

2 Corinthians 4

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[0 : 00] Amen. Open your Bibles to 2 Corinthians chapter 4.! It's on page 965 and the passage opens and shuts with the same words and opens and shuts with these words.

! Chapter 4 verse 1, Therefore having this ministry by the mercy of God we do not lose heart. And then chapter 4 verse 16, So we do not lose heart.

Here's an actual exam question from a police training cadet institution. You know they're training police officers. Here's an exam question for would-be police officers. You're on patrol, you notice a great commotion as you investigate.

You find that there's a house ablaze with a terrified family inside. There's thick black smoke billowing across the road and it causes a passing car to swerve to avoid causing a collision.

Unfortunately, in veering off the road it rolls down a bank and it ends up in a fast flowing river.

There's total confusion and a traffic piled up in suits. From another crashed car emerges the most wanted criminal in the region who races off down the road.

[1 : 21] And the question is, what would you do in this situation? And one police cadet wrote this, remove my uniform and mingle unobtrusively with the crowd. Now I think certainly as a pastor and as a Christian that sometimes feels like a good option.

And many a time you and I felt tempted to do that, haven't we? And Paul certainly was. He tells us in this letter, in this second letter, he tells us in his opening chapter, in chapter 1 and verse 8, For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia.

He wants them to know the kind of pressure that he's under as he writes the letter. And he says, we were so utterly burdened, we were completely overwhelmed. He said, beyond our strength itself, we despaired of life itself.

Chapter 1 verse 8. Or just look at chapter 4 verse 8 to 10. It says, we're hard pressed on every side.

We are afflicted in every way. We're not crushed. We're perplexed, we're not driven to despair.

We're persecuted, we're not forsaken. We're struck down, we're not destroyed. He's saying, it doesn't matter which way I turn.

[2 : 38] I'm perplexed. I've not got all the answers. I'm not like those Christian leaders that pretend they've got all the answers. They were causing them such trouble.

I'm not Mr. Popularity. I'm struck down. I'm undermined by the super apostles that were in Corinth and their followers. And there's only so much of that you can take. How do you keep on going when life is like that?

How do you keep on going when ministry is like that? How do you keep going? Think of our brothers and sisters tonight in Iran. Or Iraq. Or in Syria. Or in the Sudan. Or in Pakistan.

I could go on and I could go on and I could go on. We've got it easy, haven't we comparatively?

How do people keep on going? How do they not lose heart in the kind of circumstances they're in?

But it is tough, isn't it, being a Christian. It's tough in today's world. It's tough being in Christian ministry in today's world. It's easy to lose heart.

[3 : 37] Authentic Christian ministry. Authentic Christianity. But always and increasingly push us to the limits of our resources. Even to the point where sometimes we might think of throwing in the towel altogether.

And giving up. And no doubt you've seen that happen. No doubt people drop out. Sometimes they burn out. Sometimes quietly. Sometimes spectacularly.

Sometimes people just go through the motions. Externally doing what is expected of them.

Outwardly they are still functioning. But inside they're a mess. And how do you keep going when it's like that?

Well that's what the chapter is about. And there are three things in this chapter. Three great reasons not to lose heart. Three reasons to persevere. And I think this is a great chapter for the start of the year.

Let me put it like this. There are three great contrasts. The first contrast is number one, strength and weakness. It is God's strength in our weakness. So look at verse seven. And Paul says we have this treasure in earthen vessels.

[4 : 42] In jars of clay. To show that the surpassing power belongs doesn't it? Not to God but to us. Not to us.

It belongs to God and not to us. Now of course that follows on doesn't it? Verse seven in the early verses of the chapter. Where he tells us what this treasure is. What is the treasure? Verse five.

It is that Jesus Christ is Lord. It's the light of the gospel of the glory of God. Verse six. And Paul says we have got this treasure of verses five and six.

In jars of clay. Or earthen vessels. What does that mean? Well I think maybe Paul is thinking of the Old Testament. And he is thinking of the story of the book of Judges.

The story of Gideon. Do you remember? The Israelites were outnumbered in Gideon's day four to one by the Midianites. And God increases the odds from four to one to four hundred and fifty to one.

[5 : 47] It's an amazing story. Four hundred and fifty to one. The Israelite army goes from thirty two thousand to three hundred. And they are already faced with overwhelming odds. But God makes it impossible.

Now why does God do that? Well it's the same reason isn't it? Why did he do that for Gideon? So that Gideon and the Israelites would know that the power belongs to God and not to us.

