

Harris Creek Baptist Church
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Series: More Than Conquerors
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We Are Not There Yet

Romans 8:18-27

18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. 19 For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. 26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

Harris Creek, good morning. Let's go, you've got a little energy, because you got to sleep in, that's fine. Glad y'all are here. We're going to be back in Romans 8 today. Challenging text, honestly, so I'm going to read it to you up front. Here's the goal of this morning: that you would leave, you go back to your car, back to your lives, with a clear understanding of God's word. So, we're going to hopefully make sense of this. But let me read it to you. It's Romans 8 verses 18-27.

18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. 19 For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. 26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to

pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

God we need your help on that text this morning, just as we dive into it would your Spirit intercede with these words being preached from this stage. Open our hearts and minds to the truth that you have hidden here, the truth that you have exposed here, and I pray that as we look into the scripture like a mirror that we would reorganize the things in our lives that are disheveled. That your Spirit would conform us more to the image and the character of your son Jesus. Amen.

When my closest friend got married he asked me to be the best man, which is just a great privilege and honor, but there's some challenges with that. His life had recently changed and so all of our old mutual friends were not walking with the Lord, kind of a wild bunch, if you will. I'm in vocational ministry at the time, and so I thinking this is going to be like herding cats. How am I going to do this and keep us off the front page of the newspaper and those kinds of things? So, I have to get real creative. I'm just thinking through, okay, what should we do? What can I plan that would be fun for everybody and represent the Lord well, and be a good time, and honor my friend, and just honor the moment in general?

And so growing up, one time on vacation, we had gone to this resort and I just remember it being the most amazing place that I had ever been to. And I thought, we'll go there. It's on the coast so then we'll go fishing, but it's a 14 hour road trip. So I thought, okay, here's what we're going to do. How do I keep everybody together for the road trip? So, I rented a tour bus, not an RV, like a 12 bunk sleeper tour bus, two living rooms, just like the big thing.

And so I have it planned, it's the day, everybody's got t-shirts, I made everyone t-shirts, the whole deal and I'm about to unveil the big plan to everyone. So I let them know, we're going to this place, we're going to go fishing, but here's how we're going to get there and it's awesome! Everyone is like, "Oh wow! Tour bus, road trip, let's go!" And so it's amazing because it's twelve guys moving down the highway in essentially a hotel room. And it's challenging because it's 12 guys moving down the highway in a hotel room, And so close proximity.

So, it starts out really neat, everybody's really excited and we get about one fourth of the way through this road trip and now there's pizza boxes on all the tables, there's trash everywhere, we're kind of tired of each other, kind of moving around, like oh, hold on, let me move, okay, you go first, you know little narrow hallways, and there's one bathroom. So, right about now the whole place has just like an odor if you will. So about a fourth of the way through the trip I begin to hear this question: "Are we there yet? Are we there yet?" Now, I'm a dad of three. I know the "are we there yet". I can handle the "are we there yet". But this is eleven grown men. "Are we there yet?" But it's okay because I've got a plan. That's when I begin to pitch them: "Hey guys you don't understand where we're going. It's amazing! I've been there twenty years ago. This is

the best vacation of my life, this place.” I start to tell them about it, how awesome and amazing, hey it’s going to be worth it.

That’s what the Spirit of God through the apostle Paul is telling us today. You’re not there yet, but it’s going to be worth it. At this place in the text, we’re in Romans 8, a series that we’re calling More Than Conquerors, it starts out, **1 there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.** It starts with the headline of the gospel, and then it begins to just give us the gospel every which way he knows how. In my humble opinion, the greatest chapter of the greatest book of the greatest collection of books. That’s what I would say about Romans 8.

So, as we move through it, we’re here in verses 18 through 27, and we’re just looking at this idea that we’re not there yet, but it’s going to be worth it. We know a lot about this particular book of scripture. We know that the apostle Paul wrote it. We know that he wrote it from Corinth, and we know that he wrote it somewhere about 57, 58 AD, and he wrote it to the church in Rome. The church is made up of Jewish believers, who were of Jewish ethnicity, and gentile backgrounds that are coming together. He wrote it to bring about unity in the church in Rome, and to show them and remind them of these theological truths, primarily the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ.

