your nose when your hope is in yourself or in some aspect of this world people who don't live according to the truth according to scripture are living according to their own selfish greedy agendas from a perspective defined by the things of this world so they have a very worldly focus on life they live then in rebellion to the truth that's what the Bible tells us you read Romans 1 look at Ephesians 4 we live in rebellion to the scriptures these people don't care about the things of God this is what Paul says even weeping I tell you this they are enemies of the cross of Christ they live out of pride and greed and they have an agenda and a perspective defined by this world and a worldly focus they live in rebellion to God either way folks their hearts measure everything by the priorities values and treasures of this world those are not the people that you want to follow or pattern yourself don't be envious of those people I watched a little documentary thing with Suzanne the other night we fell into that hole in YouTube we don't we don't ever do this and I don't even know what it was why it happened but we're sitting there and and a documentary cake thing came up with Tom Cruise and some comedian that I'd never heard of and you know Tom's filthy rich right I mean come on how much of a movie how much a movie 30 mil or more per movie come on how many millions do I don't know I guess when you're in the world the millions just stack up well he's bought all these airplanes and so I have to I'm going to confess to you now this is confession time all right I put it in so I'm sitting there watching this and uh he takes this comedian out to this airport and he and he flies him to the airport you said you see this in in this in this cool you see his little cool looking private jet right that was enough I'm like oh boy I wonder what it was like to fly in that bad boy well he lands that and they get out and he says no no no no I brought you here in that but I want to take you up in that in the camera panned over to a p51

[38 : 14] Mustang I know saliva uncontrollable jewel right oh my goodness and up they went now that wasn't enough he lands the plane and he gets out and he says oh that was today tomorrow we're going up in that and he pans over and it's what are the trainers that they use the jet fighter trainers to train jet pilots t-38s is that what it is I think it was one of those tricked out oh it is that what it was a t-38 beautiful jet airplane oh my goodness and they went up that in the next day now I had to I have to admit this is why I'm telling you this I sat there for a moment and I thought it must be nice to have billions of dollars what would it what would it be like to say my day tomorrow is going to be get up and go to the airport and fly my airplanes go out in the desert and do the canyons in a jet which is what they did and I had to repent

I did I had to repent Lord don't let me be envious of the people of the world because one day God help him God help him he might find out that he would be willing to trade all of that for one more moment to say yes to Jesus right now that's sobering that's where we live and that's how quickly it can turn on us spiritual inertia and the word of the living God worldly focus moves you and I into self-orbit doesn't it it moves your heart away from God's agenda and perspective in life and when this happens even in a moment you're chasing false hope based on lies and you're headed for disappointment and disaster so what do you base your perceptions and interpretations of life on the way you see and interpret what happens to you needs to be founded on and informed by what God sees what God says what God promises

Philippians 13 17 and 20 when we bring those together brethren join in following my example and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us verse 20 for our citizenship is in heaven from which also we eagerly wait for a savior the Lord Jesus Christ a godly pattern you can follow in a citizen of heaven view of your life are those two things important to you and are you making them part of your life focus the way you interpret life how different think about this question with me how different might your daily life be if if you were to come out of self-orbit to focus less on your problems and difficulties and less on the failures and difficulties you see in others and into god orbit to focus your heart more on the Lord Jesus you see friends Jesus cares now I'm going to say it this way

Jesus cares more about you than you care more about you than you care about you he does because Jesus cares about you in a way that is selfless and listen sacrificial he proved that didn't he you would never ever crucify your desires your hopes your dreams and your and your expectations in the flesh you would never do that they're your gods they're what you chase in life Jesus had to crucify him for you because he knows what's best for you he offered himself on the cross for your sins not for his what you treasure he killed because it was killing you we need that perspective in life don't we we need a heavenly perspective in life so make these perspectives a matter of prayer for you and then seek to apply them in your relationships for the greater glory of the Lord our biblical pursuit of Christ and our biblical perceptions of Christ help us slay spiritual rivals and practice faithfulness to God slay spiritual rivals practice faithfulness to God finally very simple I told you pursue perceive and practice practice life that is practice life biblically for God's greater glory live and behave this is the this is where the rubber meets the road we start putting this into practice so faithfully diligently learn and live God's agenda for your life

