

Patient Joy - in the mess of man's Sin

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[0 : 00] But we're going to turn now to our reading this morning. It's in the book of Ecclesiastes, which if you have one of our Vista's Blue Bibles, you'll find on page 557, Ecclesiastes chapter 8.

We've just recently done a little series ranging through some of these wisdom books, rather ambitiously taking a book a week. So just dipping our toes into the waters.

But I want to return for just a few weeks into this fascinating book of Ecclesiastes to spend a little more time here. And the title for this little series is Shining-Faced Faith in a Fleeting and Fallen World.

It's all about how to live with joy. That's what this book is about. How to live with real joy amidst the reality of the life that we're living, without pretending that the mess we see all around us isn't really there.

That's the call of the Christian gospel. And it's the call of the preacher in Ecclesiastes here. So we're going to read together today chapter 8, verse 1 down to verse 15.

[1 : 06] Which is all about patient joy in the mess of man's sin. Who is like the wise and who knows the interpretation of a thing?

A man's wisdom makes his face shine and the hardness of his face is changed. I say, keep the king's command because of God's oath to him.

Be not hasty to go from his presence. Don't take your stand in an evil cause, for he does whatever he pleases. The word of the king is supreme. And who may say to him, what are you doing?

Whoever keeps a command will know no evil thing. And the wise heart will know the proper time and the just way. For there is a time and a way for everything, for every matter.

For though man's trouble lies heavy on him. For he does not know what it's to be. For who can tell him how it will be? No man has the power to retain the spirit, or perhaps should be translated the wind, or power over the day of death.

[2 : 07] There is no discharge from war, nor will wickedness deliver those who are given to it. All this I observe while applying my heart to all that is done under the sun, when man had power over man to his hurt.

Then I saw the wicked buried. They used to go in and out of the holy place, and were praised in the city where they had done such things. This also is vanity, vain, puzzling.

Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil. Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, yet I know that it will be well for those who fear God, because they fear before him.

But it will not be well with the wicked. Neither will he prolong his days like a shadow, because he does not fear before God. There is a vanity, a great puzzle that takes place on earth.

That there are righteous people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked. And there are wicked people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous. I said that this also is vanity.

[3 : 24] So I commend joy. For man has no good thing under the sun but to eat and drink and be joyful. For this will go with him in his toil through the days of life that God has given him under the sun.

Amen. And may God bless to us this, his word. Well, turn with me, if you would, to the passage we read together there in Ecclesiastes chapter 8.

Page 557 if you have one of the church visitors' Bibles. Charles Dickens once wrote that some women's faces are in their brightness a prophecy, and some in their sadness a history.

And whether you're a man or a woman, it's true, isn't it, that our faces tell a story. An astute physician can look at your face, do you know, and he can tell a great deal. About the signs of your health or the lack of health in your body.

But of course, faces reveal a great deal to all of us, don't they? They do speak of a history. Life's experience is often etched into our faces, whether it's hardships or sorrow or bitterness or loss of different kinds.

[4 : 47] But our faces are also a prophecy because they speak not only of the events of the past, but of our reaction to the life that we've lived.

And therefore, our attitudes in the present and also our attitude to the future. The attitude of our hearts, which are hidden behind the expression of our faces.

I suppose that's why portrait painters and photographers are so often fascinated by faces, because they reveal so eloquently, don't they, so much of a person's character, so much of their story, so much of their innermost being.

And some Christians have truly shining faces, faces that radiate, that speak of deep joy and peace and contentment.

But not all Christians' faces are like that. Some believers have hard faces, don't they? Stony faces. Faces that prophesy, that tell out a very different message indeed.

[5 : 48] And the thing is that the difference in those faces is not accounted for by the one having had a hard life and the other having had a charmed life. Very often, the most shining faces are those who have gone through the most tough and bitter experiences that life can offer.

But the difference is not in life's experiences. The difference is in their reaction to them and the reaction in them. For the one, it's been a path of glad acceptance, a path of submission.

And that's led to the sweet fruit of contentment, to the shining face that speaks of real peace with God and indeed peace with the world around. But for others, it's very different.

It's a path of resistance, a path of resentment. Resentment and bitterness about all the things that life has thrown into their path.

And that has hardened their heart in discontent. And that hardness has become visible to everybody in the hard features of their faces, which often look like flint.

