

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

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[0 : 0 0] Well, with the Lord's help and the Lord's grace, we'll turn back to that portion of scripture that we read, the book of Lamentations, Lamentations chapter 3, and if you read again at verse 15. Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall. My soul continually remembers it and has bowed down within me. But this I call to mind and therefore I have hope.

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. His mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, says my soul. Therefore I will hope in him. The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. But in particular, of course, the words of verse 23. Great is thy faithfulness.

Great is thy faithfulness. Safe to say that this week has been a hard week. It's been a hard week for a family we all know and love. It's been a hard week for our island. A hard week for our presbytery. A hard week for our denomination. It's been a hard week for the church. The church that belongs to Jesus Christ.

We've been reminded of the frailty of life and the pains that we encounter in this life. And without doubt, the news of the death of Reverend Dr. Ian D. Campbell, it has brought sadness, heartache, heaviness, distress, confusion, weeping, and many other things.

But what this passage reminds us today is that we do not weep as those without hope.

[2 : 3 4] We do have hope. And we have hope that despite all the darkness and all the heaviness and all the uncertainty of our circumstances, God is faithful. God is faithful. And our hope in his faithfulness, faithfulness towards us, that is the anchor of our soul. An anchor which we know is sure and it is steadfast.

And if there's anything I want us to take away from this passage today, it is the words of verse 23. Great is thy faithfulness. Great is thy faithfulness. My friend, take these words into this week and into every week of your life and remind yourself that you have hope because God is faithful.

God is faithful. Because when we come to this little book hidden amongst the pages of the Old Testament, we see that the message of the book of Lamentations, the message that it has for us, is that it's okay to weep. It's not wrong for us to be upset.

It's not wrong to shed tears. It's not wrong to be broken. Sometimes we have this fatalistic view of suffering in which we try and ignore the pain and we overlook heartache and turn a blind eye to what's actually going on around us.

Or we just dismiss it and think, well, the Bible says everything works together for good to those who love the Lord. And it'll be okay. It'll all turn out all right in the end.

[4 : 1 0] And, you know, we can try and be strong. We can try and put on the brave face, this front, so that no one will know that we are weak or broken, whether we're human.

But the book of Lamentations, the message that it has for us is that we need to look at the pain that we're going through and see it for what it is.

And in doing so, we are to set our broken hearts towards our great physician and healer of our souls, Jesus Christ. Because where do we go when we're suffering?

Where do you go when you're suffering? Where do you turn to? Who do you look to? Do you just turn to inner strength and, well, see how far it will get you?

Do you just block it out and try and have this positive attitude towards life? Where do you go when you're suffering or when you're worried or when you're anxious? Where do you go?

[5 : 12] Especially if you're not a Christian here today. Where do you go? Who do you turn to? Where do you bring all your burdens? Well, my friend, it was the Apostle Peter who looked at Jesus.

And he said, To whom else can we go but to this Jesus? For he alone has the words of eternal life. And that's what I hope we will rediscover today.

That in this passage from the book of Lamentations, we will see that when we suffer as individuals or as the people of God, we can bring all our burdens and all our tears to Jesus Christ.

The one who stores all our tears in his bottle. Because what we're being told in this passage is that when we are at our wit's end, we can draw near to the Lord and lean upon him.

And so I'd like us to consider this well-known and frequently quoted verse. I want us to look at it from within its context. Because it's only when we see these words from within their context, it's only when we view them from the context that surrounds them that we realize how powerful this confession of faith really is.

[6 : 28] Where the servant of the Lord says, Great is thy faithfulness. And so I'd like us to see that there are three directions in which the servant of the Lord looks.

He's looking back to what has happened. He's looking around to what's going on. But he's also looking ahead to the future. He's looking back, he's looking around, he's looking ahead.

So if we look first of all, if we look back with him. He says in verse 17, My soul is bereft of peace. I've forgotten what happiness is.

