

July 21, 2024

Worship | 11 am

Livestream | 11 am



# LEXINGTON

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

For God's glory, we are making disciples of Jesus as we worship, love, and serve.

# WELCOME

Thank you for joining us for worship this morning. We invite you to experience the meaning of the Gospel through this service, which reflects both ancient and modern elements of Christian worship. When we gather as a worshipping community, we enter into a dialogue with the living God. God calls us into worship, we rejoice in the hope of the Gospel, confess our sins, lament the brokenness of our world, give our offerings, and hear God's Word read and preached. We hope that by worshipping with us, you will experience joy and hope from a community of people who love Jesus.

At Lexington Presbyterian Church, for God's glory, we are making disciples of Jesus as we worship, love, and serve.

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# LORD'S DAY WORSHIP

\* Congregation, please stand if able

Prelude

## PRAISE

**Updates** | Following Christ Together

\* **Call to Worship** | Psalm 66:1-5, 16-17, 20

*Leader: Shout for joy to God, all the earth;  
sing the glory of his name;  
give to him glorious praise!*

**All:** Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds!  
So great is your power that your enemies come cringing to you.  
All the earth worships you  
and sings praises to you;  
they sing praises to your name."

*Leader: Come and see what God has done:  
he is awesome in his deeds toward the children of man.  
Come and hear, all you who fear God,  
and I will tell what he has done for my soul.*

**All:** I cried to him with my mouth,  
and high praise was on my tongue.  
Blessed be God,  
because he has not rejected my prayer  
or removed his steadfast love from me!

## \* Trinity Hymnal #119—I Sing the Almighty Power of God



1. I sing th'al-might - y pow'r of God that made the moun-tains rise,  
2. I sing the good-ness of the Lord that filled the earth with food;  
3. There's not a plant or flow'r be - low but makes your glo - ries known;



that spread the flow - ing seas a - broad and built the loft - y skies.  
he formed the crea - tures with his word, and then pro - nounced them good.  
and clouds a - rise and tem - pests blow by or - der from your throne;



I sing the wis - dom that or - dained the sun to rule the day;  
Lord, how your won - ders are dis - played wher - e'er I turn my eye,  
while all that bor - rows life from you is ev - er in your care,



the moon shines full at his com - mand and all the stars o - bey.  
if I sur - vey the ground I tread or gaze up - on the sky!  
and ev - ery - where that man can be, you, God, are pre - sent there.

Text by Isaac Watts, 1715; Mod.

Tune (FOREST GREEN); Traditional English Melody; Arr. by Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

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## \* Prayer of Invocation

# Hymn Story

## I Sing the Almighty Power of God

This hymn text was written by Isaac Watts, the “Father of English-language hymnody,” who lived from 1674 to 1748. Watts’ hymns are profound yet at the same time simple enough that young children can understand their meaning. For Watts, it was imperative that believers pass on their faith to their children, following the example of the Israelites in Deuteronomy. He explained that his purpose in writing for children was that “they may have something to think upon when alone, and sing over to themselves”; Watts believed that the singing and memorizing of hymns formed a crucial part of a child’s education. When Watts suffered poor health, he received help from a patron named Thomas Abney. Abney had three daughters, to whom Watts dedicated his 1715 book entitled *Divine Songs Attempted in Easy Language for the Use of Children*. Interestingly, the one song from this collection that is still sung is “I Sing the [Al]Mighty Power of God,” also known as “Praise for Creation and Providence.” Watts agreed with Calvinist theology, and he clearly expresses his belief in God’s sovereignty with phrases like, “tempests blow...by order from thy throne.” The word “almighty” highlights God’s omnipotence. Also, the hymn reflects many of the Psalms extolling God. In verse 1, the phrase “almighty power of God” can be linked to the Apostles’ Creed’s statement of belief in “God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.” As Dr. Hawn writes, “Watts sketches a magnificent painting...through which we may view...God’s general revelation to humanity. We are visitors to the grand gallery... of the galaxy.”

Ralph Vaughan Williams was an English composer who lived from 1872 to 1958. Besides learning in Berlin and Paris, Vaughan Williams studied music in London and Cambridge. Among his career opportunities, Vaughan Williams worked as the conductor of London’s Bach Choir and a music teacher at the Royal College of Music. Vaughan Williams showed his deep interest in English folk songs by encouraging the work of the English Folk Dance Society and joining the Folksong Society. In addition, he wrote his own compositions which span almost all the major genres of music, including music for the church. Vaughan Williams found and arranged this folk tune melody, called FOREST GREEN, and in 1906 it was included in *The English Hymnal*, an important work which Vaughan Williams edited. He also collaborated on two other

hymnals. Vaughan Williams' tune was likely paired with Watts' hymn text around 1974. Another hymn that is set to this melody is the alternate version to "O Little Town of Bethlehem."