[6 : 57] Now this book of Ecclesiastes, as we saw when we dipped our toes into it a few weeks ago, it confronts us with a message that life is unpredictable, that life is full of puzzles, full of pain, full of perplexities.

And that's true for all of us in different ways. And the question here in the passage is in verse 1. Who is wise? Who knows the interpretation of a thing?

Who knows the way of wisdom through each perplexing path of life, so that life with all its struggles, with all its mysteries, with all its bitterness as well as its joy, so that life will work in us the wisdom that will make our face shine with bright joy even amid the storms of life, instead of becoming hardened and twisted by our experience of life in this perplexing world, in this life under the sun.

Now that's a big question. Because there are many Christians whose faces sadly do harden throughout their lives. because their hearts have become embittered with disappointments, with letdowns, with bad experiences, terrible experiences, of all kinds of different things.

It could be that you are one of those people, or it could be that you're on the way to becoming one of those sad Christians. And if that's the case, then the preacher is talking to you.

[8 : 28] He's talking to all of us. Because the truth is, without his word, without his instruction, all of us would go that way. That's the truth. So we really need to listen to his words.

What is the key, then, to the shining face? Well, the key, as this book tells us so plainly, is never, ever a flight into fantasy, into denial, into a world of let's pretend.

No, it's absolutely the opposite. It's about learning the way of submission to reality, to the world as it really is under the sun. And meeting life's realities with acceptance, instead of meeting them with anger.

And in particular, in this long section, right through to chapter 9, verse 10, he's focusing on two things that we have to come to terms with, things that we find very, very difficult indeed.

The first we'll look at today in verses 1 to 15 of chapter 8, and that is living with the manifest injustice of a sinful world. But then next time, we're going to look at another difficulty we have, which is almost as hard, and that is living with the mysterious justice of a sovereign God.

[9 : 45] And we have to come to terms with living in a world with both these realities, whether we like it or not, and the wisdom that alone leads us to joy, to a shining face, and not a hardened face, lies in the way not of anger and resistance to these things, but in the way of acceptance, in the way of submission.

That's just what God plainly tells us is true. And it's what just honest observation of the world all around about us tells us is equally true. We can so easily delude ourselves and live in a cocoon of let's pretend, but the Bible faces us up with hard facts.

So let's look at this passage in a little more detail. These verses turn our focus very deliberately to the manifest injustice in this sinful world.

And the message can be summed up this way, you must live patiently and with joy even amid the mess of man's sinfulness. In other words, real wisdom knows and accepts the limitations of a world that is sinfully corrupt, and it will never be otherwise under this sun.

In a nutshell, the shining face of contentment belongs to the believer who has learned to live with mess. Look at verses 1 to 6.

[11 : 13] It's all about the king's court. And the point's clear. Even though there might be foolishness, there might be injustice, even there, you are a fool if you think you can simply ignore his authority and assert yourself every time you think you know better.

So he says, keep the king's command, be wise. Don't go storming out of the king's presence with a face like thunder. Don't take your stand against him in an evil cause. Verse 3.

Don't persist in that kind of futile behavior. Why? Because the king's in charge. The king does what he pleases. Verse 4. His word is supreme. Now you see, look at verse 5.

The way to avoid evil and misfortune coming your way is to do what? It's to accept the place of authority. Why? Because it's simple reality. It's all about, isn't it?

It's an attitude to living under authority. Especially when that authority might seem unjust, indeed evil at times. It's about how we cope when the authority and the rule above us irks us and annoys us.

[12 : 18] And there's only two ways. One is a spirit of rebellion. It's rejection of that authority. You let it get under your skin. You let it embitter you. You let it give you a hard face.

The other is the opposite. It's the way of submission and acceptance. That learns the wisdom of discretion. Not becoming bitter. Adapting to the realities of life.

A life which will never be perfect. That's the way to have a shining face, even though times are sometimes very difficult. Now some people find living and working under somebody else's authority very difficult indeed.

Some people find it so hard that it causes no end of angst, no end of anger and bitterness. And it can make you into a very bitter, angry person, if that's you.

But the reality is, friends, that the authority structures in our world, however flawed they are, they are something that God has put into the fabric of our world for our protection. Look at verse 2.