So I say my endurance has perished, so has my hope from the Lord. Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall. My soul continually remembers it and has bowed down within me.

But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope. The book of lamentations is a book that is full of emotion. Because it's a book of five funeral poems, or five poems of lament.

[7 : 34] And they express the emotion and the sorrow that was experienced by the people of God when the city of Jerusalem was destroyed. And this book of five lamentations, it was written by the prophet Jeremiah.

And it comes immediately after the book of Jeremiah because it's the sequel to the events that Jeremiah prophesied about in his book. Because the event which both the book of Jeremiah and the book of lamentations, the event that they're referring to, is the destruction of the city of Jerusalem.

And the exile of the Lord's people into captivity in Babylon. In which the book of Jeremiah, it predicts the event.

It predicts the destruction of Jerusalem. And then the book of lamentations, it reflects upon it. It laments over it. And as you know, the destruction of Jerusalem, it came because the people of God, they failed to live obedient lives.

They failed to live lives that were dedicated to the Lord. They were not to worship any other God or bow down to any other idol or serve them. But as you know, the people of God didn't do what they were told.

[8 : 46] They didn't obey the Lord. They did what was right in their own eyes. They lived their lives to please themselves. And this went on for years. In fact, decades passed. And there were so many kings in Israel that led the Lord's people astray and led them to worship idols and turn away from the Lord.

But in order to combat all their disobedience, their continual disobedience, the Lord raised up many prophets. The prophets were there to remind the Lord's people that they were only to serve the living and through God.

And down throughout the years, the Lord sent prophet after prophet after prophet. He sent Isaiah. He sent Amos. He sent Hosea. He sent all these prophets to warn the people of God that if they didn't stop what they were doing and turn to the Lord in repentance, then the Lord would bring judgment.

And it didn't matter how many prophets the Lord sent. The people of Israel weren't listening. They weren't taking heed to what was being said to them. And they were ignoring all the warnings.

But then the Lord raised up one final prophet. A young man called Jeremiah. And Jeremiah was a young prophet. But he was the Lord's prophet.

[10 : 02] And the Lord had called him. The Lord had appointed him even from his mother's womb to be the servant of the Lord. And a prophet to the nations. He was to be God's chosen vessel.

And he was to proclaim whatever the Lord wanted him to say. And from the beginning of his ministry, Jeremiah was told that his ministry and his message, it was going to be the same ministry and the same message as all the other prophets before him.

The message wasn't going to change because he was a young and inexperienced prophet. The message would remain the same. The message that judgment is coming.

Judgment is coming. And Jeremiah, he was a young preacher. That took his role seriously. And he knew that his message was of the utmost importance to those who were listening to him.

And because he took it so seriously and felt the burden of his message, the message that he had to preach, Jeremiah often preached with tears. That's why Jeremiah is known to us as the weeping prophet.

[11 : 09] He often wept over the state of his nation. He wept over the hardness of people's hearts. He wept over the fact that they weren't responding to his message.

And they weren't responding to what God was saying. And Jeremiah wept when he pleaded with the people of God to repent and turn to the Lord. He pleaded that they would seek the Lord and make the Lord their only God.

But despite pleading with them, no one took heed to his message. No one was listening. And it all came to an end when the judgment of God finally came.

And it came in the form of the Babylonian army of Nebuchadnezzar. He invaded Jerusalem and he destroyed it in 586 BC.

Because when the Babylonians came, they came in power and with force. They surrounded Jerusalem on every side so that the Israelites, they had nowhere to go.

[12 : 10] They were completely hemmed in. They couldn't escape. And as the Babylonian army, as they moved into the city to destroy the city of Jerusalem. And take all the people captive back to Babylon.

They went into the city. They went into the temple. They burned the temple down. They took all the furniture out of it. The Ark of the Covenant. The brazen altar.