And where he’s at in this section is to say, look, you need to know that the world that you live in is broken. Things are not as they should be. It’s not as it should be. What reminders do we have today that the world is broken? What would you say? (JP looks to the crowd and waits for a response) Death, absolutely, people die. The world is broken. What else? Divorce. Promises are made and broken and hearts hurt, and break ups, and despair is ushered in. The world is not as it should be. What else? Defeat by Mormons late at night. (referencing Baylor v. BYU game from the night before) The world is not as it should be! It is not as it should be! It’s broken, double overtime, not even a victory. What else? 9/11. Planes fly into buildings. 2,996 people died. Went to work that day, didn’t plan. They planned to go home and have dinner with their families. To return to their roommates. They had dinner plans that evening, or plans to go out with friends that evening that never came to fruition because of their plans thwarted momentarily by evil. What else? War, and rumors of war, and sickness, and miscarriages, and infertility, and layoffs, and the ground cracking and crying out for water, and floods in other places, and people drowning and just this whole weird mix up of brokenness that we live in. Prodigals, children who responded to the gospel in the sixth grade and grow up to leave the faith and follow all the urges of their flesh. Car wrecks. Our bodies not working as they should. We don’t have to look far to be reminded that we’re not there yet, but it will be worth it. That’s this text.

As we move through these verses, 18-27, we’re looking at how creation groans we’re not there yet, how are own bodies groan that we’re not there yet, and to give us hope as we leave, how the Spirit helps us in our “not there yetness”, our weakness, our weariness. So in verse 18 he starts, **18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.** That line right there, is everything. Okay, let me show you because when you

read it by itself, you forget the context of last week, verse 17. Where Nate ended last week and just the great message of reminding us that we're the children of God. He ends with this verse; **17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.** He says as you share in Christ's sufferings, you're also going to share in his glory. But then in verse 18, the next verse, he goes, wait, hold on, let me think about that a little bit longer. He goes, as I consider that. What he's saying is, as I think about that again, on second thought. On second thought, I imagine that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. He says it's really not fair that I compare the glory to come with the lack of glory that is today, because one day the glory is going to far outweigh any sufferings that we experience under the sun. It will be worth it.

It's like if you're hiking up a mountain and you're tired, how much longer, and somebody comes down and you say, "How much longer?" And they say "Just up around the bend and it's going to be worth the view up there. It's going to be worth it!" But it's not really like that. It's like as if they said once you experience the view, you see it and it's so beautiful and so breathtaking that you think to yourself I would have hiked that 10,000 times, up and down, to experience this. I would have paid any price that I paid by some great multiplier. It's that much better.

This is the headline of this section. It's going to be worth it. You're not there yet, but it's going to be worth it. I can't even compare the glory that you will experience to the sufferings that you experience under the sun. This is the headline. This is the main idea. Verse **19 For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it,** Here's your interpretive challenge. Who subjected it? Some theologians say Adam, others say Satan, and still others, God. Now I'm firmly in the God camp, because of what he says next. He writes, **in hope**, so I think he says God subjected it, that's what I believe. **in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.**

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right to the present time. He says all of creation is experiencing labor pains. If you've ever experienced labor pains, either first hand or in close proximity, you've even seen it played out in a movie. It's usually white knuckles, "Give me your hand", you're going to break it, white knuckle, like wincing tears, screams, contraction. It hurts! And then, something is birth forth that is completely altogether new. It did not exist and now it does. In that moment, moments before "why did you do this to me", and then it's all worth it. We should have 10. It's like what just happened? Hold on, right. Labor pains, there's something new being brought forth.

He says that one day you're going to see who the children of God are. Paul writes in this really circular fashion. You're children of God. Remember, Nate said we're going to call out "Abba Father", this really intimate term. So you are adopted. You belong to Him, and then one day it's

going to be revealed. What does that mean? You know how it's like somebody asks you, so you know talking about your uncle, "Is he saved?" You respond, "I don't know. I'm not sure. He goes to church sometimes." Or you get these questions. "Are Catholics saved? Are Mormons saved? Is my boss saved?" People ask. He's saying one day, you're going to know. Every soul you've ever come in contact with is in one of two destinations for eternity. Either experiencing eternal FOMO. Eternal "left-outness". Like seeing who got in, who had surrendered their life to Jesus, and they realize they didn't take that opportunity to believe upon the gospel. Or you're in the kingdom saying it was all worth it, forever and ever and ever. It will all be revealed.