Sources:

- Fenner, Chris. "I sing th' almighty power of God." Hymnology Archive, 11 April 2019, rev. 18 August 2023, [www.hymnologyarchive.com/i-sing-th-almighty-power-of-god](http://www.hymnologyarchive.com/i-sing-th-almighty-power-of-god). Accessed 16 July 2024.
- Hawn, C. Michael. "History of Hymns: Watts' 'Power of God' composed for children." Discipleship Ministries: The United Methodist Church, 22 May 2013, [www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-watts-power-of-god-composed-for-children](http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-watts-power-of-god-composed-for-children). Accessed 16 July 2024.
- Polman, Bert. "Ralph Vaughan Williams." Hymnary, [www.hymnary.org/person/VaughanWilliams\\_Ralph?tab=tunes](http://www.hymnary.org/person/VaughanWilliams_Ralph?tab=tunes). Accessed 16 July 2024.

\* **Scripture Reading** | Ephesians 3:1-13 | Pew Bible p. 977

For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

# Speak O Lord



1. Speak, O Lord, as we come to You to re-ceive the food of Your ho - ly word.
2. Teach us, Lord, full o - be - di - ence, ho - ly rev - er - ence, true hu - mil - i - ty.
3. Speak, O Lord, and re - new our minds; help us grasp the heights of Your plans for us.



Take Your truth, plant it deep in us; shape and fash - ion us in Your like - ness, that the Test our thoughts and our at - ti - tudes in the ra - di - ance of Your pur - i - ty. Cause our Truths un - changed from the dawn of time that will ech - o down through e - ter - ni - ty. And by



light of Christ might be seen to - day in our acts of love and our deeds of \_ faith. faith to rise, cause our eyes to see Your ma - jes - tic love and au - thor - i - ty. grace we'll stand on Your prom - is - es, and by faith we'll walk as You walk with us.



Speak, O Lord, and ful - fill in us all Your pur - pos - es for Your glo - ry. Words of power that can nev - er fail; let their truth pre - vail o - ver un - be - lief. Speak, O Lord, till Your church is built and the earth is filled with Your glo - ry.

Words and Music by Keith Getty and Stuart Townend

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# RENEWAL

## Call to Confession | Psalm 88:1-3

*Leader: O LORD, God of my salvation,  
I cry out day and night before you.  
Let my prayer come before you;  
incline your ear to my cry!  
For my soul is full of troubles,  
and my life draws near to Sheol.*

## Corporate Confession of Sin | From “Valley of Vision”

All: Holy Lord,  
I have sinned times without number,  
and been guilty of pride and unbelief,  
of failure to find Your mind in Your Word,  
of neglect to seek You in my daily life.  
My transgressions and shortcomings  
present me with a list of accusations,  
but I bless You that they will not stand against me,  
for all have been laid on Christ.  
Go on to subdue my corruptions,  
and grant me grace to live above them.  
Let not the passions of my flesh nor lustings of the mind  
bring my spirit into subjection,  
but rule over me in liberty and power.  
Purge from me every false desire, every base aspiration,  
everything contrary to your rule.  
Deliver me from every evil habit, every accretion of former sins,  
everything that dims the brightness of Your grace in me,  
everything that prevents me from taking delight in You.  
I ask this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

## Silent Confession

### \* **Words of Comfort** | 1 Peter 1:3-4

*Leader: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you...*

### \* **Passing of the Peace** [stand and greet one another]

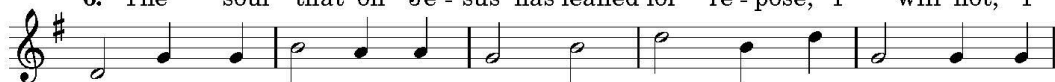
*Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.*

**All: And also with you.**

## Trinity Hymnal #94—How Firm a Foundation



1. How firm a foundation, you saints of the Lord, is laid for your
2. "Fear not, I am with you, O be not dismayed; for I am your
3. "When through the deep waters I call you to go, the rivers of
4. "When through fiery trials your pathway shall lie, my grace, all-suf-
6. "The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose, I will not, I



faith in his excellent Word! What more can he say than to  
God, and will still give you aid; I'll strength-en you, help you, and  
sor-row shall not o-ver-flow; for I will be with you, your  
fi-cient, shall be your sup-ply; the flame shall not hurt you; I  
will not de-sert to his foes; that soul, though all hell should en-



you he has said, to you who for ref-uge to Je-sus have fled?  
cause you to stand, up-held by my righ-teous, om-nip-o-tent hand.  
trou-bles to bless, and sanc-ti-fy to you your deep-est dis-tress.  
on-ly de-sign your dross to con-sume and your gold to re-fine.  
dea-vor to shake, I'll nev-er, no nev-er, no nev-er for-sake."