They took everything out. They went into the king's palace. They took out all his gold. And they burned Jerusalem to the ground. It was an awful scene. An awful scene of destruction and devastation and death.

There was so much sorrow and heartache over God's city. God's city being burned to the ground. And this loss of possessions and of their homes and even the loss of the temple.

Everything was stripped from them in a moment. And this is what Jeremiah promised would happen if they didn't turn to the Lord. Jeremiah had told them that judgment would come.

[13 : 12] And when judgment finally came, they were taken off into exile. And so when we look at these five poems of lamentation, Jeremiah is weeping over the destruction of Jerusalem.

He's crying over the absolute horror of what has taken place. Because the book of lamentations, it was written very shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem.

And in these poems of lament, Jeremiah is describing the awfulness of God's judgment upon Jerusalem. And when you read these laments that Jeremiah has written, it's only five chapters.

Five different poems. But when you read them, you can't help but be gripped by the intensity of the physical suffering that they went through. And all that they endured at the hands of the Babylonians.

Because there was war. There was death. There was famine. There was starvation. There was cannibalism. There was humiliation. There was rape. Then there was exile. And the only word which can be used to describe what Jeremiah saw was horror.

[14 : 24] Total horror. It was a nightmare. And as he looks back over these recent events in Jerusalem, with it still fresh in his mind, Jeremiah laments.

He weeps as he remembers the affliction of God's people. And as he considers it, he says, My strength and my hope is perished. My strength and my hope is perished.

It's gone. It's all gone. I've got nothing left. And he says, As I remember the affliction and the misery of what I saw in Jerusalem, it was like wormwood and gall.

Wormwood was a bitter herb. Gall was this poisonous herb. And they're symbolic of the destruction and devastation of Jerusalem, in which there was no mercy shown.

Jeremiah says that when he looks back, when he looks into the past and what has gone on, that's all he can remember. The pain and the suffering.

[15 : 27] He has this imprinted upon his mind, this horror, this nightmare. That it's with bitter experience and this poisonous time for the Lord's people.

He's just a broken man. But you know, it's interesting that in verses 19 to 21, Jeremiah uses the word remember three times. He says, Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall.

My soul continually remembers it, and has bowed down within me. But this I call to mind, or this I remember, and therefore I have hope. And looking back upon the experience of the Lord's people, all Jeremiah can remember is the affliction, the pain.

And that's what often happens when we look back, and think of the past. Think of what's gone on. All we can remember, and all we can see, and all we can think about is the affliction, and the pain, and the suffering, and the heartache.

We can't get it out of our mind. But in verse 21, it's as if Jeremiah's expression changes when he says, But this I call to mind. Therefore, I have hope.

[16 : 45] Jeremiah thought that the Lord had abandoned his people. He thought, How can something good come out of this darkness? And looking at the severity of their judgment, it looked like the Lord had completely forsaken them.

But as Jeremiah remembers, and as he laments, and as he weeps before the Lord, he calls to mind God's covenant of grace. God's great promise of salvation towards his people.

A promise that was unbreakable. A promise that was like God himself. Infinite, eternal, and unchangeable. It was an unbreakable promise.

The covenant of grace. A promise that would never change. Despite the darkest of circumstances. And this is why Jeremiah says, Therefore, I have hope.

I have hope. And it's this realization of hope that led Jeremiah to make this great confession of faith. Great is thy faithfulness.

[17 : 50] And when we look at the context of it all, And see where this confession came from, And that it came up, And it came out of the depths of darkness, And despair, And destruction.

It's only then that we can see, How powerful this confession really is. And so we see Jeremiah looking back. He's remembering the devastation of what has just happened.

But then we see him looking around. He's looking around. If you look at verse 21, He says, But this I call to mind, And therefore I have hope.

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. His mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning. Great is thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, Saith my soul.

Therefore will I hope in him. You know the book of Lamentations, It originally had no title. They couldn't come up with a title for it.