To put other verses to this, in context, 2 Corinthians 4:17, **17 For our light**, this is Paul again writing to the church in Corinth, **17 For our light, and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.** Same idea. Now Peter writes a similar idea. **But rejoice**, this is 1 Peter 4:13, **13 But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.** Talking about creation groaning and so my first point is creation groans "we're not there yet!"

1. Creation Groans, "We're Not There Yet!"

This is just this week, okay, a quick search of the internet for headlines this week. Here you go, this is how creation is groaning this week. Wildfires in California, in Oregon, in Turkey. There was an earthquake in China, 46 left dead. Landslides all throughout the world. Flooding in China, in Pakistan and in Rhode Island. Droughts throughout the world. Hurricane Kay, tropical storms, typhoon in South Korea, famine in Somalia. What a dichotomy that in one geographic area, they're pleading for rain to fall from the sky, everything is drying up, there's no food source. And in another geographic area they're pleading for it to stop raining, and they're swimming in the streets. That's the world we live in. That's this week. Creation crying out, groaning, fix me! Repair me! Restore me! Make me new! All over the world, and a broken creation, fractured creation is all you know. You've never experienced anything, in all of your life, that was as it should be. All you know is a world that's been broken.

Anybody notice over the last several weeks, maybe months, the green hue that was over here? The green dot on the screen, the projection? Anybody see that? Maybe you noticed it's not there anymore, some of you. I didn't, in full transparency. They came to me and said, "Hey we need new projectors." I don't like spending money, so I'm like, "We don't need new projector. The projectors are just fine. There's stuff on the wall, I've seen them." They're like, "No, they're going out." "How do you know they're going out?" "They're green." "It doesn't look green to me." He said, "That's because you're used to it. Let's go look at it together." I didn't even notice the green. So we go, we come in here, and they show me what is and then they show me what should be, and when I compare what is, to what should be, I was like "Whoa! That's really different. Wow that's way clearer. That does have a green dot right there in the middle. Wow, it does really distort what you project on there." When you compare it side by side, you see how off it is.

For those of you that might even feel this morning life is good, life is right, there's money in the bank, we can pay our bills, we sit around the table, we hold hands, and we pray. All is right in the world. No. The ceiling of joy that you experience here is beneath the floor of joy in the kingdom. You're very best moments on earth with the sun setting, and the breeze blowing and the birds chirping, and there's no aches in your body, and everyone around you seems to love Jesus, and opportunities are coming your way, and all seems right in your world, is a commercial for the least of the moments in the kingdom of Heaven. That's where we're headed. That's what he's saying. I can't even compare the suffering that we've experienced here to the glory that we experience there. The best of earth is below the worst of heaven.

He says in verse **23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.** He says **but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit,** What does that mean? Firstfruits, it's a metaphor for what they would have experienced literally in this time. In an agrarian culture there would be firstfruits. Your firstfruits would show you what was more to come. Let me explain, if you were a farmer, you work the ground, you till the soil, you prepare it to plant seeds and when you plant those seeds you wait for those seeds to sprout plants and you watch the plants and the health of the plants and then you eagerly anticipate the plants blooming some fruit. There's a firstfruit. You have a field of tomato plants, you have a field of green vines, if you will, and all of a sudden there's one single bright red, ripe, beautiful tomato. You pick it and you eat it and it's juicy, delicious, and it's just an idea of what is to come. You have this one and from that you realize, oh, it's going to be a good crop. This is a good one! Now, I can wait for all of the rest, all of these vines to be filled with tomatoes just like this one.