But the power is not in the Israelite army. It's not in the military tactics and strategies. It's not by my might or my power. But by my spirit says the Lord of hosts. And that's the lesson that the church of today needs to learn.

And we need to learn. It is not being flashy. It is not having great programs and good moves and all those things are useful and helpful to have. But it is the Spirit of God that does the work. And then you remember what happens in the book of Judges.

He riddles the numbers down to three hundred. So the odds are now four hundred and fifty to one against. And then he sends them out in the middle of the Midianite camp with torches in jars of clay.

[6 : 49] And that's God's strategy to defeat the Midianites. He sends them out in the middle of the night, hopelessly outnumbered with torches. In little clay jars. But the blast of the trumpet.

The jars are smashed. And the enemies wrote it. And maybe that is the picture that Paul has in mind here. We have this gospel. We have the light of the gospel. Of the glory of God.

We have this treasure. We have this light in clay pots. And for the light to shine, what had to happen in the book of Judges? The pots needed to be smashed.

And there is no other way to do Christian ministry. There is no other way to be efficient or effective Christians in our witness. For the light to shine, the jars have got to be broken.

And God uses brokenness. He does not use togetherness. And that's the Corinthian mistake. That is what they thought, the Corinthians.

[7 : 50] They thought they had to act together and compete with the world. So the minister had to do a kind of Ted talk on a Sunday morning. That's what the super apostles wanted. They were great orators.

And they wanted Paul to be like that. And he wasn't much cop as a speaker by all accounts. But it is not togetherness that God uses. It is brokenness. It is cracked pots. Not crack pots.

There are plenty of cracked pots in the Christian church on the head. But it is cracked pots that he uses. So that the light will shine through. It's a lovely example of that, isn't it?

In the book of Ruth. And Ruth and Naomi. You know that story. Ruth was a pagan. She was an outsider. She was a Moabitess. And it was her mother-in-law who brought her to the Lord.

Did you know that? And Naomi must have thought she wasn't much of a witness. In fact, we're told that she wasn't much of a witness. And she told Ruth, your husband has died.

[8 : 50] My son has died. You go back to your own people. Don't come with me. I went out full, but I've come back empty. And the Lord has dealt harshly with me. Don't call me Naomi. Call me Mara.

Which means bitter. That's my experience. And then Ruth clings to her. And she says, where you will go, I will go. And your God will be my God. How can a pagan Moabitess say that?

What would draw her to worship the God of Naomi? Chapter 2 of the book of Ruth, we eventually find Boaz. Who finds out that Ruth is, as he describes her, someone who has come to shelter under the wings of the God of Israel.

And so here is a pagan Moabitess who has put her faith in God. And she's seen something of the God of Israel. But where did she see that? She saw that in the brokenness of Naomi.

In the tears of repentance that brought Naomi back to Israel. That is where, in those tears, in that brokenness, Ruth caught sight of a loving and forgiving God.

[9 : 54] A God who protects. And Naomi must have thought, she must have thought, I've blown it. There's no way anyone will believe in God because of me.

I've made a total mess of my life. But she was authentic. And in those authentic tears of repentance, Ruth caught sight of the real God, the living God. And maybe that's what Paul's thinking about here.

It is brokenness that God uses. Jars of clay. And of course the modern equivalent is what we talk to children. It's the plastic cup. Jars of clay are two of penny.

Archaeologists are digging them all over the place. They don't even bother to catalogue them anymore. They're very common. They're just disposable vessels in the world. And today, that would be one of those cups we drink coffee out of on a Sunday morning.

You don't take them home with you, do you? You don't collect them. You haven't got a cupboard full of plastic cups from Sunday morning, have you? They're not royal dalton.

[10 : 55] You don't go rifling through them, recycling on a Sunday morning to try and take as many plastic cups as you can home to add to your collection. You don't do that.

And Paul says that is what gospel ministry is like. You have this treasure, this light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus. That is our message. We don't tinker it. We don't manipulate it.

We simply carry that message out into a dark world. And that's the glory of God in the face of Jesus. And we have the treasure in plastic cups. Imagine drinking one of the world's top wines.

You go to a restaurant. And they say, you are the fortunate winner. You are going to taste one of the world's greatest wines. I don't know what that is. And they give it to you in a plastic cup.

They could do that, couldn't they? But you probably wouldn't. So why does God do that? Why does God pour the most precious thing in the world into a plastic cup?