TEXT: Rippon's Selection of Hymns, 1787; alt.; Mod.

TUNE (FOUNDATION): Traditional American melody; J Funk's A Compilation of Genuine Church Music, 1832

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## Friendship Register

Kindly remember to give your neighbor the Friendship Register. Once it reaches the end of the pew, then please pass it back. Making acquaintances with guests and fostering friendships within the larger church family is the goal of this register. Starting from the middle aisle, the register is located at the head of each pew.

## Worship Through Giving

The offering is a way for members and friends of Lexington Presbyterian to present the substance of their whole lives to God. Please feel no pressure to give.

Ways to give:

- You may use the offering plates.
- Go to “Giving” on your Church Center mobile app or [lexpres.churchcenter.com](http://lexpres.churchcenter.com).
- Text2Give: text any dollar amount to 84321.

# Living Hope



1. How great the cha - sm that lay be - tween us; how high the  
 2. Who could im - a - gine so great a mer - cy; what heart could  
 3. Then came the morn - ing that sealed the prom - ise; Your bur - ied



moun - tain I could not climb; in des - pe - ra - tion I turned to  
 fath - om such bound - less grace; the God of a - ges stepped down from  
 bod - y be - gan to breathe; out of the si - lence the Roar - ing



heav - en and spoke Your name in - to the night. Then through the  
 glo - ry to wear my sin and bear my shame. The cross has  
 Li - on, de - clared the grave has no claim on me. Death is de -



dark - ness, Your lov - ing - kind - ness tore thru the shad - ows of my soul. The work is  
 spo - ken: I am for - giv - en, the King of kings calls me His own. Beau - ti - ful  
 feat - ed, O con - quering Sav - ior; Now I am Yours e - ter - nal - ly. O hal - le -



fin - ished, the end is writ - ten; Je - sus Christ, my liv - ing hope.  
 Sav - ior, I'm Yours for - ev - er; Je - sus Christ, my liv - ing hope. Hal - le -  
 lu - jah, hon - or and glo - ry; Je - sus, Yours is the vic - to - ry!



lu - jah, praise the One who set me free; hal - le - lu - jah, death has



lost its grip on me. You have bro - ken eve - ry chain, there's sal -



va - tion in Your name; Je - sus Christ, my liv - ing hope.

## \* The Doxology

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all  
crea - tures here be - low; Praise Him a - bove, ye heav'n - ly host;  
Praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost. A - men.

Words by Thomas Ken, 1709

TUNE (OLD HUNDREDDTH): Louis Bourgeois's *Genevan Psalter*, 1551

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# HEARING GOD'S WORD

## Corporate Prayer

## Children's Sermon | A Bible, a Briefcase, Time, and a Promise!

### \* Scripture Reading | Colossians 1:21-29 | p. 983

<sup>21</sup> And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, <sup>22</sup> he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, <sup>23</sup> if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

<sup>24</sup> Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, <sup>25</sup> of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, <sup>26</sup> the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. <sup>27</sup> To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. <sup>28</sup> Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. <sup>29</sup> For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

## Sermon | Our Sufficiency in Christ

### An Exposition of the Letter to the Colossians

#### 12. Our Sufficiency in Christ's Hope, part 2

Rev. Dr. Curt McDaniel

## Sermon Notes

Oftentimes, biblical hope comes after a long wait and at a time when we least expect it. I learned this lesson in my early years of ministry in Montgomery, AL, when I served Trinity Presbyterian Church (PCA). In those days, I gave pastoral oversight to all the outreach and missions ministries of the congregation, and one of those ministries was evangelism training. There was a man named Allen Brackston<sup>1</sup> who was married to one of our members, but he was not a Christian. He was also the brother of a dear ruling elder friend of mine, who served as Clerk of the Session. For years, family members had witnessed to Allen, but there was no evidence of eternal life in him. In addition to family members, I had taken a visitation team to witness to him, but with no results.

A few months later, word reached me that he was diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer and had only weeks to live. Many people prayed for him as he became bedridden and “yellowed” with disease. Then one morning, I received a call in my office from Allen’s wife saying that he wanted to see me. She did not know why he wanted me to come, but she wanted me to come as soon as I could. Within 2 hours, I was in his home.