[18 : 55] But the Jews, They always referred to it as the book of how. The book of how. It was called, How in relation to the question, How could God allow his people, To endure such affliction?

How could he let his people suffer, In such horrific ways? How could God allow this nightmare to happen? And, As we all know, These are the questions which we all struggle with.

How? Why? Why this way? Why now? What happened? And it's a question which Jeremiah struggled with too. How could the Lord abandon his people?

Where is the Lord in this? What's going on? And you know, When we look at this chapter, The first 18 verses, They're all taken up with Jeremiah, In the dust, Completely devastated by, What has taken place.

Where Jeremiah says, In the opening verse of, This third poem, I am the man who has seen, Affliction. And it seems that Jeremiah, He's on the verge of despair.

[20 : 01] After all that he has seen, And after all that he's witnessed, And after all that, The Lord's people have been through. But when Jeremiah calls to mind, God's covenant of grace, He's moved from remembering, The affliction of God's people, To remembering, Who God is.

He's given the perspective, Not of the situation, But of the sovereign. The one who is in control. And these verses, They're key to this, Whole book of Jeremiah, Of lamentations.

In fact, An amazing fact about this, The Hebrews were brilliant, At writing poetry. There are five, Books, There are five chapters in this book.

And on the outside, If you work, Chapter one, Chapter five, Chapter two, Chapter four, Chapter three, In the middle, It's all lamentations. The middle verse, Of this whole book, Is great is thy faithfulness.

That's the wonder of, The way they wrote, About lamentations. About their lament, Their heartache. They always had God, At the centre, Despite everything, That was going on, They had God, At the centre.

[21 : 24] And that's, What we're seeing in these verses. Jeremiah is revealing, That the reason, Why the people of God, Can cope, With suffering, And their affliction, And all that they go through, Is because, The covenant making God, And the covenant keeping God, Will always remain faithful, To his promises.

Despite all their hardship, Despite all, The difficult providences, He will not abandon, His people. I will never leave you, He said. I will never forsake you.

And as Jeremiah, Calls to mind, Who this covenant God, Really is. He confesses that, It's because, Of the Lord's marshes. It's because, Of the Lord's steadfast love.

It's because, Of the Lord's covenant love, That we are not consumed. Jeremiah's statement, It's so, Rich in covenantal language, That you can't help, But see, That in the midst of, All the devastation, And the heartache, He's, He's clinging, To the covenant promises, Of God.

Jeremiah is, Looking around him, At all the brokenness, That he's in, And all he can do, Is look to the Lord. All he can do, Is look to the Lord.

[22 : 37] And when, Jeremiah looks to the Lord, In this poem, He keeps using, The covenant name Lord. He calls him the Lord. The one who keeps covenant.

The self-existent one. The one who has no beginning, And no end. From everlasting, To everlasting. This is who the covenant God is, And Jeremiah says, It's because, You are the one, Who keeps covenant.

And it's because, Of your unchanging covenant love, That we are not consumed. It's because, Of your, Of the undeserved covenant love, And mercy of God, That never ceases, That we are not consumed.

It's, It's wonderful. And what Jeremiah is seeing here, Is that God's love, And God's grace, It never ends. It has no limit.

It never runs out. The rivers of his love, And grace, And mercy, They'll never run dry. That's his promise. No matter, How much we may suffer, And endure affliction, We can never exhaust, The grace of God.

[23 : 48] Because it doesn't cease. It will never come to an end. It will always keep flowing, Towards us. And because of his, Unending storage of grace, Jeremiah is saying, His compassions, They fail not.

His care and compassion, Towards his people, Never changes. It'll never stop. It'll never cease. It'll never run out. Jeremiah is, Is laying all his hope, Upon the grace, And mercy of God.

And that's what we need to realize. Not only when things are going well, But especially when things aren't going well. When life takes the unexpected turn, The thing we never saw coming, Round the corner.