[13 : 22] Obey the king's voice. That's why? Because of God's oath to him. That's why in Proverbs 24, verse 21, it says, Fear the Lord and the king, my son.

And don't join in with the rebellious. The kingship in Israel was God's institution, even when it was corrupt, so it couldn't be ignored. Yes, God would judge wicked kings, but you can't ignore his rule.

And the New Testament is just as clear, isn't it, about our governing authorities today in our world. They're ordained by God. They're part of God's merciful ordering of this world for our protection.

That's why Peter, the apostle, can even say to Christians who are living very probably under the dreadful reign of Nero, that's why he can say, Fear God and honor the emperor. Because even bad government is far better than total anarchy.

Just look at some of the countries in the world today. Look at Syria and other places. We can see that. But this is a sinful world, so even pretty good, even pretty uncorrupt government, as we have, is always going to have injustices, always going to have incompetences.

[14 : 32] There's going to be all sorts of reasons for us to become angry and resentful and bitter. And the point is, the preacher says, are you going to let that eat you up and poison your whole life?

Or, are you going to come to terms with reality in a sinful world and accept these things and learn to live with the limitations of a world which is awaiting recreation and which will not be perfect until that day comes?

Will you learn to live with mess so as to overcome it with patient hope, with joyous hope? That's such an important question.

Not just at the level of politics and rule and so on. Some people may be very taken up with that sort of thing. But it also impinges upon our daily lives every day in every way. Most of us who work, we work under authority.

And most of us who work under authority, we feel most of the time, or at least some of the time, we know a jolly lot better than our boss, don't we? Of course we do. And sometimes we're driven mad by their incompetence or by their injustice.

[15 : 44] Well, are you going to let that harden your face? Are you going to let that embitter your heart? Are you going to let it give you an ulcer? Make you a cynical, unhappy person?

Live with a permanent chip on your shoulder? Or is the hope of the Christian gospel about what you know about the reality of eternity and the priority of eternity?

Are you going to let that principally affect your life so that your face will shine even in the midst of these things? Maybe you're a teacher. Quite a few of you are.

You're driven mad with the latest bits of things the government is dropping on you and giving you to do in terms of crazy paperwork and so on. Or maybe you're a doctor or a nurse or a therapist. Maybe you work in the NHS and you're just absolutely sick and tired of all the latest reorganization when the last one is only just finished.

And maybe you're in business or you're a tradesman and you're being driven demented right now by the new data protection thing. Or the fears about Brexit or all the latest things. What about it? Well, the preacher says, don't be hardened by these things.

[16 : 54] You're a believer. You understand reality. You understand that this is an unjust, sinful world. So learn to live patiently as God does with the tragedy of human sin.

Don't be the kind of person who storms out and resigns at the first little irritation with your boss. Don't be the kind of person who's endlessly pursuing disputes that you know that you can never actually win in this world.

Embrace reality. But as a Christian, see the bigger picture and smile. See, a wise believer knows what verses 5 and 6 say here, that there's a time and a way for everything.

And that includes God's judgment. It will bring injustice and wickedness to book in the end. Verse 6, for there's a time and a way for everything, literally for every matter.

It's the same as in chapter 3, verse 17, where it says, God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for every matter. Be patient, he's saying.

[18 : 03] We know the bigger story. And we know God's timing and we can trust God's timing. This current injustice is not forever. And God's justice will prevail in his good time.

Sometimes, yes, that will be in our lifetime. Sometimes we will see it. But certainly, without doubt, we shall see it ultimately. God will bring every deed to judgment.

That's how the book ends, chapter 12, verse 14. And you see, knowing that and really believing that is the only thing that can help us endure this world with shining faces.

No matter what trouble, verse 6, literally what evil, we might have to bear in this life. And we need that anchor, don't we? Because life is hard.

Look at verse 7. It's true, isn't it? No one can control our own times. We can't predict all of life for ourselves. Neither can anyone else. We have to face up to our ignorance.

[19 : 06] We have to face up to our powerlessness. So much in life is just beyond us. And until we accept that reality about our lives, until we learn to live with these huge limitations on our lives, we will never be at peace in this world.

That's not to say, of course, we can never change anything or we shouldn't bother to try and challenge injustices and evils where we see them. Of course we should. We're commanded to love our neighbors. Christians all through the ages have done so much to bring about change.