Allen struggled to get out of bed and met me in his living room for more privacy, so I sat close to him and told him I was glad to see him and wanted to know how I could help him. “You already have,” he said. I was puzzled and replied, “I am not sure I understand.” He then stated, “Several months ago, you came with my brother and another church member and shared the gospel, and for the first time, it made sense to me. Then, you left me some literature to review, and I read it, and that made sense to me also, so I have been thinking about it, and I want to ask you now to help me ask Jesus to receive the gift of eternal life. I am ready now.” It was then that I helped him—using his own words—to pray to receive Christ as Savior and Lord of his life, repenting of his sins, and trusting in Christ for His gift of eternal life.

Minutes later, he called for his wife to come, who was in the back room of the house, and he told her what he had just done. Needless to say, during his afternoon nap, the phone lines burned, and the next morning, his wife called me and asked if we could have a worship service at their home soon because he was declining fast. I agreed and called a Session meeting at his house the next day, where he gave testimony to the elders (one of them his brother!) and over a hundred people were present, many of them dear

friends in the church. After his testimony, we had a public worship service in his living room, and I baptized him. After hymn singing and preaching, the Lord's Supper was observed. In just a matter of minutes, people saw and heard this cancer-dying man give testimony to the gospel's power, and everyone left with their faith strengthened.

Two days later, the Lord called him home. I still remember the graveside service I conducted a few days later. I used Jesus' parable of the workers in the vineyard (Matthew 20) to show that Allen represented the last worker Jesus hired for the vineyard that day, but that was good enough. It does not matter when you get to the vineyard, but that you get to the vineyard. Allen's life is a testimony to the power of biblical hope.

As we come to the end of Colossians 1, we see the theme of biblical hope strongly centered around the person and work of Christ, who is described in 1:27 as "the hope of glory." In this text, we learn two great elements of biblical hope that point us to the sufficiency of Christ for our lives. Last time, we saw:

- I. **Biblical hope comes from God's reconciliation** (1:21-23). Four descriptions of our life before Christ:
  - a. "*Once*" (1:21). There was a definite time before we embraced Christ. One is not physically born into God's kingdom. One must be spiritually born in time and place.
  - b. "*You were alienated*" (1:21). This shows that there was enmity and animosity between us and God.
  - c. "*Hostile in mind*" (1:21). We carried bad thoughts about God and against His authority.
  - d. "*Doing evil deeds*" (1:21). Our actions were the proof of our evil thinking. We acted against God.

Yet the message of the gospel is "BUT NOW!" (1:22). God has reconciled you to Himself by the physical death of Christ, and now our Savior seeks to present you and me as blameless and whole to the Father!

*Today:*

2. **Biblical hope comes from God's revelation** (1:25-29). Verse 25: "I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the Word of God fully known, the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to His saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." With these words, the apostle tells the Colossian believers and us that our hope rests in the revealed knowledge of God. In His infinite love and pleasure, God, the great Creator of all things, now chooses to be the great Revealer of all things, purposely deciding to show us things about Himself so that we can know Him, love Him, and have a personal relationship with Him in an intimate way.

This is a mind-boggling truth! No other religion even hints at the idea that you can know God intimately or that God wants to make His home in your life (John 14:23, Revelation 3:20). Only Christianity claims that a person can know God personally and intimately. But notice that this relationship is not possible because of human efforts or initiatives. On your own skill or ingenuity, you cannot know God. Instead, God must reveal Himself to you. This text tells us that this knowledge of God, this Word of God, was once "a mystery hidden for ages and generations, but now revealed to His saints" (1:26). Think of that: You and I once lived in the shadow of a great mystery: the knowledge of God. But in His great pleasure, God chose to make Himself known to you and me. We are no longer living in a world of confusion, uncertainty, and secrecy. God has revealed Himself to us! We are no longer in the dark! We are living in the light! And the knowledge of this disclosure can give us hope for our daily lives!

What do we know about this mystery? Why is this mystery so great in Paul's eyes? What makes it so significant? In this text, the apostle gives us four aspects that help us understand why there is so much hope in God's revelation.

- a. *This mystery reveals a plan* (1:26-27). The wording in 1:26-27 strongly implies a timetable in God's mind for the knowledge of Himself to come to the world. 1:26 tells us that this mystery, this Word of God in its fullness, "has been hidden." This verb "hidden" is constructed (perfect passive participle), denoting that in past

centuries, God was the One who held the curtain closed between Himself and humanity. Only the Jews in the Old Covenant (and a few Gentiles from time to time) saw glimpses of God's character and glory through His mighty acts of power and deliverance, through His Shekinah glory cloud appearances, and through His revealed law. To the rest of the world, the knowledge of God was a mystery. But notice in 1:26 that this mystery that was once hidden "is now revealed." In other words, in His wisdom and grace, God has now drawn the curtain. In the fullness of time (Galatians 4:4) and plan, He chose to make Himself known. Praise God that our hope in Him is founded on His plans!