Where do we go? We need to turn to God, And see who he is, And lay hold upon, His endless grace, And mercy towards us. But more than that, More than that, Jeremiah, He not only highlights, The endless grace, And mercy of God, He also reminds us, Of their newness, Every day.

He says that, God's grace, And God's mercy, They're renewed, Every morning. Because, Even our most difficult situations, And whatever we go through in life, Jeremiah is reminding us, That we have the promise, Of the Lord's covenant, The Lord's covenant, Love the Lord's covenant, Compassion towards us.

[25 : 20] And it's there for us, In abundance. And it's there, Right at the outset, Of a new day. It's there for us, As soon as we open our eyes, As soon as we wake up, It's new, Every morning.

It's like the sunrise, Of a new day. Where the darkness, Darkness has passed, And the light has come, Where the darkness is gone, Yesterday's sorrows, And darkness, It's gone.

But now it's met, With today's light, And today's mercy, In which the Lord's mercies, They are new, And they're as new, As they have ever been.

And you know, It's no wonder, That Jeremiah goes on, To make this, Confession of God's faithfulness, Because, When you read it, It's as if he's climbing, He's in the depths, And he's climbing slowly, Out of this darkness, Climbing out of it, He's climbing, And every step, And every foothold, Is a promise of God, The mercy of God, The faithfulness of God, The compassion of God, The love of God, And he keeps climbing, Until he reaches the climax, And he says, Great is thy faithfulness, Great is thy faithfulness, But what makes this, Confession of faith, All the more beautiful, Is the context, In which it was said, Because with Jerusalem, In ruins, God's people devastated, God's people, Lamenting, They're all suffering, All in pain, Despite all the darkness, All the circumstances,

Jeremiah is still confessing, Great is thy faithfulness, He's laying hold, Upon the faithfulness of God, Towards his covenant, And his covenant people, And what Jeremiah had, Come to discover, In the midst of all, That he was going through, Is that the Lord, Will remain faithful, Even when we fail, To be faithful to him, Even when we are, Disobedient and faithless, He will always remain faithful, He will always remain faithful, And that's what led Jeremiah, To say, In verse 24, The Lord is my portion, The Lord is my portion, Literally Jeremiah is saying, The Lord is the best part, The Lord is the best part, He's the best part, In all of my suffering, And in all of my affliction, And in all of my darkness, And in everything that I have seen, The Lord is my portion,

[28 : 06] He is the best part, He is the best part, In all of this, Because he is still with me, He hasn't left me, And his promises, Are still being held out, To me, And the wonder of all this, Is that Jeremiah, Doesn't ask for the situation, To change, He doesn't ask, To be taken out of it, But as he goes through it, His heart's desire, Is just to lean upon the Lord, And trust in the Lord, With all his heart, And that's what Jeremiah is teaching us, From his experience, That in the hardest of circumstances, And the most difficult of providences, The best thing we can do, Is cast all our cares upon the Lord, Knowing that he cares for us, The best thing we can do, Is throw everything upon the Lord, And confess our utter dependence upon him, The best thing we can do, Is fall at his feet, And confess how faithful a God he really is, The best thing we can do, Is trust in the Lord with all our heart,

Lean not upon our own understanding, But in all our ways, To acknowledge him, And he shall direct our paths, My friend, The best thing we can do in times of trouble, Is confess with the weeping prophet, Great is thy faithfulness, Great is thy faithfulness, And this is why Jeremiah could say, The Lord is my portion, Saith my soul, Therefore, I will hope in him, I will hope in him, And in that statement of hope, We see that Jeremiah, He's now looking ahead, I will hope in him, He was looking back, To the horror of the past, Of what had just taken place, He's looking around, To the people of God, In devastation, Reminding himself, Of his circumstances, And, Well,

