



Do We Know What We Have in Christ?  
Sermon – December 3, 2017

Verses Covered This Week

*1 Peter 1:3 – 12*

*Revelation 21:3 - 4*

Well good morning. It is a joy to be able to open up the Word with you this morning and we, do be in prayer for our pastor and the team in Israel. Since I'm not on Facebook anymore, I don't know where they're at. But they're somewhere and we trust that they're safe. Israel is a wonderful place.

If you've got your Bibles, we're going to be in 1 Peter chapter 1, verse 3. 1 Peter chapter 1, verse 3. Now youth and children, I'm going to give a little illustration as we go into the text today. And you should pay attention because it will forever redeem when you are forced to go antique shopping with your mother and your grandmother. To anyone in the room, you've probably never heard the name Frank Abrams. But he's a North Carolina lawyer. And he has, he goes antique shopping. And back in 2011 he went into an antique mall and was looking through some things and he found an old tintype from the late 1800's. Now a tintype was a kind of photograph that was very popular in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century where they would put the photo on a very thin piece of metal; on a piece of tin. So he finds this tintype and it's a little different. Because normally when he finds these in North Carolina they tend to be pictures of Southern culture; things from Southern plantations, things like this. But this tintype had a picture of five cowboys; it was wild west. And so he buys it thinking it's just interesting and he hangs it up inside one of his rooms in the house that he rents out as an Airbnb room. That's 2011.

Well fast forward four years. He reads a story of a tintype that had a picture of Billy the Kid playing croquet that sold for \$5 million at auction. So he gets kind of curious, "Well I wonder if there's anything special about my tintype." So he goes in and he starts to look at it and some things start to hit him and he starts to think and so then he is just not content with his own realizations, but he takes it to the right channels, the right people. They do facial recognition software and all these things and he discovers that his tintype, one of the five cowboys is indeed Billy the Kid. Which has already drastically skyrocketed the value of this \$10 tintype to multi-millions. But he discovers something else in the photo. The thing that really sets him off is on the other end of the photo, one of the other cowboys is a man named Pat Garrett. Pat Garrett was a gambling buddy of Billy the Kid's until he became sheriff in a New Mexico county. And he told Billy, "You better

get out of here or I'm going to have to take you down." And Billy came back and Pat Garrett was the man who ended Billy the Kid's life. So the only known photograph that's ever had the two of them together before that happened. This tintype would be worth millions today if it were to go to auction. Now Frank's a lover of history so he's not so sure that he wants to sell it. But the question that it makes us ask is this: Do you know what you have?

For four years, Frank owned a \$10 tintype that he found at an antique store not knowing that it was the single most valuable thing, monetarily, in his home. Do you know what you have? And when you know what you have, how does it impact your life? So as we come to the text, the question you and I have to ask today is do you and I know what we have in Christ? Do we really know what we have in Christ or is what we have in Christ, is the salvation we've given Christ, has it become so commonplace that it's easy for us to just skip right over it? Oh yeah, Jesus saved me from my sins, but I've lost the weight and the majesty of what actually God has done. So let's look at 1 Peter. As you come to 1 Peter, the apostle Peter is writing this most likely from Rome. He's writing to a group of believers in what's today Northern Turkey. It's a group of believers that he's going to remind them, are living as aliens, as sojourners, they're not at home in this world and they're only here a short time. It's a group of believers that are facing social persecution for the fact that they're followers of Christ. They're facing a loss in business from their jobs, they're being fired from their employers, they're facing ridicule from their families, they're facing social persecution. He's going to write this letter to encourage them on what it looks like to follow the Lord obediently and what it looks like to do that in a culture that's hostile. And so here's where he builds the entire case he's going to make in this letter upon what you and I have in Christ. So look with me.

<sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Blessed, literally praise-worthy, worthy of praise is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is worthy of our praise simply because He's God. If He did nothing, He would be worthy of our praise because He is God and deserving of all praise. But our God is not complacent to just be God and do nothing. Our God, because of who He is, He acts. And He is worthy of praise because of who He is and because of what He does which is about to be what he unlocks. This entire passage we're going to look at today is one solid cry of praise declaring that God is worthy of all our praise and it's all about Him. It's not about you and I. Blessed be, worthy of praise, is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

because of His great mercy

Before he tells what God has done, he tells us something about God. God is a merciful God. The word mercy, there's two senses to the word mercy, there's a judicial sense and there's a social sense. When you come to the legal sense, it's of one who is in authority looking down at one who has transgressed the law, and this person who's in authority showing leniency on that person by not giving that person what they deserve. On a social sense, it means to be so filled with compassion and sympathy that I look out as one who has power on one who is suffering and I am moved deeply to act and alleviate that person's suffering. This is the heart of God. Everything that flows as a result of His mercy, God owes you and I absolutely nothing. He does not owe us anything that He gives us. He does not owe us life. He does not owe us breath. He owes us

nothing. But He is a merciful God who looks out on broken mankind and acts and in sending Christ, Emmanuel, God with us, this is what He does.

because of His great mercy He has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

What He has done is He has rebirthed us. When you come to Christ in faith, when the Spirit convicts you of your sin and your need for Christ, and you respond in faith declaring that “Jesus what You have done is good enough and I need what You had done. I need You to save me.” When that happens, who you were is no more because you are rebirthed, is what it says. You are born anew. What you were no longer exists. You are made new entirely. I am made something new. I am reborn. And God gets all the credit, right. Because you don’t make yourself born. You don’t get to pick when you’re born literally. And you don’t get any credit for being reborn spiritually. But you are reborn. You are made entirely new and you’re born into, if in this life when I’m born physically, I am born into, according to Ephesians 2, a life that is dead in trespass and sin. I am born into death. Here, look at what it says, I am reborn into, not death, but I am reborn into a living hope. A hope that is alive. Now the word hope, we use that word, hope, and we pick up on two aspects of Biblical hope, but we miss the third. When we use the word hope, we say things like, “I hope the Rangers win the World Series next year.” Well we pick up on something that’s unseen, because they didn’t win the World Series, and they haven’t. It’s futuristic because I’m looking towards the future, but what it lacks is it lacks a guarantee. There’s no guarantee that happens next year. My hope is simply wishful thinking. And this is oftentimes how we use the word hope. I hope I get a raise. I hope I pass the class. I hope, we use it in a way of wishful thinking. That is not what the Biblical word for hope means. In the New Testament the Greek word for hope, it’s always unseen, Romans 8:24 – 25 reminds us of this. Hope that is seen is not hope, but it is unseen. So hope is always unseen. It’s not something that we see in front of us which means it’s greater than what we see in front of us. It wouldn’t be hope if it wasn’t better. What I see in front of us is not the hope I have, because the hope is better, and it’s unseen. It’s always futuristic. It’s something that’s coming.

But in scripture the word hope is something that is unseen, something that is coming, and is guaranteed beyond any shadow of a doubt to happen. I don’t see it yet. It’s not here yet. But it’s going to happen. That is what hope is. It says that we have been born again into a hope, into a, not just a hope, a hope if that’s what’s setting us up of what is coming, it’s a living hope. Living is present. This hope that I have in Christ gives me life. It’s life that I experience in the present and that will be brought to its completion in the future. And it’s guaranteed it’s going to happen. And nothing will get in the way of it happening because it’s hope. But it’s a living hope because it’s through Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. It’s a living hope because Jesus is alive. Why is it guaranteed hope? It’s guaranteed hope because the One who gives it cannot be conquered by anything. It’s guaranteed because Jesus is absolutely going to come back and bring the fullness of that hope. It’s a living hope because Jesus is alive. And there is no, there is, even if you were to remove what scripture says about His resurrection and you were just to take what the Roman historians give us, there is no possible way to explain all the facts they present of His resurrection other than He rose from the grave a little over 2,000 years ago. He is alive and He will not be stopped and because of this I have been given a living hope. And look what it says: as a living hope I have this. Verse 4:

<sup>4</sup>and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading,

I have an inheritance. What is that inheritance? Go through scripture, let me give you simple things you can go through and time doesn't permit us to go through everything that we're given, but essentially Romans 8 says that I have the very inheritance of Christ. I am a co-heir with Christ. So what does that include? It includes a restored justice because I have an eternal reward. I am rewarded for the life that I live in faith in Christ. Even though it's not a life I gave myself, it's what God gave me. He rebirthed me. I am rewarded for it. You see this in 1 Corinthians 3. It talks about our life will be put on the altar before Christ. And that which is done for Christ and survives His refining fire's given to us as reward. We saw this last week as Pastor Chris walked us through Revelation 2 – 3. The rewards that Jesus laid before the churches to walk faithfully with Him. It's a real reward. You and I will be rewarded for following Christ faithfully. There's a restored dwelling. John 4 says that Jesus goes to prepare a place for us. We have an eternal home. A home that will not change. A home that is secure. A home that there is no trouble, there's no discord, there's also probably no 24-hour news networks. Look at what Revelation 21 says. Let me read it to you. It says:

<sup>3</sup>He heard a loud voice, "Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, He will live with them, they will be His people, God Himself will be with them, they will be, He will be their God, <sup>4</sup>He personally will wipe every tear away from their eyes, death will be no more; grief, crying, pain, will be no more because the previous things have passed away."

