Hopeful Rejoicing

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. As Jeff said, our pastor is away this morning and he's had a busy weekend, so he's preaching twice this morning.

He spoke at a conference Friday and Saturday this weekend, so he's been away, but he's not on vacation by any means. And so when the cat's away, the mice will preach, and so here I stand before you this morning.
And if you would, take your Bibles and turn with me to Romans chapter 5. We'll be in Romans chapter 5, verses 1 through 11 this morning.
And as you're turning there, I want us to consider a question. What are some distinctives of the Christian life? What are some things, some characteristics that set Christians apart from the rest of the unbelieving world around us?
And what comes to my mind is the fruit of the Spirit that Paul lists in Galatians chapter 5, which begins with love, and the next three being joy, peace, and patience.
[1:18] And it's those first four, love, joy, peace, and patience, that come together in a most wonderful way in our passage this morning, as we consider hopeful rejoicing.

If you've ever read 1 Thessalonians 5, where Paul commands us to rejoice always, and then later on to give thanks in all circumstances, if you've read those passages and wondered, how can I possibly rejoice always?
Always. How can I give thanks regardless of my circumstances? I pray that this morning, this passage will give you firm footing in the fight for joy.
I pray this passage will teach us to rejoice in every circumstance. And as we read through our passage here in a moment, you'll see that our text this morning is held together by the threefold repetition of the word rejoice.
The songs we've sung this morning were held together by choruses that drive the song along, carry it, and give it its primary meaning. And the chorus of our passage this morning is rejoicing.
[2:25] So let me read Romans 5, verses 1 through 11. Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Through Him, we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly.
For one will scarcely die for a righteous person, though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die. But God shows His love for us, and that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life.
[3:44] More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. Our title this morning is Hopeful Rejoicing, and we'll cover it in three points.

Rejoice in hope, rejoice in suffering, and rejoice in God. Let me pray for us at the outset. Our Father, we thank you for the gospel truths that we have sung about this morning, that Jesus, the Son of God, your true and living Son, gave His life on the cross in our place.

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And He rose again on the third day. And it's on the basis of that historical reality that we can approach you with confidence, with our request. And so we pray now, as we study Your Word, that You would open our eyes, that we may behold wondrous things from Your Word.
Give us light from the Holy Spirit to see the beautiful truth of this passage. Speak to us, Lord, if Your servants listen. In the name of Christ we pray. Amen. Paul begins this passage with the word, therefore.
He's beginning with an inference from what he has said previously. He's drawing a conclusion from what he has previously said. And in the case of chapter 5, verse 1, he is drawing from what he has said in chapters 1 all the way through chapter 4.
[5:06] Particularly chapter 4, where he talks about justification by faith alone. And so if you're familiar with the book of Romans, you know that in chapters 1 through 3, Paul is establishing our sinfulness.

He's establishing the sinfulness of every human being who has ever walked the face of the earth, except for Jesus. And so in chapter 1, he begins with Gentiles who have exchanged the glory of God for images resembling mortal creatures.
In chapter 2, he confronts the Jews who have, in their hypocrisy, looked down on the Gentiles around them, even though they are guilty of the same kinds of sins.
And in chapter 3, Paul pans out to all humanity in general when he says, all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And he is laying this groundwork so he can move on to establish the doctrine of justification by faith alone.
Justification is God's declaration that we are righteous before him. In our practice, in our life, we are utterly sinful.
[6:15] We have despised and rejected Christ. But because of his death and resurrection, God can look on us and declare us not just innocent of our sins, but positively righteous because of what Christ has done.

And in chapter 4, he's wanting to establish this fact and he points us to the example of Abraham. Genesis 15, 6 says that Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness.
And Paul's point is that when God justified Abraham by faith, Abraham had not yet obeyed the covenant. It was before Abraham was circumcised.
It was before he had obeyed God that he was counted as righteous. And so Paul is saying that we are justified by faith apart from works. And in chapter 4, verse 24, he says it will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead, Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.
Christ died on the cross for our sins. He rose again for our justification. We are saved both by the death and the resurrection of Christ.
[7:32] Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We've been declared innocent and righteous even though we've continually rebelled against God.