- b. *This mystery reveals a pleasure* (1:27). "God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery." No one influenced or swayed God to reveal Himself to us. God's disclosure comes out of His desire and His initiative to make us His children and have a grace relationship with us. It was His desire and plan to unveil the wonder of Himself to people like you and me: "It was just here that this mystery achieved its greatest triumph and displayed its transcendent glory; here too was its wealth, for it overflowed all barriers of caste or race."<sup>2</sup> It reminds us of 1 John 4:10: "In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Our knowledge of God is completely and totally based on the pleasure of God revealing Himself to us. It is an act of His grace. It is an expression of His love. It is a sign of His delight. Praise God that our hope in Him is founded on His pleasure in us!
- c. *This mystery reveals a person* (1:27). At the heart of this great mystery lies the greatest truth anyone could know. This knowledge and relationship with God are not tied up in a series of legalistic acts, human performances, practices, or duties. It is centered on a person: "To them God has chosen to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." To be as personal and intimate as possible, God decided to disclose Himself to us in human flesh in the person of Jesus, our Savior and Messiah. When we see Jesus, we know that God is no longer a mystery. John 1:18 says, "No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, He has made Him known." But notice the way Paul makes the hope of Christ so personal and powerful. You would think that there is enough hope in the knowledge that God has revealed

Himself to us on this earth in the person of His Son “to live for a while among us,” as John 1:14 states. But to Paul, that is not enough! The wonder of the gospel, the glory of the Christian Faith and the greatness of God’s mystery is that Jesus Christ is not only among us, around us, before us, and behind us, but most emphatically, *He is IN US!* **WHAT AN INCREDIBLE TRUTH!**

Our hope rests in the indwelling, glorious presence of the Son of God inside us, walking with us, communing with our being, and giving us the kind of relationship that no other religion can offer—union with its Creator. That is what makes the Christian gospel so breathtaking, so unique, so compelling, and so attractive. We can know God in the deepest, most intimate ways possible because His Son was sent to live among us, to die for us, and to be raised from the dead for us so that through faith in His person and His saving work, He may live in us, not only now, but also for all eternity. Praise God that our hope in Him is founded on the person of His Son living in us!

- d. *This mystery necessitates a proclamation* (1:28-29): “Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all His energy that He powerfully works within me.” A gospel this great and glorious deserves to be declared to everyone, something Paul saw as his mission in life. His all-consuming zeal, his day and night passion, was to proclaim this great revelation of God—a mystery hidden but now revealed to us by God’s pleasure—Jesus Christ to all humanity. This proclamation was meant at times to “warn” or “admonish” (NIV) others with a sense of alarm about the consequences of refusing Christ. On other occasions, this proclamation of hope meant teaching all people in all wisdom, conveying to all that would hear about this beautiful Savior and His great work of redemption.

The reason Paul and others wanted to proclaim this hope was to present them as “perfect” or “complete” in Christ. The word “perfect” (*telios*) has several nuances, but the meaning believed to match Paul’s intentions was that of mastery and maturity. Paul sought to proclaim Christ in such a way that people would become mature, mastering the content of the gospel and practicing it in their lives in such a daily way that people would see that their life and instruction were complete. By internalizing the gospel, they would function as spiritual adults in Christ, not

babies relying on milk, but rather people who were grown up, stable, secure, and completely knowledgeable in the ways and works of God. It was this purpose that made Paul “toil” (the actual word in Greek is where we get the verb “agonize”) with all the effort of an athlete, knowing that God’s power was at work in him to get this kind of work done.

Why would Paul agonize like this? Why would he give every last ounce of his strength to proclaim Christ as this great revelation of God? In contrast, why do so many professing Christians remain silent and fail to speak about Christ as a witness? Paul gives us his motivation in 1:27: Christ is “the hope of glory.” For some reason, some Christians have forgotten this truth. They have become so content and satisfied with the ways of this world’s culture that they have put their hope in many other things except Christ. Biblical hope means an anticipation of something wonderful to come, an assurance that God is acting today, and an expectation that His promises will hold fast to the end. In Paul’s day, many people believed in this hope, and they were persecuted for it. They were killed because this good news, this mystery now revealed, declared that God was now the God of the Jews *and* the Gentiles. In fact, Paul is currently suffering in prison because of proclaiming this good news. What does biblical hope give you during times of suffering and trial?