Reminding himself of the Lord's covenant faithfulness, But because he reminded himself, Of the Lord's faithfulness, He could look ahead, He could look ahead, And hope for the future, So let's look ahead with him, He says in verse 24, The Lord is my portion, Saith my soul, Therefore, I will hope in him, The Lord is good to those who wait for him, To the soul who seeks him, It is good that one should wait quietly, For the salvation, Of the Lord, In verse 18, We saw Jeremiah, Looking back, To the devastation, Of what had taken place, And saying, He had no hope, His hope, He said, Was perished, It's gone, All gone, But when Jeremiah called to mind, The continual, And ceaseless, Covenant faithfulness of the Lord, He said in verse 21, Therefore, I have hope, And then in verse 24,

After his confession, Of the Lord's covenant faithfulness, He now says, Therefore, I will hope in him, And so what we see is that, By calling to mind, God's covenant of grace, Jeremiah has gone, From having all his hopes dashed, From being completely broken, To now, Walking forward with the Lord, In full assurance, And hope in him, He now looks ahead, To what the future holds, For the people of God, And he says, I will hope in him, I will hope in him, And this change, It's so beautiful, Because, Jeremiah now confesses, That his hope, It's in the Lord alone, It's not in his circumstances, It's not in any people, It's not in the Lord's people, His hope, Is in the Lord,

And he has this great hope, In the Lord, Who is faithful, And in verses 25 and 26, Jeremiah explains, What it means to, To have hope in the Lord, And what he tells us, Is that it's a good thing, It's a good thing, To have hope in the Lord, Because he repeats the word, Good again, And again, He says, The Lord is good, To those who wait for him, To the soul who seeks him, It is good, That one should wait quietly, For the Lord, For the salvation of the Lord, Then he says in verse 27, It is good for a man, That he bear the yoke, In his youth, And as Jeremiah begins, To look ahead, To the future, He tells us to do so, In hope, He looks ahead, In hope, That wasn't the case, When he was looking behind, But now he's looking ahead, In hope, And his hope, The word hope, It means to wait expectantly,

[33 : 12] To wait expectantly, He, Not to wait in doubt, But to wait expectantly, Upon the Lord, Upon the Lord, Knowing, That it is the Lord, Who has made these promises, And the Lord is faithful, To all his promises, And that's what Jeremiah, Is talking about, In these verses, The Lord is good, To those, Who wait for him, To the soul, Who seeks him, It is good, That one should wait, Quietly, For the salvation, Of the Lord, The Lord was faithful, Towards him, And towards his people, That he could, Put his hope in him, He could wait, Expectantly upon him, Only because, The Lord was good, And the Lord was faithful, To his word, And this is what, The psalmist said, In Psalm 130, We're going to sing that shortly, But in that psalm, In Psalm 130, The psalmist begins, In the darkness, In the depths of despair,

Crying to the Lord, Lord, From the depths, To thee I cried, My voice Lord, Do thou hear, And, Like Jeremiah, As he waits upon the Lord, He's hoping, In the Lord, He's calling, To the Lord, As he does so, As he waits upon the Lord, The psalmist, He slowly, Rises, Out of the darkness, Climbs out of the darkness, And sees, The light of God's grace, And the psalmist explains, How he climbs out of the darkness, He says, I wait for God, My soul doth wait, My hope, Is in his word, More than they,

That for morning watch, My soul waits for the Lord, The psalmist says, That just like the watchman, In his watchtower, Standing there, All night, In the darkness, He's waiting expectantly, For the morning, He waits for the dawning, Of a new day, In his experience, And he knows, That that day will come, He knows that the morning, Will come, He doesn't know when, He doesn't know, When it will come, But he has no doubt, That the sun will rise, When it is time, The sun will rise, When it is time, And so he watches, And he waits, And he waits expectantly, Hoping, In the Lord, But it's in that the psalmist, He continues, And he says, With confirmation, I say, More than they that do watch, The morning light to see,