And how is it that we receive this righteous standing? How is it that we are justified? It is by faith and by faith alone. And Paul has just established this fact in chapters 1 through 4.
And what he has explained in the first half of chapter 5, he now applies. Justification is the foundation of our passage, but it's not his main point here.
He is seeking to apply that doctrine to the hearts of his readers, which includes us this morning. He says, since we've been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We have peace with God. And don't think about the therapeutic peace that our culture prizes. The peace we have with God is not the same thing as yoga or long walks on the beach or good vibes or Karen's essential oils.
[8:39] The peace we have with God is an objective reality. It is not a subjective feeling. It is based in historical fact.

It is based in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And notice also that Paul's not talking about the peace of God, which he talks about elsewhere. This is not the internal sense of peace. He's saying we have peace with God. And this obviously implies that previously there was hostility. Previously there was enmity and animosity.
And what reconciles us to the Father is justification by faith. And peace that he speaks of here in verse one reappears later under the synonym of reconciliation.

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We have peace with God by faith through the work of Jesus Christ, our Lord, the end of verse one. And when we read about peace, we can't also just think about a lack of conflict.
[9:42] We can't just think of peace as the absence of difficult things going on in our life. Peace is an Old Testament concept that refers to a whole life kind of flourishing.

A well-being of our entire life. And Paul says we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And while this peace is objective here, this is a fact, it does have an effect on our hearts. If you firmly believe that you have peace with God, that the Almighty was at war with you and now there is peace, it will give you confidence and calm in your heart.
This peace we have is an objective fact. And so even when you don't feel this peace, even when you don't feel peaceful, you can look to the gospel and know God is at peace with you through the death of Christ.
And Paul continues this thought in verse two, through him we've also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand. And when we read that, we might have guessed that Paul was going to say that through him we have obtained access by grace into God's presence.
[11:00] But what he says is that we've obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand. So what is this grace? What is he referring to? I think he's referring still to justification.

It is through Christ, it's through his mediatorial work on our behalf that we are able to access justification by faith. faith in him has transferred us from the war zone into the grace in which we stand, the realm of grace in which we now exist.
And here's our first occurrence of the word rejoice. Verse two, we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
Why would we rejoice in God's glory? Because one day we will be participants in it.
What is Paul referring to when he says God's glory? He's referring to the future when God's glory is put on full display against sin and for his people and when his glory appears in Jesus' return, we will be like him.
[12:18] And so we rejoice in hope of the glory of God because we will one day share in that glory. Elsewhere, Paul says in Philippians 3, we are citizens of heaven and from it, from heaven, we await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly bodies to be like his glorious body.

And Paul is saying it is this hope that sustains us, it's this hope in which we rejoice because we will share in his glory one day. At one point in time though, we rejected God's glory.
We exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man. It is God's glory that we one day, at one point, fell short of continually, but now it has become the basis of our hope. The thing that we despise has now become the thing in which we rejoice because we understand that we will share in his glory through the work of Christ. The glory that Adam lost in the garden will be restored and even surpassed in the new creation.
We know that when we see him, we will be like him and it's this hope that sustains us in rejoicing. This future reality is brought into relation in the present through hope.
[13:42] This future event is made relevant to us personally through hope. Now the Bible has a very different conception of this word hope than we do.