3. **Biblical hope brings joy in the midst of suffering** (1:24). Notice the apostle’s attitude toward the trials he was currently facing in prison: “Now I *rejoice* in my sufferings.” What?! Joy? In prison?! What could cause him to say this? It was because of the hope (biblical confidence) that he possessed in the knowledge of Christ, his Savior and Lord: “Paul rejoices ‘in suffering,’ not because of the suffering itself. He is no masochist. God has given him joy in the midst of the suffering, and he is also rejoicing because his suffering lessens the suffering of others.”<sup>3</sup> You may recall that it was Jesus who interrupted the former Saul on the road to Damascus and said to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” (Acts 9:4). Jesus did not say “His people” or “His movement;” instead, He said, “You are persecuting **ME**.” This helps us understand the inseparable connection between biblical hope and suffering in the path of Jesus. Following Jesus in a hostile world often means trials, troubles, and tribulations (John 16:33). Peter told his readers that true suffering for the gospel’s sake means following in the example of Jesus (1 Peter 2:20-23, 3:14, 4:1): “We should

bear in mind that although Christ, by means of the afflictions which He endured, rendered complete satisfaction to God, the enemies of Christ were not satisfied! They hated Jesus with insatiable hatred and wanted to add to His afflictions. But since He is physically no longer on this earth, their arrows, which are meant for Him, strike His followers.”<sup>4</sup> This “suffering pattern after Christ’s example is seen in two ways in this text:

- a. *Suffering for believers and for the church (1:24)*. Paul says these sufferings are “for your sake” and “for the sake of His body, that is, the church.” Following Christ means following a crucifixion pattern of life, a willingness to bear shame and ridicule upon your life because you choose to bear the name of Jesus Christ as your testimony. Jesus made this plain to His disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it” (Matthew 16:24-25). There are times when God ordains true suffering in one believer’s life to embolden and galvanize other believers to stand firm in their faith with a revitalized witness and a resolve to proclaim the righteousness and light of Christ to their world. Paul states that he is suffering for them, with the biblical hope that they will see Christ’s life and example in the middle of it: “There is then an intimate and intrinsic connection between the mode of Christ’s death and the character of the church, so that one may rightly speak of the cruciform character of the church. Its identity is shaped by the cross of Christ.”<sup>5</sup>
- b. *Suffering that fills up the appointed proportion divinely determined by God*. The debate through the centuries over the term “filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions” continues to be intense.<sup>6</sup> James D.G. Dunn points us in the right direction, “There is a degree of continuity between Christ’s body of flesh and Paul’s flesh for Christ’s body.”<sup>7</sup> It appears from Jesus own words and John’s visions in Revelation that there is a strong connection between preaching the gospel in the end times with tribulation (Matthew 24:9-13, 21, 29, Mark 13:9-13, Revelation 14:6, 7:14). This matches the OT prophecies of “Messiah miseries” predicted while Israel experienced exile (Daniel 7:21-22, 25-27, 12:1-3, Habakkuk 3:13-15, Zephaniah 1:15). While these sufferings do not complete our salvation

before God, they give purpose in declaring to the world that *the gospel of Christ is a saving, suffering good news that is worthy for people to embrace and to follow*:

“So the idea that death has a vicarious function, vicarious in the sense that it calls forth imitation and so helps others maintain the proper life and avoid pain, is fairly common in first-century culture. These examples do not simply aid those who hear of these sufferings when they endure similar troubles. They also are broad exhortations in the face of the vicissitudes of life, intended to help others maintain the philosophical or religious life...Paul’s sufferings, then, are vicarious in the sense that they provide an example demonstrating the value of his gospel and so helping the readers adhere to that gospel in the face of a different teaching.”<sup>8</sup>

To the Colossian believers (and us) who struggle under oppression in its various forms, who feel pushed by the culture to conform to its ways, and who face temptations by false teachers to follow a different message other than what they originally heard, the word of the gospel comes through strong and clear:

- *There is HOPE in knowing that God reconciled you to Himself through Christ’s suffering.*
- *There is HOPE in knowing that God revealed Himself to you through Christ’s person and work.*
- *There is HOPE knowing that God rejoices within you as you suffer so that others may see Christ.*

The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is a glorious gospel of suffering. Christ suffered for our salvation. We suffer for Him as a testimony to the world of Jesus’ love. And surrounding all of this is the power of **biblical HOPE**.