Our inheritance is an eternal home that is perfect. An eternal home where there is peace. An eternal home where God dwells. An eternal home where there will be no more tears because there is no more suffering. Of restored justice. An eternal reward. We have a restored dwelling, an eternal home. Our inheritance is a restored existence. 1 John 3:3 says that we will be like Christ meaning we will have a resurrected body. 1 Corinthians 15 talks about this body which is perishable, which is mortal, will be made immortal, it will be incorruptible. This body will be repaired. I will not only have an eternal dwelling, but I will have an eternal body that is like Christ, that is not subject to decay, to pain, to sickness, to sin, and more than anything in my inheritance, I have a restored relationship. Revelation 22, verse 4, they will see His face. 1 John 3 says we'll be like Him because we will see Him as He is. I am in a restored relationship with Christ now because I am saved by His grace, but the life I lead in Christ today I lead by faith. The life that I lead by Christ then, I will lead by sight because I will see Him. This is my inheritance. It's nothing short of what God has granted Christ. This is my inheritance. And notice what it says, this inheritance is imperishable; meaning it can't be touched by death. It's undefiled; meaning it can't be touched by sin. And it's unfading; meaning time has no impact or decay on it. In this world there are three things that bring destruction: death, sin, and time. None of those things have any power over what God has given me. This inheritance that He is waiting, this inheritance that is built up for me, notice he says that it's kept for me. Kept is a perfect verb meaning that at one time I did not have this inheritance. At one time I was without an inheritance. But then there came a point, there came a moment, the moment of salvation where I was given this inheritance in Christ. And from that moment forward, it has been kept. Meaning it is being preserved. It is reserved for me. No one else can take it. It is personally mine that Jesus gives to me. I've been born into a living hope because Jesus has risen. I've been given an inheritance that can't be touched by

anything that will destroy or diminish it. All of these are futuristic, but my living hope is present. It's not just future, it's present. Notice what it says. That we who have this inheritance, we are, verse 5:

<sup>5</sup>we are being guarded by God's power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed.

Presently I am guarded by God's power. And that word guarded means to secure something. It's literally the mental picture of a fortification where on the outside of the walls you have the enemy surrounding and attempting to make advances. On the inside of the walls you have a people seeking safety and the walls that separate them are guarding the people. We have a real enemy. We have a real enemy who seeks to rob us and destroy everything, as a believer, that God has promised us. But it says we are presently being protected. We have walls around us and those walls are God's own power. Which means the enemy cannot actually truly touch my life in a destructive way. Now how do we deal with suffering? We'll see that here in a second. God's power we're going to see does not protect us from sorrow here on this side of heaven. But it protects me from anything that would rob me of that which is His. And there may be times I flirt with the enemy on the outside of the wall and there may be times God gives me a short leash with which to do so, but if I am truly His child, His protection comes in and He brings His discipline, Hebrews 12, into my life to pull me back. I become a part of His protection when I am saved. I receive His protection as I live and even in the times when I am faithless, it says in 2 Timothy 2, He is faithful because He cannot deny Himself. And I belong to Christ. God protects us for a salvation that is ready to be revealed. You have His protection in your life if you are truly washed in the blood of Christ. You may not realize it because sometimes we lose sight and we don't know what we have.

Do we really know what we have? Do we really know what it means to have a living hope? Do we really know what it means that we have this inheritance? Do we really know what it means to be protected by His power? Do we? Or is it something that's really great and it was a great little bargain we found at the antique store and we've got it up in our house and it's there, but we don't really tap in and understand what it is. Do we know it? If we really know that it impacts. It changes everything. I guarantee you Frank Abrams whether he sells the tintype or not, his perspective of how he treats that tintype has forever been changed. If his house burns down there may be a few sentimental things he grabs, and he'll grab that tintype because if he sells it, he'll have everything he's got, everything he loses, again. I guarantee you if the people goes in there and he may not have that in the Airbnb room anymore for someone to swipe conveniently in their suitcase. If you and I really know what we have it changes everything. So how does this change us? How does what we have in Christ change us? Look at verse 6.