God's agenda for your life what is it do you know it's written down in the Bible that agenda is set down in scripture as you and I deny ourselves take up our crosses and follow him so by his process of spiritually transforming you by the renewing of your mind does that sound familiar to those of you who've been here in his spiritual process of transforming you by the renewing of your mind God is always working into you what he wills to work out of you please stay with me on this you work out what God works in are you impatient do you struggle with being impatient well friend are you pursuing God in prayer to open your heart to more Christ likeness and being patient with others are you filling your mind with God's perspective on being patient you see how that works so now I've brought in those first two points into the practice of life if you're struggling with impatience

[44 : 45] I'm going to ask you well what have you prayed about in the way of being impatient have you taken this to the Lord are you talking to God about your impatient issue now you may fill it in with another one the next thing I want to know from you is this are you adopting God's mind and attitude and heart on patience do you know what God says about being impatient and about being patient are you seeking to repent of the impatience and replace it with patience are you putting off the wrong and the sin and putting on what God calls you to as his child do you have a plan to do that are you working on it is it even on your radar see it doesn't do any good for us to whine and complain about this constant battle that we have with a particular stronghold or sin in our life if we're not doing anything about it we're just falling into the same old cycle over and over again so we pursue Christ Jesus and in a life and an attitude of prayer we're seeking Jesus in this issue in my life then we begin to pursue or interpret and focus not on just the problem but on what Jesus provides in the way of helping us with our problem our human weakness our sin and then we adopt that provision by faith and we start moving forward to honor him in a walk of faith looking unto Christ Jesus that's what this practice is all about are you filling your mind with God's perspective on the issue

God will work his truth about patience into your heart so that you can live patiently with others from your heart do you see that that's the way it works God works the thing into your heart that you need to work out and from in your walk with him the scripture says this and I'm grateful for it the steps of a man are established by the Lord I'm grateful to know that in my struggle against sin I'm grateful to know that the Lord will fulfill his purpose for me I'm grateful to know that aren't you eternity matters now as you seek to show the character of God in your daily life if you turn back with me and the Philippians if you're not there Philippians 1 and notice this wonderful prayer that Paul makes Philippians 1 beginning in verse 8 for God is my witness how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus wow and this I pray that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment so that you may approve the things that are excellent in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through

Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God because you belong to Christ the Lord Jesus is working in your heart to transform you into greater likeness to himself because Jesus loves you in his care for you Christ doesn't simply come in and Christianize your earthly hopes dreams goals aspirations and plans no what does he do he helps you abandon them in place of pursuing him that's what needs to happen first I don't ask Jesus to Christianize all Jeff's hopes dreams plans expectations and aspirations no what does Jeff know those I could be so deceived in those things no I say Lord help me bring all of those things and lay them at the throne of grace and trust that you will put in my heart what I need to want hope for desire pursue you help me know what's best teach me train me show me and help me to live faithfully before you

Jesus teaches you in a word to hope in him not in stuff not in the end of things he teaches you to hope in him because what you hope for determines what you live for let me read through that text now I'm going to put it up here I want you to see it in its entirety and I want to emphasize it that's why I'm going to put it up here for you to follow along all right but whatever gain I had I counted as loss for the sake of Christ indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord for his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law but that which comes through faith in Christ the righteousness from God that depends on faith that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and may share his sufferings becoming like him in his death that by any means possible

I may attain the resurrection from the dead not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect but I press on to make it my own because Christ Jesus has made me his own brothers I do not consider that I have made it my own but one thing I do forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus let those of us who are mature think this way and if in anything you think otherwise God will reveal that also to you only let us hold true to what we have attained brothers join in imitating me and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the Christ like example you have in us for many of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears walk as enemies of the cross of Christ their end is destruction their

[51 : 29] God is their belly and their glory is in their shame with mindset on earthly things but our citizenship is in heaven and from it we await a Savior the Lord Jesus Christ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself therefore my brothers who my love and long for my joy and crown stand firm thus in the Lord my beloved that's glorious that's the context in this passage Paul does not simply take his dreams and plans for his life and turn them over to God boy you hear that kind of preaching no he speaks strongly to the issue of coming to loathe what he used to value in life in comparison to knowing and serving Jesus do you see the focus there boy so many things fall into just insignificance when Jesus is exalted as Lord in your life what you used to think was so worth pursuing and so important boy you hold Jesus as the treasure of your heart and he helps you see those things for what they are again it doesn't mean that we're not called to live a joyful life we are it's where we put our focus