You're the firstfruits of the Spirit. You connect that to a conversation with a conversation I had with my son this week. We're sitting on the stairs and he says, "Dad, would you like to hear, he's so sweet, Dad, would you like to hear about when I became a Christian?" I'm like, "There's nothing I would like to hear about more. Tell me!" He says, "You want to know?" I said, "Yeah, I want to know, tell me." He said, "Well I was praying when, Dad, it was a long, long, long time ago, because I was praying and as I was praying I began to think about how there's things like the earth and DNA", is what he says. "How you know there's really not anything that is, that was not made." He goes, "So I thought, you know, there's a maker." And he thought about how there's so much that we can't even do ourselves. He goes, "Dad, did you know that we don't even fully understand DNA, so there has to be someone else that is making all of this, and I had that thought and all of a sudden my heart was filled with joy. I just was overwhelmed with joy deep inside of me." And I'm reading this text I'm thinking, that's the firstfruit. That's the firstfruit of the Spirit. That is the Spirit of God saying hey, here's a glimpse and you're not there yet. It's going to be a lot of that multiplied. That's a firstfruit of the Spirit. There's going to be more.

Then in verse 24 and 25 he just repeats this word, hope, there's hope, you gotta hope, and you don't have what you haven't yet, there's hope. I've heard it said that a person can live about 40 days without food, about 3 days without water, about 8 minutes without air, but only for 1 second without hope. As followers of Jesus, more than anyone in all of creation, we have hope. It's one of the things that marks us. It's a distinction of our salvation that you and I live with a tremendous hope, even when our bodies break. We're not there yet. That's my second point, our bodies groan, "We're not there yet!"

2. Our Bodies Groan, "We're Not There Yet!"

Is anybody's body groaning we're not there yet? I have come to know my chiropractor in Waco very well. Monica knows hers very well. Just sometimes things are not aligned. I don't know what I did this weekend, but this knee just feels like it's about to flop sideways any minute up here, and it hurts. It's just like this low dull pain. I had to visit a friend in the hospital this week. He had back surgery. His body is groaning, you're not there yet. Another friend came over, blew out his ankle or hurt his ankle, rolled his ankle the night before and as we sat down and talked about it he said I have five ailments right now. Five things hurt within my body, all symbolizing that we're not there yet. Also symbolizing we just crossed that forty threshold. Some of you, it's been your whole life. There's some constant migraine, some reminder, you're not there yet.

He says inwardly groan so it doesn't even have to be ailments of our nervous system. It may be the synopsis in our brain, our serotonin levels, a low hum depression, or some anxiety to remind you this is not the body you will have. This is not the body you will have. We're not there yet. We're not there yet. In 2 Corinthians 4:16: **16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.** Same idea. Your body is going to fail you and you will get a new body. Amen. Yeah, Amen.

Then he says this illustration in here, **for you will be adopted.** But Nate told us last week that we were adopted in that section. We're adopted children of God. We cry out "Abba Father." This is that strange already, not yet, that we see in this text. That there's something that will be that you're experiencing now, but not in its fullness. For right now you see in part, but one day you will fully know. Now you know in part, but one day you will fully know. What does that mean? My best effort to try to explain that: Monica and I have some dear friends who are very well resourced. That's pastor speak for they're loaded, a lot. Like richer than rich, rich. Right? Private jets, lake houses, summer somewhere, all inclusive, a beautiful place, not even all inclusive, they don't even need all inclusive. It's amazing places. Great vacations. Their second and third homes, nicer than most homes I've been in. Nice homes. That kind of resourced, and they're followers of Jesus. They love God. God has their heart. They get to this place where they think, you know what, we could have more children. They sense the Lord calling them to adopt. They begin to think through, where are we going to adopt? They thought we'll go internationally.