<sup>6</sup>You rejoice in this, in this, in this salvation, everything he's described, you rejoice in this, even though now for a short time, if necessary, you suffer grief and various trials,

You rejoice. If you know what you have, then you and I rejoice in it. The word rejoice is an interesting word. It is not used by secular writers in Greek. It was not a word that they used. It's a word that took on a distinctly Christian flavor. That the Holy Spirit used the authors of Scripture and pulled it and used, it means to take joy and specifically to take joy by taking my thoughts,

taking the eyes of my heart, the eyes of my mind, and setting them on who God is and what He has done. It is a meditation of who He is and what He's done. That's what rejoicing is. To rejoice in something is to give thought to who someone is and to what they've done. To rejoice then here is to give thought to who God is. He is worthy of praise. He is a merciful God and what He has done. Look at what He has given me. The size of my rejoicing will be dependent upon how great I really understand what I have is. And rejoicing is what the Holy Spirit uses to produce joy.

Joy is an interesting thing in scripture. We tend to view joy and to promote it as if it is an emotion. As if it's simply happiness or pleasure. There is another word for pleasure in the Greek and it's not the word that's ever used for joy. It's the word we get hedonism from. The word for pleasure is not the word for joy. Joy is something entirely greater than simply pleasure. It's not a continual feeling of hilarity nor is it a denial of the reality of suffering and pain, but it is something that has an object that it looks at and in contemplating that object it produces a gladness. Which means certainly is there an emotional component of it? Absolutely. But it also means it's far greater than just an emotion. Which is why it's possible; notice what the text says. We rejoice even though now we suffer grief. Grief there is the internal anguish that I feel when suffering happens. So whether it's a trial in the sense of someone just says something rude to me and it cuts to the core, or whether it is having to face the loss and the death of a loved one, the response of pain that I feel, that is grief. And notice what the text says. It says that, that I rejoice in the midst of that grief. Which means the response of rejoicing is not exclusive from the feeling of grief. I can feel the fullness of grief and sorrow and I can still rejoice. It should give freedom to those of us who face intense sorrow. It means I possess the ability to have joy and to rejoice even when I feel crushed and in anguish. Jesus is described as a man of sorrow and well acquainted with grief. Paul says that they were, that they despaired so deeply that they despaired even of life itself. You and I are going to be grieved. God's salvation, the greatness of His gift, does not exempt us from suffering in this life. It doesn't tell us how much suffering we'll have. It doesn't tell us how many, the language is very generic. You will have various trials. It's so generic it covers everything from tragic loss to times when you are being tested and God allows situations in your life to test. It covers everything in that gambit. Everything you can suffer that is sorrowful, it covers. And in this I can rejoice and in rejoicing the Holy Spirit produces joy. This is what sets joy apart from happiness. I can buy happiness. Joy is exclusively only produced in me by the Holy Spirit. I can't actually make myself joyful. It's a fruit of the Spirit, meaning the Holy Spirit has to make me joyful. My part is to rejoice. It is to take my mind in the midst of grief. To take my mind in the midst of happiness. To take my mind and to dwell on the greatness of who God is and what He has done in my life. And everything that it means because of what He has done. To rejoice is not a stoic thing. Understand we have a living hope. If we really understand that and we rejoice in it, it means we as believers, we as believers should look like people who have life. Any kind of Christian teaching that produces within us just a dead pan rotteness, is not, not flowing out of what God has given us. Now notice because of what God has given us, notice what happens in our suffering. It says,