Yes, of course. It's not passivity that the preacher is advocating here, but it is patience. It is realism. You have to realize that you cannot and you will not change everything.

This will be a world of sin and wickedness and injustice right till the end. That's what Jesus himself tells us so clearly in this world's governments and institutions and societies, in our whole country all around about us, no matter what happens, in your life, in your work, in the relationships that we all have, everywhere.

And unless we realize that and accept it and live patiently with the tragedy of sin, friends, it will make you bitter. It will harden your heart and it will give you an unhappy face.

[20 : 27] There are some things we just cannot control in life. Look at verse 8. The wind or the spirit as our Bible translates it or the day of death. No one escapes that war of mortality, do they?

And of course, that also is a comfort, isn't it? Because the king, the unjust ruler, the evil one, they won't escape it either. Their time will come. But that is life as we know it.

Verse 9. That's what the preacher sees. That's what we see in a world where man has power over man to his hurt.

The manifest injustice of our sinful world, we can't deny it. But, remember, it's a temporary situation.

Verse 10. The wicked too will come to their grave. It's hard to know in verse 10 whether we should take it as printed or as the footnotes suggest, whether it's the wicked are forgotten or praised.

[21 : 24] If it's praise that's correct, then it means that the injustice extends even to the funeral. The wicked are eulogized at the funeral in the very place where they did their evil works. Well, that's true, isn't it? Whoever heard a real crook called for what he actually is at his funeral?

No, he's always the greatest fellow that's ever lived. But if it means forgotten, then the emphasis is simply that the evil also will die. He'll come to an end. He'll soon be forgotten. Their power is not lasting power.

And either way, that latter point is taken up in verses 11 to 13. This really is a vanity. People live with the fantasy that God is dead, that God is powerless, that there's no judgment to come.

And because people don't meet reprisals immediately for the wickedness, well, they conclude there's no judgment. We can live as we please. They set the heart fully to do evil, verse 11. Well, nothing has changed, has it?

That's our world. He thinks nothing of the coming judgment of God. That's why Peter wrote in his letter to the Christians that the last days would be marked out by exactly that. People saying, where's this judgment?

[22 : 27] The world is just as it's always been. Nothing will ever change. No, no, no, says the preacher here. It may seem that you can oppose God with impunity, that you can live to a right old age.

It may seem you can do evil a hundred times, he says, and preserve your life. But I know, says the preacher, that the ultimate story is very different.

It will be well with those who fear God, he says, ultimately. Why? Because they fear God. Not because they're morally superior, but because they fear God. But not so the wicked, verse 13.

They will not prolong their days like a shadow. Why? Because they do not fear God. And they're living under a complete illusion that there is no ultimate judgment. So they live carefree lives, flagrantly denying God's justice.

But God is not powerless. He's just patient. And he will, as the preacher keeps reminding us, he will bring every deed to judgment.

[23 : 32] And knowing that, you see, and believing that, and allowing that fact of God's clear revelation from above the sun to permeate our whole life here on this earth, that is the key to living patiently and joyfully in the midst of the tragedy of sin.

In the midst of the mess, the injustice of this human world. Viewed only from planet earth, well, yes, life is a vanity. It's a total enigma. Verse 14. Bad things happen to good people and good things seem to only happen to the wicked.

That is a huge enigma of vanity, a puzzle, an evil, an injustice. But, says the Bible, if you listen to God's revelation, if you listen to his explanation from above the sun, then you shouldn't be surprised.

It's just what to expect in a fallen, sinful world. How can it be other? And we can accept it and bear it and live patiently in the midst of it because we know that.

We know more. That this is not just the whole story. And we can trust God and trust him to be God and not become bitter that he hasn't been God in the way we want him to be God as if we were God.

[24 : 46] I would do it this way, God. And that's why you see the preacher's prescription for life in a world of mess is not despair but it's verse 15.

It's joy. And so I commend joy. For man has no good thing under the sun but to eat and drink and be joyful. If you want to be a Christian with a shining face not a stony face, you'll be the kind of believer, he says, who is always counting your blessings not cataloging your complaints.