So they look at The Congo. They enter into this really long, grueling, process full of mysteries and unknowns and they willingly subject themselves to this to adopt a sibling group in the Congo. The day comes where they fly over there to meet their children. This is the adoption, they go to the orphanage. Dirt floor, limit food resources, you would be blessed to eat a meal a day, kind of situation. A head full of lice, clothes so putrid. What they're wearing is so disgusting that you can't pull it near without your gag reflex. You understand? They're covered in that. This is the situation. These children sitting in their own filth and there they are and they show up and these are your children. You are now their parents, and they're adopted, right there, in that moment they're adopted. Still in the putrid clothes, still in the horrific environment, still hungry, but they're yours. And those children, I think about this all the time, those children have no idea where they're going. They have no idea. Here's mom and dad. They don't know it's Disney for three weeks. Magic Kingdom, all you want to eat, the nicest hotels, the most comfy beds, the best clothes, the finest of foods, the greatest of experiences. That's their life. That is the rest of the rest. But right now, you're still in filth. They stink. You've got these shoes that need to be addressed, but they're adopted, and that's us. That's you and me, right now. We belong to the Father, we belong to his kingdom, not the Magic Kingdom, the greatest kingdom. We are His and we will be there with our new bodies and new clothes and all of the newness that comes with being in His kingdom. Right now we belong to him, but we're not there yet. And it will be worth it.

Verse 26: **26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.** It says in the same way the Spirit helps us in our weakness. When he says the Spirit helps us in our weakness you might be tempted to think oh when I'm weak the Spirit helps me. That's not what it's saying. It's saying in your perpetual weakness, in your constant fallen state, in the fact that your bodies don't work the way that they should and the creation around you groans and all that you know is seeing the world through a broken filter, experiencing only constant less of everything that it should be, the Spirit is there to help you. The term help you is the same word you would use as you're trying to carry something that you can't carry on your own. The Spirit is there.

This is the problem with the coffee cup theology. You know, God won't give you more than you can handle. God is going to constantly give you more than you can handle. That is your lot in life. Most days, you will have more than you can handle and that's why you want to be near the help. Most days you are going to be asked to carry more than you can carry on your own so you want to keep the one who's going to help you carry it close to you. He starts that section, **in the same way**, and if you're reading this on your own you're like what's the "in the same way" mean? In the same way what? What's the "in the same way". There's a pattern here if you're following it, creation groans, your body groans, the Spirit groans.

I believe it's a literary device. He's repeating this word. In the same way, though creation groans and your body groans, the Spirit groans to your aid on your behalf. The Spirit comes to help you. In the same way that those things groan, the Spirit groans. Sometimes this verse is used to address tongues. It's not, I'm rather confident, along with the wealth of people smarter than me, that this has nothing to do with tongues. I'm not against tongues, by the way, I just don't think this is the verse. In fact, the same author speaks to us about tongues in other places and doesn't use any of the same language here. This is about wordless groans and it's not your groans, it's not anything coming out of your mouth, it's the Spirit acting on your behalf. So my third point is the spirit of God helps us in our "We're not there yet" ness, in our weariness. The word they use is weakness.

3. The Spirit Of God Helps Us In Our Weakness.

We're not there yet. The Spirit of God reminds us it will be worth it. The Spirit of God gets us there. The Spirit of God sealed us for there, the scripture says. The Spirit of God helps us navigate this broken world in our decaying bodies so much, so that sometimes you go to God and you don't even know what to pray and the Spirit of God says, "Hey it's okay. I got you. I'm constantly praying on your behalf." Wow! "And I know the will of God, being the third person in the trinity and all, I know the will of God, and I will pray on your behalf. I'm here to remind you of where you're going." We have this great mediator in Jesus, who goes to the Father on our behalf.

I'll tell you a story that happened this week. It may feel a little hokey, but it happened and I think it's relevant, so I'm going to share it. So, I was praying on the patio, I had my prayer cards. I use prayer cards. Prayer cards so there's no mystery in that. I've talked about it before. They have a headline, subject if you will, then they have verses that go with that, then specific things I pray. So, I've got things for you guys. I have a prayer card for Harris Creek, for the body, a prayer card for preaching, a prayer card for my wife, and a prayer card for each of my children. So I'm praying for Presley, I'm praying that routine can settle in, as with all things, right, and so I'm praying as I do often, you know God bless her, protect her, use her creativity for your glory, give her friends that know and love you. I'm praying these things all the time and I'm praying kind of in, I'm kind of in overdrive if you will, cruise control would be a better word. So, I'm praying these things and the Spirit of God, I believe, speaks very clearly. What that looks like, to remove any mystery, it's like everything else in my mind is pushed out, and I'm just left with a really clear phrase that has nothing to do with anything I was thinking or what I was saying and it's kind of soul startling. Like, oh what is that? It's like boom, here. He just says, put away your phone when you're with her. That's what he said, put away your phone when you're with her. I'm like, God? So I'm like okay, let me give this some more thought. What is that God? Why is that God? What are you saying there? He just said hey, there's a lot going on in her world right now. When you're with her, be all in.