We say, I hope there's no line at Wild Hero. I hope the Cowboys win another Super Bowl. There's no basis in reality for the hope that we have. But when the Bible talks about hope, it talks about it in an altogether different way.
John Piper has defined hope this way. He says, hope is faith in the future tense. Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen, and hope is faith for the future. Hope is not a wish. It's a sturdy expectation that's built on the foundation of the promise and character of God. God. And Paul says, we rejoice in hope.
This word rejoice is literally boast or glory. We boast in the hope of the glory of our God. We glory in his glory because it will be ours one day as well.
[14:53] And if we were the Roman Christians hearing this letter read in total for the first time, we would catch on to the fact that this isn't the first time Paul has used this word. It's translated differently but in chapter 3, verse 27, Paul says, what becomes of our boasting or our rejoicing?

It is excluded. And so the gospel, because we are sinners, because Christ saved us apart from works, we have no ground to rejoice in ourselves.
We have every reason to boast in our God. We have every reason to rejoice in the hope of what Christ has done and will do for us. So our first point rejoice in hope in verses 1 and 2 is the hope of

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the glory of God.
Secondly, we rejoice in suffering. We rejoice in suffering, verses 3 through 5. And Paul now turns to the thing that would seem to upset our hope.
Paul now deals head on with a thing that would seem to turn our rejoicing into mourning suffering. And that's the topic of suffering. Paul does not have a romanticized view of the Christian life.
[16:07] We will suffer. Suffering is a part of our lives. But rather than deconstructing our hope, suffering actually serves to enrich our hope, as Paul goes on to explain.

He says, not only that, verse 3, not only do we rejoice in hope of the glory of God, but we rejoice in our sufferings. Rejoicing in glory is expected, but this is a staggering statement.
And I expect that if you're an unbeliever, you have no idea what Paul is talking about. What does he mean, rejoice in sufferings? Rejoicing in glory is to be expected precisely because when we are glorified, all suffering will be left behind.
But here, Paul is also calling us to rejoice in the sufferings themselves. This is backward from our typical attitude and response to difficulty.
We tend to pity ourselves and pity our suffering, but Paul did not. And he commands us through the Spirit by his example that we rejoice in suffering.
[17:14] It is staggering that Paul's response to suffering is the same response he has to the hope of glory. Sufferings don't overthrow the blessing of hope, but are themselves platforms for further rejoicing.

What does he mean by sufferings? This can refer to persecution, obviously, but this word he uses is broad. Any difficulty we face in this life, any trial we go through from living life in a fallen world, people naturally and normally brag about the good things in life, but we rarely hear of someone boasting in their trials.
This is counterintuitive to what we would expect. It's hard enough to get through trials without complaining. It's altogether a different thing to rejoice in the midst of your trials, but Paul is taking us even further.
He's calling us to give thanks for the suffering itself. We don't only rejoice in the future, we rejoice in the present as well.
And Paul is not being glib here. Paul knew what it was to suffer. When he's writing this letter, he had already suffered immensely for the gospel, and so he's not saying you need to enjoy and rejoice in sufferings because it's fun.
[18:38] The reason Paul rejoiced in suffering was because of what it was accomplishing in his life. And suffering is doing something in our lives as well.

And so verse 3 says, not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings. How? Knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope.
We rejoice in our sufferings because they initiate a chain of events that culminates in enriched hope. And so friends, our present sufferings, our present struggles should never be isolated from the thought of future glory.
If we approach our suffering divorced from the reality of future glorification, we will despair. We will become heartbroken over the difficulty of this life.
But we are to rejoice in suffering, knowing what it's doing for us. Sufferings strengthen our hope. hope. And the saints who have gone before us in the faith all agree that trials and suffering are for our good.
[19:47] Ask Joseph, and he will tell you how thankful he is for his prison cell in ancient Egypt. Ask Moses of the trials he went through with Pharaoh, and he will be thankful for every one of them.

Ask Elijah, and he will testify that God drew near to him in his bout with fear and anxiety. Ask Stephen, and he will testify that he saw the risen Christ as stones were whizzing past his head. Ask Job, and he will reveal to you that he learned more from adversity than he did from prosperity. Our trials are good. We can rejoice in our trials because God has promised to use them for our benefit.
All of the mature and godly saints before us have learned to view their suffering in this positive light. As one man said, God's blessings are poured out in bitter cups.
God's blessings are poured out in bitter cups. And I have a friend who's going through a good deal of suffering right now, and the joy in Christ is beyond my explanation.