Paul listen Paul does not want his heart for Jesus to have any rivals do you now I'm just going to let that one soak in Paul doesn't want his heart to have any rivals against the Lord Jesus do you Paul's process of spiritual transformation was forged from decades of heartache heartbreak and hardships this man did not have an easy life his counsel here that we're reading and just read together his counsel is bathed in years not months not days not weeks years decades of false imprisonment beatings torture hunger thirst poverty danger exposure being lied to mocked maligned and mistreated shipwrecked run out of town stoned left for dead decades of that being beaten and whipped how did Paul keep his spiritual focus and maintain his hope in

God's goodness how did he do that how did he keep from becoming sinful and resentful and bitter toward everyone toward God why didn't he look up into heaven and say this is not what I signed up for that is such a ridiculous thing to say Jeff if God had shown me what was coming I don't know what I'd have done but he doesn't do that how did Paul console himself and find any joy in all of the suffering and heartache throughout his life here's the simple answer Paul savored Jesus as his greatest treasure whatever loss came into his life whatever pain came into his life whatever mocking and maligning came into his life Paul realized I haven't lost Jesus Jesus hasn't gone anywhere say Jeff is that just the way Christians spin reality nope it's how Christians know reality and there's a difference we live by faith not by sight seeing and savoring the heavenly value of Jesus

Christ puts all earthly hopes and values in their proper place Paul is speaking to the process of personal change where he is being spiritually transformed by the renewing of his mind God is changing Paul's heart into greater Christ likeness the way he thinks reasons the way he longs for what he hopes for what he expects in life Paul God is working all of that change into Christ likeness into Paul's life so knowing growing in serving Jesus gave Paul a heavenly perspective on every situation of his life he knew the Lord had him in a process what process Jeff a process of becoming more like Jesus he knew the Lord had him in that process Paul trusted God's wisdom to take him through that process so what did Paul do Paul gave himself to Jesus and suffered no rivals in his heart for the Lord you see whatever he faced he hoped in

Jesus whatever he faced he interpreted his situation moment by moment through his relationship with Jesus Paul lived for the greater glory of God as his life's only true ambition that's how he had learned to be content the question was is Jesus being served is God being glorified is Christ being honored yes yes yes then I'm good but Paul I'm good I'm good I really am good he didn't live for his own goals he didn't live for his own dreams he didn't live for his own hopes he didn't base his life in his in his expectations of others he didn't put that off on other people either he also learned this and here's the harder one he didn't live in light of their expectations of him that's a tough one he didn't put his hope in some worldly ideal so what about you my friends are there active rivals in your heart fighting for the loyalty you owe to Jesus as your redeemer suffer no rivals in your redemption are there any competitors to your devotion to Christ I want to end with this final quote before I pray so what is your hope where do you seek to find solace for your spirit when this fallen world presses down upon you is your hope in a better marriage is that what you're hoping for it'll get better a better paying job does your hope reside in overcoming some issue of sin that has plagued you for years if I could just overcome that that's what my hopes in is it no longer being depressed anxious or angry is that where your hope is does your sense of hope reside in who is elected as the next president or the conservative agenda liberal agenda whatever it may be is it in a better school for your children by what is your mind governed that shapes your perspective of hope the potential list is endless the reason for this rests in the fact that our hearts are wired for worship and our worship is directly tied to our sense of hope will you pray with me father I thank you for the souls who are here today sitting under the message that I've brought I thank you for the scripture truths that we've looked at even though briefly I thank you for the passages that have spoken to our hearts the truth of your heart I pray that you will teach us how to pray even as Jesus did I pray father that you'll help us to pursue Christ perceive Christ practice Christ and him crucified and raised again and I pray for my brothers and sisters father that the God of hope will fill them with all joy and peace and believing so that each of them will abound in the hope of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit may this be so in their lives to the glory of God and their good in Jesus name we pray amen or you the