<sup>6</sup>You rejoice in this even though if now for a short time, if necessary, you suffer grief and various trials, <sup>7</sup>so that the proven character of your faith which is more valuable than gold, though perishable, is refined by fire, may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Because we fall presently under the protection of God and because we have this hope and inheritance coming, what God does with our suffering and our sorrows as he transforms it. So no the enemy cannot touch my life in a way that would rob me of what God has given me. But God will permit, whether it's the enemy or whether it's other people, God will permit and allow suffering and sorrow in my life. It cannot happen if He does not allow it. And catch the difference. There's a difference in allowing something and causing something. God didn't cause Job's suffering. But He allowed it. Nothing can touch my life because I'm under, I'm inside the walls of God's power, that He does not allow. But He will allow some sorrowful things to happen. But because of what I have in Christ, I'm not simply left with sorrow. I grieve, but not as those without hope. God transforms my suffering and this is what He does in the midst of my sufferings. He uses it to, to refine my character, to show the genuineness of my character. God is concerned chiefly with my relationship with Him. It's my relationship with Him, my walking in faith with Him, with which I will be rewarded eternally. God is refining and at work to refine us and what God will do in these sufferings, it mentions gold. Gold's the most precious metal in the world. It's the most valuable metal. And what happens with gold is if you just go and dig up some gold, it's brittle and it's impure. And so what you do, it mentions refine by fire, you super heat that gold until it becomes molten and you beat on it. And as you beat on the super-heated gold two things happen. The impurities are hammered out. Meaning it's more pure and beautiful. And because the impurities are pulled out, it is made stronger. But we have as a hope in Christ, a living hope, what we have as being guarded by Christ, is that God will take our sorrow and He will take our suffering, He will take the griefs that you and I have faced and He will use it in our lives to take us deeper into Him to take the salvation that He has given us, He will work it out to make it more pure and to strengthen it. And what happens as a result of this? Why is this more precious than even gold? Because gold which is refined is still going down. It's still, as you still leave it, at some point, it won't be, but notice what it says: God does all of this so that it would result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. And what's interesting there, the way it's phrased, it's not praise, glory, and honor of Jesus; it's Jesus demonstrating praise, glory, and honor to me. Because of the purity and the strength of the faith that God has worked out in my life on that day when I received the fullness of my hope and inheritance. I rejoice. If I rejoice, let's keep working through the passage. Look what it says.

<sup>8</sup>though you have not seen Him, you love Him, though not seeing Him now, you believe in Him, and you rejoice with inexpressible and glorious joy, <sup>9</sup>because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

If you and I are going to rejoice in what we have, you and I are going to have to have a real love for Christ. You will not rejoice in someone or something you do not love. Now not in the same sense of rejoicing as scripture, but about a month ago, there's a lot of Astros fans who rejoiced. Why? Because you love the Astros. There's a lot of Rangers fans who didn't rejoice. Why? Because they don't love the Astros. And because they realize that we gave up Nolan Ryan and maybe if we'd kept him, we would have won a World Series too. You rejoice, you will not rejoice in someone you do not love. So do I love Christ? Or do I love ministry more than Christ? Or do I love the benefits of Christ more than Christ? The object, the supreme goal of the Christian faith is to love Jesus. The real Jesus. The Jesus who has a resurrection body right now. The Jesus who as we are in this place is looking down on us with real eyes. Who as we sing praise to Him this morning is hearing our praise with real ears. Who even in the midst of our sorrow, even in the

midst of the times when we can't see Him, and we're tempted to think He's forgotten or abandoned us, He looks upon His real hands and He sees the scars of the nails which scripture says my name is engraven on. Do I love Jesus? Because I will not rejoice in one I don't love. And I cannot rejoice if I don't believe. It says you don't see Him, but you believe Him. You are believing. Both love and believing are present tense verbs meaning it should be taking place all the time. I cannot rejoice, I cannot contemplate the greatness of who God is and what He has done if I really don't trust Him. For some reason it seems as believers, it's much easier to trust Him for salvation of my soul, which is something I can't see as well than it is to really trust that all the things that He gives me in my salvation, He will actually be faithful to do. Do I trust that He guards my life? Do I trust that I have a hope that is coming? Jesus said that anyone who gives up anything in this world will be rewarded tenfold in heaven. Do I really trust these things? If I do not really believe God and His word, I cannot rejoice. If I allow doubt to linger in my life, I will not rejoice. And if I will not rejoice, you want to know why, why I lack joy? Because I'm not rejoicing. Because in rejoicing that the Holy Spirit produces the joy. And when I love Christ and I believe what He says, notice what it says: I rejoice. Again, present tense, rejoicing. We should be doing this always. Not once a week on Sunday mornings. Not once a year at Christmas or once a year at Easter. But always. This is a moment by moment process in our life. We rejoice how? We rejoice with joy that is literally unable to be described by words. And is filled with glory and the way the verb is there, it means that God places His glory upon this joy. This is a joy that does not make sense to the world. It's joy that cannot be described in human terms. That's why it's beyond just an emotion. And it's a joy that when you and I radiate with it, it shines out with the very, the very glory of God. A witness to the world. Do you and I know what we have? And if you and I really do, do we rejoice? The passage ends this way. Look real quick with me. He's going to remind, he's talked about what we have, how we ought to respond, but he's going to end going back to what we have. But he's going to describe it, not in terms of what it is, but in terms of the greatness of it. Look with me real quick. Verse 10:

<sup>10</sup>Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that would come to you searched and carefully investigated,

Those words mean this. That the prophets, they were very careful. They wanted to know every little detail about what was coming and they looked forward to it with eagerness. The prophets, the great men, Isaiah, Jeremiah, I mean can you imagine Jeremiah. God says I will write a new covenant, a covenant that is with the laws on the hearts. Ezekiel where he sees the dry bones get up and lived. These men looked forward from the other side of the cross and they were eager to know everything they could about what you and I have now. And they inquired into what time or circumstances the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating when he testified in advance to the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. Understand that what you and I have now, it is costly. It cost Jesus His life. It cost God His Son. It was not cheap. It was costly. It was the most costly.

<sup>12</sup>It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you and these things, these things about salvation have been announced to you through those who preach the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven,

All of what we've looked at today, this is the message of the gospel. That's what the gospel proclaims. It's what the Holy Spirit convicts in our hearts. And when you and I believe it, we possess it. And catch this last little interesting phrase. These things, these things about what we have in Christ, angels long, they crave, they hunger, to catch, my Bible says, a glimpse of these things. Meaning they want just a quick peak through the crack of the door at the glory of what you and I have. It's a little statement, it seems kind of strange, but go with me. 2 Peter says that if an angel were to appear right now, we would be just terrified by the sheer splendor and glory of that angel. The angels in heaven are morally pure. They are without sin. They are in God's very presence. Isaiah 6 says that the Seraphim, they have six wings, with two they fly, but with two they cover their feet, and two they cover their eyes. And they proclaim all day and night, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty. You see the angels, they're creatures. They're not the Creator. They can proclaim the holiness of God all day long. They stay, they fly in the presence of the holiness of God. But they cannot gaze upon the holiness of God. They cannot know the redemption of God. We, like them, are creatures, but we are different than them. We are in the image of God. The angels cover their eyes because they cannot gaze upon the holiness of God, yet scripture says that I will share His holiness and it says that I will see His face. The angels dream to catch just a quick peak of what I have presently in Christ and what is coming to me in my hope and inheritance. Do you and I know what we have?

Pray with me.

Father forgive me for the many days where I failed to rejoice. Where my mind is pulled towards what, to what my situation is today and I cease to really think and to rest on who You are and what You have done. Father may we be in awe of who You are. That you are a God who is full of mercy. Who in Your great mercy has caused us to be reborn into a living hope and God may we be a people of this hope. A people whose eyes are continually set on the hope rejoicing in it. And because of that a people who demonstrate life today. God you don't spare us from sorrow and God you don't act like sorrow was not painful. You know it firsthand. And Lord I am grateful to know that joy and sorrow are not mutually exclusive. That I can have Your joy in the midst of mourning. God you even said, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." So Father I don't know where everyone's at this morning, You do. There are some in this room, Lord, that You know do not know You. They don't know this hope. They don't have this hope. And Holy Spirit right now you are tugging and convicting on their hearts. May they yield to You in belief today. There's others in this room we've forgotten the greatness of what you've done. God may we respond accordingly if that's to be encouraged or if that's to be convicted. May we respond rightly this morning. God thank you for what you have done.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed we're going to move into a time of response. Ministers will be down front ready to respond to you. I don't know where you're at this morning, I do know Jesus is here. I do know the Holy Spirit is moving. I do know His word does not come back void. Some of You do not know this hope. You cannot know this hope because you're born into a Christian family or because you've gone to church all your life. You can only know it in the new birth. If God is moving on your heart today, come and know His mercy and be given what you can't possibly fathom the greatness of; His salvation. For some in this room, you know the Lord, I don't know how God's stirring. Maybe today's the day you need to join the church here. Maybe you need to come down and just pray. My plea to you is just be responsive and obedient

in how the Lord is moving on your hearts. So as you pray, come as you're led, and Lord it's in  
Your name we pray. Amen.