This is the Spirit helping me in my weakness and not knowing what to pray. And, there's times where I won't even have those words, or you won't even have those words, and the Spirit is going to God on your behalf. The text is telling you this so you can rest assured. As you struggle in prayer, it's okay, God's got you. I don't know what to pray. I know what to pray and I'm with you, and I'm in you, and I'm praying even when you don't have the words. I'm so tired! Sometimes we don't have questions. Every now and then you see someone's life fall apart and they're in such duress, they're in such despair, they don't even know what to ask. But the Spirit of God says, "But I know what to ask, and I'm with you with these wordless groans." And He serves as a reminder that we're not home yet, and a promise that He'll get you there and it will all be worth it.

So, in summary, creation groans "we're not there yet!", and our bodies groan "we're not there yet!", and the Spirit helps us in our weariness, in our weakness.

So what happened, to go back to that story where I started, is we drove through the night on the bus, we had a driver driving the tour bus. We drove through the night, which meant lots of bumps in the middle of the night, turns, a few times almost rolled out of the bed. I got in bed, some didn't even get in the bed. So we show up the next day. We're on the bus, we're parked, we're there, we're at the destination and everybody's a little bit agitated, frustrated, tired, short. I'm just thinking, it's okay. They're about to see the place. I hadn't been there in 20 years and we got out and they hadn't changed the place in 20 years, evidently. Everything was so much bigger in my mind as an eight year old, when I had been there. It was just like the pool was the largest thing ever, the water slides, the resort was just so nice, and I just remember as an eight year old thinking this is the most amazing place I've ever been. The challenge is we were no longer eight and so the guys get out and they all look at me and they're like, "Are you serious, this is it? This is where you brought us?" They just start making fun of it and in turn making fun of me, so all weekend I'm taking it on the chin. They will give me no break. They were like "Oh look, your grandmother brought the curtains!" They're just giving me a hard time all weekend about this place. All you know on this earth is disappointment. At every turn, someone over promises and under delivers. You experience here, so many missed expectations that it's so easy for that to creep into our theology. And for us to have this skepticism toward God, I know what you say, but..., and you experience disappointment under the sun. I'm still single! Marriage didn't work, or it's really hard! God, my kids! Chronic migraines, really? Body Aches? I can hardly walk, or I can't walk!

It's so easy to have that drive us to despair. And He's saying, "You're not there yet. You're not there yet, it's going to be worth it." So much so that you would say if you were there that I would experience the pain of that prodigal, pain of that relationship, the pain of that disease, the pain of that ailment, the pain of that heartbreak, a million times to be in here again, to get here. This place where there's no sickness, there's no disease, there's no death, there's no miscarriage. There's no conflict with a family member or a neighbor or a coworker. No unresolved insecurity,

no anxiety, no depression, no despair, there's nothing there that would remotely give you the familiarity of sadness. We're not going to be in heaven and be like "Oh, this reminds me of this one time when I was sad on earth". That won't be there! No missed expectations, only exceeded expectations. More than you know to ask for and more than your finite mind on earth can even imagine. You don't have the creativity to imagine His kingdom right now. Words fail you. Words fail you. And the peace and the joy, and the all is right in the world-ness that you might experience here in glimpses are commercials. They're still cursed, they're still fractured, they're still less than what they will be. That's what we're racing toward. He's telling us, you're not there yet. You're not there yet, but it will be worth it.

God, would you help us believe that? It's so easy to lose hope because tomorrow, presumably, we're still here, and next week, should you give it to us, we're still here, and maybe next year, should we have it, we're still here in this broken place, and that's overwhelming. It's overwhelming. So would you stir in us, as we sing, a reminder that you keep your promises? That you fulfill your word, and that we shouldn't or really can't compare our present sufferings to the glory that will be one day. Would you fix that in our hearts? In the name of Jesus, Amen.