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[21:01] It's faith. It's God working through our trials. It is God helping us to rejoice in our sufferings, and how do we do this?

Knowing that suffering produces endurance. We rejoice in trouble because our troubles build us up. This word endurance is sometimes translated in the Bible as patience, like the fruit of the Spirit. So our trials toughen us up and help us to withstand the storms of life.
This is fortitude that bears up under weight and under pressure. And I think a good analogy of this are the Olympic weightlifters. If you ever watched those events, it's amazing what weights they can throw up.
And how is it that they can do that? Is it Wheaties? Is it Body by Milk? It's suffering. It's putting pressure and strain on their muscles over time that builds up the endurance and the strength needed to stand up under the weight and pressure of the trial.
[22:06] That's the word Paul uses here. And endurance produces character. Our endurance through trials brings our character to a level previously unknown and character produces hope.

This hope that we have is that God will complete the work that he has begun in us. That we believe God's promise that those whom he justifies he will also glorify. Romans 8.30 And through our trials God will provide assurance of the future glory.
And just as difficulties we walk through in marriage draw us closer together, so is the effect that trials and suffering have in our walk with Christ.
Do you view suffering this way? Do we rejoice in our trials? This is what Paul calls us to in Christ.
And hope, verse 5, does not put us to shame. How many of our hopes have never materialized? Hopes of a better, more peaceful work environment, hopes of a higher paying job, hopes of a loving family, hopes that one day our kids would be believers.
[23:17] How many of our hopes are frustrated and disappointed in this fallen world? But our hope in Christ will not put us to shame. How do we know?

What's going through Paul's head when he writes this? Because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us, we will not be ashamed of the hope we have in Christ.
And the proof of that is to be found in the love which has overflowed our hearts through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Romans 8, 16 says that God, the Holy Spirit, testifies to our hearts that we are children of God.
The gift of the Holy Spirit demonstrates that we will be spared in the final judgment. In Ephesians 1, Paul calls the Holy Spirit the guarantee or the down payment or the engagement ring of our inheritance.
And Paul is saying this is how we know our hope will not disappoint us. The confidence we have that we will appear with God in glory comes through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.
[24:30] And so this confidence we have isn't strictly based on the knowledge of facts but also on the internal witness of the Holy Spirit. So what is it that gives our hope stability? It's the unwavering unchanging love of God.

And how do we endure suffering? By remembering the glory that awaits us. The bitter must come before the sweet. The cross comes before the crown. Sufferings in this life cleanse our palate to taste glory.
Rejoice in sufferings. Friends, we have no reason to fear the future. We can raise our kids and our grandkids with joy because our destiny is the glory of God.
We will share in His glory and any suffering and trials that meet us along the way are just preparing us to receive the gift of God's glory.
And I want to emphasize the Bible's message is not come to Jesus and everything is going to go your way. The Bible's message is you will suffer and your suffering makes you more like Jesus.
[25:49] Rejoice in sufferings. But the love of God is not something tangible. It's not something we can measure or put our fingers on. So how can we know that the love of God is sure and trustworthy?

Verses 6-8 answer that question head on. We see thirdly rejoice in God. Verses 6-11 rejoice in God. God's love for us is anchored not in emotions or experience but in a historical reality the death and resurrection of Jesus.
And so while verse 5 tells us of the love of God that's in our hearts verses 6-8 give us the factual grounding of that love. We learn that Jesus did not die because he detected in us an inclination

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towards goodness.
He did not see some untapped potential within us. He died for us to overcome our hostility and our enmity towards him. Christ died for those who have no claim on his benefits by nature.
And so I want to read once again verses 6-10 but before I do if you take God's love for granted if you presume on his love if you assume that he owes us his love these verses will not have an adequate effect on you.
[27:10] But if we rightly understand our own sinfulness our own unworthiness the love of God will be the sweetest reality our souls have tasted that God could even consider loving rebels is beyond our comprehension but he has.