Let Israel hope in the Lord, For with him mercies be, The watchman has no doubt, That the sun will rise, The shadows will flee away, The sun will rise to a new day, And he waits expectantly, Upon the Lord in hope, Knowing that, With a new day, Comes new mercies, And that's what we see, With Jeremiah, That with the faithfulness, Of the sun, Rising each morning, Where God's mercies, They are always new, Jeremiah is expectantly, Hoping, And waiting upon, The faithfulness of the Lord, To be shown to him, And that's the way, We ought to be with the Lord, Hoping in the Lord, Expectantly waiting, Upon the Lord, And looking to the Lord, Looking ahead, Even in the darkness, Looking ahead, Even in our times of trouble, Looking ahead, My friend,

We are to keep looking, We are to keep hoping, We are to keep waiting, Upon the Lord, That's what Jeremiah tells us, It is good that one should wait, Quietly, For the salvation of the Lord, Wait for the salvation, Of the Lord, And of course, The salvation, Which Jeremiah was waiting for, And hoping in, And looking to, And focusing his mind upon, Was the salvation, That would come, In the person of Jesus Christ, Because as he looks ahead, Jeremiah waits, For the salvation of the Lord, He waits for the fulfillment, Of God's covenant promise, Of a saviour, That through him, All the nations of the earth, Will be blessed, And as we said, Jeremiah's confession, Of the Lord's faithfulness, It's so rich, In covenantal language, It's the language of promise, Because in the midst of, The devastation, And the heartache, In his own context, Jeremiah is clinging,

[38 : 27] To the covenant promises of God, And to the covenant God, Of promise, The covenant God of promise, Who is Jesus Christ, And what's remarkable, Is that every covenantal term, That's used here in this passage, The mercy, The steadfast love, The compassion, The faithfulness, They're all descriptive, They all look forward to, The person of Jesus Christ, Jesus, Is the steadfast love, Of the Lord, Of the Lord, He is, The love of God, Personified, He moved, With compassion, And care, Towards sinners, He displays to us, His mercies, Came not to call the righteous, But sinners to repentance, He is the demonstration,

Of God's faithfulness, Because he was faithful, Unto death, Even the death, Of the cross, And you know, When we look at that cross, Upon which the prince of glory died, When we see a man nailed to a tree, Suffering the hatred, And the mocking, And the darkness of Calvary, We're not to look back, To that moment, At what God was doing, We're not to look at it, In despair, Seeing that God was offering his son, As a sacrifice for sin, We're not to look around the cross, And see all the mocking, And hearing all the jeering, No, We're to look at the cross, And look ahead, Look ahead, And see that that cross, Is not the end of the story, Because on the first Lord's day, Morning, When the sun rose, Over the city of Jerusalem,

And with that new day dawning, The Lord's mercies, Were being renewed, The covenant promises, Were being affirmed, The salvation, That would go to the ends of the earth, From Jerusalem to Judea, And to Samaria, To the uttermost part of the earth, That was being affirmed, The darkness of the grave, The coldness of the grave, The pain of the grave, It had the light of God's glory, Shining in, Revealing to us, That sin had been atoned for, Death had been defeated, The grave had been conquered, But what's even more remarkable, God's messenger, Sitting at the tomb, Telling the disciples, He is not here, He is risen, He is risen, And with that,

The empty tomb of Jesus, All it declares, Is great is thy faithfulness, Great is thy faithfulness, The Lord's mercies, New each morning, Great is thy faithfulness, Is it any wonder, To us then, That Jeremiah says, The Lord is my portion, Saith my soul, Therefore will I hope in him, My friend, Jeremiah never hoped, For a better situation, Or even a different one, He hoped in the Lord, He hoped in the Lord, And that's where our hope, Needs to be today, Our hope, Needs to be in the Lord, And that was the purpose, Of the book of laments, To show us, That when we suffer in any way,