But I mean, all the mysteries, all the enigmas that we can't solve, there are blessings to enjoy. In fact, we're commanded to enjoy them by God. And we can learn to be satisfied even with the many dissatisfactions of life, not just dissatisfied even among the many satisfactions in life that God gives us.

But that joy in this world is only possible when we stop resisting the reality of our own limitations. And when we live patiently with the tragedy of sin, knowing that in this world it's true we have no abiding city, no eternal home.

But we're waiting for that world to come. And that's the person who can say in the midst of all the mess, I commend joy. Like Paul from a Roman prison who writes to the Philippians, rejoice always.

[26 : 12] Again I say it, rejoice. I've learned contentment whatever the circumstances he says. Or writing to the Corinthians where he says he's afflicted, he's perplexed, he's persecuted, he's struck down and yet not crushed, not despairing, not destroyed.

We do not lose heart he says. Why? Because this light and momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.

As we look not to the things which are seen, the present injustice of this world, but to the things that are unseen, the loving justice of God that is coming.

For the things that are seen, they're transients as Paul, but the things that are unseen as of now, they are the eternal things. That's just the New Testament way of saying exactly what the preacher in Ecclesiastes is saying right here.

And don't we need to hear that message? I certainly do repeatedly in my life. Because it's so easy, isn't it, as Christian believers even, to become people who are hardened by the injustice of this fallen sinful world.

[27 : 20] We look at the world, we look at our lives, we look at our own experience, we find ourselves saying so often, don't we, it's so unfair. There's so much to make us angry, so much to make us resentful, bitter.

But you see, the Bible tells us that's not just wrong for us. It's so very damaging. It's destructive, it makes us miserable.

That attitude, if you let it engulf you, it will make you miserable and it will rob you of the many manifold joys that God has given to us right in the midst of this messy world.

That attitude will take all the shine off your face. Because it will rob you of all the joy that should be in your heart. And it will make you bitter and hard.

It will harden your face, which is an expression of your inner life because it's hardened your heart and allowed you to be eaten up with that bitterness. So let me ask you, is your joy in life at something of a low ebb this morning?

[28 : 23] Has the shine, perhaps, come off your face? Is this world, is your life, is your family, your work, your general walk? Is it getting you down? Is it filling you with so much unfairness, so much annoyance, so much injustice seeming to flourish all around about you?

So much misery when you see people who deserve nothing getting everything and people who deserve so much more getting nothing. Well, if that's you today, the preacher here is saying to you, you need to do two things again and again if you're not to become or not to remain a hardened person, an embittered person with a hard face.

You need to be remembering and you need to be rejoicing. You need to remember heaven's perspective on our life here under the sun.

And that has two parts. First of all, it means submitting to present realities of what the Bible plainly tells us and what we can see with our own eyes that this is a world of injustice.

It is a world of sin. It won't be right until the Lord Jesus comes again to remake this universe completely. And friends, if that is what it takes for God to set this world to rights, how can we possibly delude ourselves to think that something we can do can somehow or other make it right before then?

[29 : 43] That's to deny the gospel. And we have to live patiently and joyfully with the tragedy of sin in so many areas of life. We need to live with mess.

And until that great day, as chapter 1 of Ecclesiastes, he says, there are so many things that are crooked that just cannot be made straight. And the only way of satisfaction, in fact, the only way of sanity is for us to accept that, to submit to that.

Not to try and fight against it and disbelieve it and pretend it's not so. And that's very hard for us. There might be the whole realm of politics and social change.

Maybe you're rightly concerned for issues of justice and betterment of people, both nationally and internationally. I hope we all are. We're all called, aren't we, as Christians, to love our neighbors, to show compassion wherever we can.

But you see, if we allow ourselves to become so consumed with zeal in that whole area that we think that if only we can achieve this thing in politics, if only we can achieve that thing in economics, if only we can change this thing in our society, then everything will be marvelous.

[30 : 52] Friends, if we're doing that, we are deluding ourselves. We'll never be happy in this world if that's us. Maybe in your job or in your career or in your marriage, or in your family life, or even in church life, as long as secretly, deep down, you've got the idea that if only we had this or did that or did the other thing or achieved something, then we'd overcome all these injustices, all these frustrations, all these aggravations and be at peace.

Friends, you will only ever be disappointed. Let me tell you. Remember, says the preacher, this is an unjust, sinful world.