And so pay attention to who Christ died for. For while we were still weak at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.
For one will scarcely die for a righteous person though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die but God shows his love for us and that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.
Since therefore we've now been justified by his blood much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his son much more now that we are reconciled shall we be saved by his life.
So for whom did Christ die? He died for the weak the ungodly for sinners and for enemies. And so whether you believe in Jesus or not these descriptions of all of us are true.
[28:24] Are you weak? Are you ungodly? Are you a sinner? Are you an enemy of Christ and his cross? I have good news for you. You are the only type of person that Christ died for.

He did not die for the righteous. He did not die for those who had their lives together. He did not die for people that were glorifying him already. He died for rebels and sinners because he loved us.
We were weak. We were ungodly. We were sinners. We were enemies of God but he loved us and reconciled us to himself through the death and resurrection of his son.
Verse 6 while we were still weak we were powerless. Powerless to overcome our sin. Powerless to please God in any way. And I just want you to recognize what good news this is for us.
God loved us because we first loved him our only hope would be the inconstancy of our own sinful hearts.
[29:27] But the fact that God loved us first and sent his son to die for us while we were still in this state shows us that his love is unchanging. We will never be as wicked as we were when Christ died for us and so he will not abandon us even on our worst day.

At the right time while we were still powerless Christ entered the world and died for the ungodly. In chapter 1 verse 18 says the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness but it is Christ who justifies the ungodly and saves them.
And he gives a brief parenthetical statement in verse 7 to contrast human love from the divine love displayed in the cross. He says one will scarcely die for a righteous person though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die.
The point here is that human sacrificial love which occasionally manifests itself on behalf of the righteous contrasts sharply with God's sacrificial love which was displayed for the wicked and for sinners.
We would all consider dying for the loved ones in our household. Some of us would consider dying for close friends. Some of us maybe even for in-laws.
[30:51] But that contrasts sharply with God's love. He died for enemies. He died for rebels. These are the only type of people that Christ died for.

If we only occasionally would die even for our friends, how unlikely is it that Jesus would die for his enemies. Verse 8, but God shows his love for us and that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
The death of Christ is a display of God's magnificent love for us. We cannot separate the Father and the Son when it comes to the death of Jesus.
And notice what this text is saying. The death of Christ is the manifestation of God's love for us. The death of Christ did not strong arm God into forgiving us.
The death of Christ did not convince God to save us. The death of Christ is the very expression of the Father's love itself. And this is a Trinitarian love.
[31:57] God's love is ministered to our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is sent by the Father and the Son. And it is Jesus who died for us. And verses 9 and 10 parallel each other.

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Verse 9 describes justification which is our legal standing. Verse 10 describes reconciliation which is our relational standing before God. So we were once lawbreakers now we are pardoned.
We were once enemies and now we are friends. Paul says since therefore we've now been justified by his blood much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.
Since the Son died for sinners we will make it safely to the end. What Paul is doing here in verses 9 and 10 is an argument from the greater to the lesser.
This is a favorite among rabbis in the first century and whether you recognize it or not you have probably heard a greater to the lesser argument if your parents have ever said to you I brought you into this world and I can take you out.
[33:01] There's no hatred there that's just good logic. What your parents are lovingly and logically arguing there is if they have brought you into existence from nothing it's more easy to take you out of existence.