### **Reflection:**

“In these days certain would-be-wise men are laboriously attempting to constitute a church without Christ, and to set forth a salvation without a Savior; but their Babel building is as a bowing wall and a tottering fence. The center of the blessed mystery of the gospel is Christ Himself in His person. What a wonderful conception it was that

ever the infinite God should take upon Himself the nature of man! It never would have occurred to men that such a condescension would be thought of. Even now that it has been done it is a great mystery of our faith. God and man in one person is the wonder of heaven, and earth, and hell. Well might David exclaim, ‘What is man, that you are mindful of him? And the son of man, that you visit him?’ The first thought of the incarnation was born in the unsearchably wise mind of God. It needed omnipotent omniscience to suggest the idea of ‘Immanuel, God with us.’ Think of it! The Infinite an infant, the Ancient of Days a child, the Ever Blessed a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief! The idea is original, astounding, divine.”<sup>9</sup>

### **Study and Discussion Questions**

- In today’s world, where do people look for hope? How does this text address a person’s need for hope?
- Review and discuss the gospel’s presentation of “mystery.” What is it? Why is it called a “mystery?”
- Look at the different aspects that this mystery is seen in this text (at least 4). What does this tell you about the revealing character of God?
- Why can the apostle Paul “rejoice” in his sufferings? Why is he suffering for the church? What does it mean “to fill up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions” in 1:24? How does this connect to the end times?
- What comfort and encouragement do you draw from biblical hope in the light that suffering may/will come?

### **Footnotes:**

1. Name changed.
2. J.B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*. 14th Printing. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978, 169. Originally published in 1879 by MacMillan and Company.
3. Ben Witherington III, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007, 145.

4. William Hendricksen, *New Testament Commentary: Colossians and Philemon*. Fifth Printing. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977, 86.
5. Marianne Meye Thompson, *Colossians and Philemon. The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005, 44.
6. Scot McKnight, *The Letter to the Colossians. New International Commentary on the New Testament*. Ed. Joel B. Green. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018, 187-192 provides a good overview and helpful discussion of the most pertinent theories on this subject.
7. James D.G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon. New International Greek Testament Commentary*. Eds. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996, 117.
8. Jerry L. Sumney, *Colossians: A Commentary. The New Testament Library*. Louisville: John Knox Press, 2008, 100-101..
9. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, "Christ in You." *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*. 63 Volumes. Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1973. XXIX:266-267. Sermon #1,720, preached Sunday AM, May 13, 1883, at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London. Original emphasis.

# \* I Set My Hope on Jesus



1. When this life of tri - als tests my faith, I set my hope on Je - sus.  
 2. Though I fal - ter in this war with sin, I set my hope on Je - sus.  
 3. Though the world calls me to leave my Lord, I set my hope on Je - sus.



When the ques - tions come and doubts re - main, I set my hope on Je - sus.  
 When I fail the fight and sink with - in, I set my hope on Je - sus.  
 Though it of - fers all its vain re - wards, I set my hope on Je - sus.



For the deep - est wounds that time won't heal, there's a  
 Though the shame would drown me in its sea and I  
 Though this heart of mine is prone to stray, give me



joy that runs still deep - er. There's a truth that's more than all I feel,  
 dread the waves of jus - tice, I will cast my life on Cal - va - ry,  
 grace e - nough to fin - ish. Till I wor - ship on that fin - al day,



I set my hope on Je - sus. I set my hope on Je - sus, my rock, my on - ly  
 I set my hope on Je - sus. I set my hope on Je - sus, my rock, my on - ly  
 I set my hope on Je - sus. I set my hope on Je - sus, my rock, my on - ly



trust, who set His heart up - on me first. I set my hope on Je - sus.

Words and Music by Keith Getty, Matt Boswell, and Matt Papa

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## Sending

### \* **Benediction** | Psalm 121

*Leader: I lift up my eyes to the hills.  
From where does my help come?  
My help comes from the LORD,  
who made heaven and earth.*

*He will not let your foot be moved;  
he who keeps you will not slumber.  
Behold, he who keeps Israel  
will neither slumber nor sleep.*

*The LORD is your keeper;  
the LORD is your shade on your right hand.  
The sun shall not strike you by day,  
nor the moon by night.*

*The LORD will keep you from all evil;  
he will keep your life.  
The LORD will keep  
your going out and your coming in  
from this time forth and forevermore.*

## Postlude

## **Serving This Morning:**

Updates, Liturgist and Pastoral Prayer: Joe Wright

Reader: McKie Green

Musicians: Abigail Baarendse, Vicki Bowles, Dianne Britton, Theron Drayton, and Barb Howell

Audio/visual and livestream: Chris Hollis, Don Parker

## Updates

### Church Administrator and Director of Youth Ministry

LPC is seeking a full-time Church Administrator (aka Business Manager), and also a Director of Youth Ministry. Please visit [lexpreschurch.com](http://lexpreschurch.com) and click on “Jobs” at the bottom of the home page to view the full job description and learn how to apply. Thank you!