This world is tinged in every part with the tragedy of human sin. If you don't remember that constantly, you will go mad with frustration and you'll end up becoming a very bitter-hearted person.

Look at your life today and ask yourself the question, what if this is as good as it gets? Because let me tell you, it may very well be as good as it's going to get.

Can you ever be satisfied? Can you ever be happy? The answer to that question will tell you if you have understood the Christian gospel. Are you going to let your sleep be worried, robbed by worry, constantly?

[32 : 19] Are you going to let resentments about your work or your family or whatever it is fester in your heart forever? Are you going to be longing constantly for a justice that will never be possible in this fallen world?

The preacher says, remember and keep remembering heaven's perspective on life under the sun, the present realities of this fallen world and all its mess.

And because you are a Christian believer, you need to also remember the second part of that heavenly reality, which is the future certainty of the kingdom of Christ, which is to come. that it will be well for those who fear God.

Life beyond the sun is a real and future certainty for all the people of God. There is a great day of God's salvation coming. There is a great day of redemption coming.

And because of that promise, says Paul, we can rejoice now in the glory of God and in the hope that that glory gives us. That is what will make us rejoice now, even amid sufferings.

[33 : 25] And that's what we constantly need to be remembering when we're surrounded by so many vexations in life, in an unjust world, in a world that is under the sun, frustrating. If we won't face realism about the abiding facts of this fallen world, if we won't live patiently with a mess of sin, then we're deluding ourselves.

And eventually, friends, what happens with people who do that is that reality overtakes them and very often their faith collapses because it wasn't real faith. It was fantasy.

It was delusion. It was escapism, not real Christian faith. But if we don't focus our lives equally on the future hope of the gospel and on the judgment to come and on the reality of the greater reversal that is promised, then we would despair, wouldn't we?

And we would be crushed by the pain of life under the sun. But when we remember all this, the whole truth and the realism and the hope of the Christian gospel, well, then we will be able for the second hour, our remembering will enable us to be constantly rejoicing.

Rejoicing in heaven's provision for life, even now, even under the sun. That is what verse 15 tells us. We'll be able to find joy even in the midst of pain and perplexity.

[34 : 50] Joy in all the good gifts of our Creator and our Redeemer. Joy in just simple things like daily life, food and drink and friendship, however imperfect it might be, and in our daily labors that God gives us.

However, ultimately, these things can never satisfy. And in so many other things in this life. And we'll be able to do that and find joy because we've set our faces on the glory of the world to come and the glory of the Christ who is coming.

That's the only place the preacher says you can find the wisdom that will make your face shine brightly with joy whatever this world might throw at you.

Do you remember how we're told in the Gospels that the face of the Lord Jesus shone like the sun when he was up on the mountain of transfiguration with his disciples? Even though his mind was fully set on what was about to happen as he set his face fully towards Jerusalem and to the cross and to the death that awaited him.

But his face shone like the sun because he saw also before him the glory of his kingdom.

[36 : 06] And it's no different for all of those whom Jesus calls to be disciples to follow him in that train for you and for me. Let me finish by what Peter writes to the church.

Just listen. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to his great mercy he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

To an inheritance that is imperishable undefiled and unfading kept in heaven for you who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

In this you rejoice although now for a little while if necessary you've been grieved by various trials so that the tested genuineness of your faith more precious than gold that perishes even though it's tried by fire so that your faith may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Though you have not seen him you love him. Though you do not now see him you believe in him and rejoice with a joy that's inexpressible and filled with glory obtaining the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

[37 : 28] see if we really understand that the hope of the true Christian gospel even amid the tragedy of this world as it really is then we will live with daily joy and with faces that shine and show the way to that joy to a watching world.

Let's pray. I commend joy for man has no good thing under the sun but to eat and drink and be joyful for this will go with him in his toil throughout the days of his life that God has given him under the sun.

Our heavenly Father how we thank you that you have opened the heavens and spoken into the darkness of this earth in all the words of the prophets from the very beginning but above all in these last days in the glory and magnificence of your son our savior the Lord Jesus Christ in whom we see not only the exact imprint of your nature but in whom we also have the sure and certain hope of glory through his resurrection from the dead.

so keep us remembering all the truth of your gospel and keep us rejoicing all the days of our lives for we ask it in Jesus name Amen