I'm not going to unpack that because that's a little dark but that is an argument from the greater to the lesser. If you can do the greater you can definitely do the lesser. God has already overcome our greatest obstacle to glory which is our sin.
If he has conquered our sin if he has overcome our sin he can keep us in his grace. He can keep us to the end. He can spare his people from wrath.
He says much more. So since we've been justified by his blood much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. This wrath is the future end times wrath of God that we will be saved from Paul says verse 10 for if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his son much more now that we are reconciled shall we be saved by his life.
We were enemies to God both actively and passively. We were actively rebelling against God and we were passive enemies as well. God was our enemy.
[34:24] He was opposing himself to us as well. Both sides have been reconciled through the death of his son. We were reconciled to God.

Our hostility was exchanged for friendship. And since we've been reconciled to God we also ought to be reconciled to one another. We need to have peace with God through Christ and peace with each other as well.
And the way he reconciles us is by the death of his son. son. And in the book of Romans this is the first time Paul refers to Christ as the son since the introduction.
The intimacy of the relationship expressed in this term magnifies his love even more. What great cost the father paid to reconcile his enemies.
Much more now that we are reconciled shall we be saved by his life. His life referring to the resurrection life in which he now intercedes for us. And so we're saved by his death and by his resurrection.
[35:29] If Jesus' death was powerful enough to justify and reconcile us how much more powerful is his resurrection life to keep us? If God reconciled us while we were in a state of rebellion and alienation from him how much more will he save us from wrath now that we've been brought near?

If we were reconciled while we were foreigners how much more will we be saved now that we are family? He has done the greater he will do the lesser. If a dying savior can bring us into grace how much more can a living savior keep us there?
If the dying savior could reconcile us to God how much more can he maintain that reconciliation now that he lives forever? If his love covered us while we were enemies how much more will it cover us now that we are children?
Now that we're saved we're not nearly as wretched as we were beforehand yet even then God loved us fully.
Verse 11 more than that we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have now received reconciliation. reconciliation. The capstone of our rejoicing is God himself.
[36:49] As great and necessary as justification and reconciliation are these are not abstract talking points. These are descriptions of the activity of our living and loving God.

Friends do you rejoice in God? Do you enjoy God? God. The gospel should bring that to your hearts. You should delight in the presence of God and it's through our Lord Jesus Christ that we rejoice in him.
It's not only that we rejoice in God we rejoice in him while being united to him through his own son. We have now received this reconciliation.

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Our present reconciliation is a guarantee of future glory and this compels us and enables us to rejoice in him. And so believers as you contemplate our hope of future glory as we consider the trials of this present life let us conclude to rejoice always.
Let us rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Let us rejoice in our sufferings. Let us supremely rejoice in God himself. And I pray that our church is a place that's marked by the hopeful rejoicing spoken of here in this passage.
[38:14] Let's cultivate in our hearts a steadfast love for the message of the gospel. Let us never forget that Christ displayed the Father's majestic love while we were sinners heading to hell undeserving of his love and mercy.

We should be the most joyful people in the world. Let us rejoice together. Let us praise him for the declaration of righteousness we have received through the death of his son.
And if you're not a believer in Jesus, do you have hope for the future? Do you have a belief that can make sense of your sufferings?
Have you ever rejoiced and found true joy in anything other than yourself and your sin? Do you have a solution to the problem of your sin? Do you have confidence that will carry you through the judgment of God that is in your future?
Come to Jesus. Believe in him. He will provide you with a hope that will not put you to shame. He'll give meaning to your suffering. He'll give you true joy where there was none before.
[39:25] He'll pay for your sins covering them with his own precious blood and give you confidence that will carry you through the day of judgment and save you from the Father's wrath.

Come to Jesus and be saved. Apart from him, there is no hope and there certainly is no true rejoicing. Pray with me. Our Father, we thank you for the joy we have in the gospel.
that it is not righteous people that Christ died for, but sinners. Our only hope of righteousness is through the death and resurrection of Jesus.
And so, Father, on our darkest days, give us a hope that will pierce through the darkness of our souls and help us to see that if when we were enemies you sent your son to die for us, much more will you save us now that we are your friends.

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