### VBS

We are sailing into Homeport but need your help to feed our hungry crew!

- If you are able, please choose 1 to 2 days to contribute a sweet or salty snack, appetizer, or shareable dish for our volunteer team during VBS. Please drop off snacks in the kitchen before or during VBS. Homemade treats are always a favorite!
- Please help us Set-Up & Decorate on either day:  
**Today** after our church-wide lunch: hamburgers/hotdogs & fixins’ will be provided.  
**Monday: July 22** ~9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

### Women’s Ministry presents a Game Night | August 23

Dear LPC Ladies, please mark your calendars for **August 23rd**. We are going to have a wonderful gathering and play different games from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Snacks will be provided. Please don’t hesitate to invite your friends and neighbors. More details are to follow.

### Volunteers

Volunteers are a crucial part of our church life. It would be impossible for us to serve others without our hardworking volunteers, for what we are immeasurably grateful. But we always have room for more. Right now, we are in need of several volunteers:

- The Coffee Team is looking for a woman/girl, or a couple to serve once a month (4th Sunday, second break, and cleaning).
- Greeters for both services.
- Scripture readers for both services.

If you want more information about any of the abovementioned opportunities, please contact the church office at [hello@lexpreschurch.com](mailto:hello@lexpreschurch.com) or call 803.359.9501.

## LaVie Baby Bottle Campaign

We are very thankful to everyone who took part in the LaVie Bottle campaign! We gathered \$2,254 to help moms and babies in need.

If you still have a bottle to donate, please bring it ASAP and leave it at the church office.

<b>Missions Financial Summary:</b>	Actual	Projected	Budgeted
Fiscal Year	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
General Fund Budget for Missions	\$157,578	\$147,578	\$130,000
Faith Promise Receipts for Missions	\$160,280	\$83,906	\$41,050
Missions Disbursements	\$214,756	\$275,883	\$207,346
<b>Total Faith Promise Pledges Made</b>	<b>\$114,381</b>	<b>\$97,970</b>	<b>\$41,050</b>

## Stewardship

- LPC fiscal budget year is July 1st to June 30th.
- The 2023-2024 budget was revised on January 1st, 2024.

Through the end of June, 2024:

Budget FYTD	\$1,230,583
Received FYTD	\$1,244,426
Expenditures FYTD	\$1,155,023

LPC Women's Ministry  
*invites you to*

# COFFEE CONVERSATIONS

- COMMUNITY
- CHRIST-CENTERED
- CONVERSATION

Panera Bread  
5416 Sunset Blvd

Tuesday, July 30th, 2024 | 6:30-7:15 AM  
Thursday, August 1st, 2024 | 6:30-7:30 PM

And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.  
Colossians 3:14

LPC  
*Men's and Boys!*

# BARBECUE

Thursday, August 1<sup>st</sup>  
6:30-8:30pm

The Wingard's Home  
1467 North Lake Dr, Lexington  
BBQ, HASH, COLE SLAW, BAKED BEANS & BANANA PUDDING

**Come Hungry! Bring a Friend!**



Please register to ensure we have enough food!

## SUMMER SUNDAY SOCIALS at LPC

Let's

*worship together*  
*pray together*  
*feast together*  
*fellowship together*

**VBS DECORATING TODAY AFTER LUNCH**

LEXINGTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

# CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

July 28, 2024  
9:45 am  
(during CE hour)

Do you struggle to hear on Sundays?



Hearing assistive devices are available for use during the worship services. Ask a greeter for a device and return after the service.

## Connect Card

Thanks for joining us today.  
We would love to come alongside  
you in your walk with Jesus,  
whether you're new to our  
community or you've been here a  
while.

Visit [lexpreschurch.com/connect](https://lexpreschurch.com/connect)  
or scan the QR code to fill out  
our Connect Card!

If you're not familiar with QR  
codes, we're here to help!

1. Open your smartphone's  
camera and point it at the QR  
code so that it shows clearly on  
your screen.
2. Wait for the camera to  
recognize and scan the QR code.
3. Click the link banner or  
notification when it pops up on  
your screen. Our Connect Card  
will automatically load in your  
browser.



246 Barr Road | Lexington, SC 29072  
[www.lexpreschurch.com](http://www.lexpreschurch.com)  
[hello@lexpreschurch.com](mailto:hello@lexpreschurch.com)  
803.359.9501