We can draw near to God, We can lean upon him, We can cling to all his covenant promises, Bring all our burdens, To his footstool, And even bring all our tears, With us, Because as we said, Jeremiah is telling us, That it's okay to weep, It's not wrong for us, To shed tears, It's not wrong for us, To be upset, And even when we are resting, In the Lord, We don't need to be, To try and be strong, And put on the brave face, Because we can still hope, In the Lord, And be broken, And weep, But you know, With us I'll close, I always love what the Apostle Paul said, About suffering, Paul went through a lot in his life, And yet he could say, If I must boast, If I must boast, I will boast in the things, That show my weakness, So that the power of Christ,

[43 : 34] May rest upon me, He says, I take pleasure in infirmities, In reproaches, In needs, In persecutions, In distresses, For Christ's sake, For when I am weak, Then I am strong, And Paul could only say that, Because he had learned, That God's faithfulness, Was great, And he had learned, That God's grace, Was sufficient, And that his strength, Was made perfect, In weakness, May you be, By leaning upon the Lord, In all your weakness, In the midst of all that is going on, May you know the grace, Of God being sufficient for you, And that your strength, Is made perfect, In weakness, And may you be enabled, To look ahead, In hope, Not to the situation, But to the sovereign, May you be enabled,

To look to the Lord, Wait expectantly upon him, And lean upon him, And him alone, But for you, If you are unconverted, Uncommitted, Wouldn't dare call yourself a Christian, If you don't know the Lord, And you don't know that he is faithful, Then you don't have this hope, And if you don't have hope, What hope do you have?

What hope do you have, As you look at life, And all its brokenness, And all its sadness, And all its sorrow, And all its darkness, What hope do you have, If your hope, Is not in the Lord?

Well may your hope be, The hope of the Christian, May you be enabled to say, The steadfast love of the Lord, Never ceases, They are new, Every morning, Great is thy faithfulness, May you be enabled to say, The Lord is my portion, Saith my soul, Therefore, Will I hope in him, May the Lord bless these thoughts to us, Let us pray, Amen, O Lord, Our gracious God, We bless and we praise thee, That thou art one who is faithful to us, That there is none likened unto thee, A God who speaks to us, Even in the darkness, And how the psalmist said,

That thou didst my mourning eyes from tears, My feet from falling free, That thou art the one who upholds us, The one who keeps us, That thou art the God who promises to keep our going out, And our coming in, From this time forth, And even forevermore, Grant us thy strength, We pray, To keep looking to Jesus, For he is the author, And he remains the finisher of our faith, Cleanse us, We pray, Do us good, Bless this day to us, The Lord's day, Help us to rest in it, And to know that, For the people of God, That we look not to this rest, But to an eternal rest, Wherein dwelleth righteousness, Do us good, And we pray, For Jesus' sake, Amen.

[47 : 31] We shall conclude by singing, In Psalm 130, Psalm 130, The Scottish Psalter, Page 421, Shall sing the whole psalm, Lord, From the depths to thee I cried, My voice, Lord, Do thou hear, And to my supplications voice, Give an attentive ear, Down to the end of the psalm, And plenteous redemption, Is ever found with him, And from all his iniquities, He is real, Shall redeem, The whole psalm, To God's praise, Amen.

Lord, From the depths to thee I cry, My voice for you I hear, And to my supplications voice, Give an attentive ear, Lord, Do thou stand, Give a whole Lord, Choose my iniquity, But yet with thee,

Forgivenesses, That fear thou mayest be, I wait for all my soul, That wait, My hope is in this world, More than they thought, To watch the Lord, I say, I say, For them, They thought,

Do watch, The Lord, May light to see, Let Israel, Israel, Open the Lord, For with the mercies be, Unplenteous, Retention, Is crucified with him, And from all his iniquities, In Israel,

Shall redeem, The grace of the Lord, Jesus Christ, The love of God, The Father, And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with you all, Now and forevermore, Amen.