[12 : 01] Why does God entrust ordinary people? And don't kid yourself. In this church, we are just ordinary people. Why does God commit ordinary people to ordinary people like us, the most precious thing in the world?

And the answer is to show that surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. But it's not about us. It's not about IPC. It's not about how great our new building will be. It's not about waving the Presbyterian flag.

It is not about us. It must be about Jesus. We're just cracked pots. Some people think we're cracked pots.

But we are cracked pots. Tony Campolo, who I think is an awful preacher and social activist and an even worse theologian, but is a very, very good storyteller. He tells the story of when he was a young theological student and his professor said to him after hearing him preach, Tony, you can't persuade people that Jesus is wonderful and you are wonderful at the same time.

That's right, isn't it? And we don't want people to go away from this church saying, wasn't the preacher great? Isn't that church wonderful? Wasn't the music fantastic? Isn't the ambience wonderful?

[13 : 18] Aren't they an impressive bunch of people? No, we want them to say, isn't God great? Isn't Jesus wonderful? And that's the bottom line. It's not about us. It's about Jesus.

It's about making Jesus known and showing the world that Jesus is alive. Now how do you show the world that Jesus is alive? And look at verse 11. Chapter 4 of verse 11. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested, may be shown in our mortal flesh.

For death is at work in us, but life in you. How do you show that Jesus is alive? We have to die. And that is radical, isn't it?

We talk about the radicalization of young Muslim men in the UK today. It's terrifying. But there is a sense in which the church needs to radicalize. The church needs to radicalize not to kill.

Not to kill, but to die. And that's a huge difference, isn't it, between Islam and Christianity. We need to radicalize ourselves because Christianity is a radical message.

[14:23] We want people to know that Jesus is alive. And how do we make people know that Jesus is alive? Well, not by bigging ourselves up. Not by showing off our wonderful rhetorical skills and our new facilities.

And our great programs that we're running. And how relevant we are. How do you know that Jesus is alive? Paul says, by dying. And I think you know that.

And I think you've experienced that. Because to come out as a Christian in this world, you've got to die a thousand deaths. You know what it's like, don't you, to witness to your non-Christian friends. Have you ever invited someone to church? It's all on the surface, isn't it, very much on the surface. You're like the duck on the pond. On the surface, you're very calm. You practice what you're going to say. And then you slide up to someone and say, What happened? This meeting of the cow's service. Maybe we could go and go for a drink afterwards. And sometimes you practice what you're going to say.

[15:27] But underneath, you're panicking. Like the duck under the water. And the feet are going. Frantically. Because you're turned up inside. Why? Because you're risking a friendship, aren't you? And when you come out as a Christian in your workplace, you are risking the death of relationships.

And that's the sort of thing Paul is talking about. And when I say we need to be radicalised, some of us are not willing to do that. Because we're into the comfort thing, aren't we? I know of a young guy. I knew McCall Hill. I did small groups with him there. He's gone out to a dangerous part of the world in his early 20s. Mid 20s now. He may very well die. We pray that he won't.

But there is a sense in which he's already died, isn't there? He's a bright guy. He can do very well in life. But he's already died to career prospects. By going as a missionary. He's died to everything that the world thinks is worth having.

He's died in terms of career. It's all over for him. In terms of finding a wife, it's probably not going to happen. And he's had to face that. He's died to that.

[16:39] And it's painful. Why? Because he wants those people in that land to know about the Lord Jesus. That Jesus is alive from the dead. And so he's prepared to die.

And that's what Paul is saying. We who live are always being given over to death. For Jesus' sake. So that the life of Jesus also may be manifest in our mortal flesh.

That is the way it works. That is the dynamic of gospel ministry and of true church growth. Death isn't working. That says Paul. So that life isn't working you. And the Corinthians, they thought actually Paul was a little bit of a loser.

And they may think that he was a bit of a wimp. But the reason I go through all of this is so that you might live. And so that you may know that Christ is alive. Death is at work in me. So that life is at work in you.

And that is the way it works. And if you want to know. If you want people to know that Jesus is alive. They will not see it in crowded meetings. And they will not see it in slick, clever presentations.

[17:41] And they will not see it in beautiful, modern presentations. They will see it in your weakness. And in your suffering. And in your willingness to go the way of the cross.

Are you up for that? Because if you are not up for that. We will have a brand new church building probably next year. That in the end will be a museum piece. And people will come in and look inside.

Nostalgically. But we won't reach healing for Christ. Unless we are prepared to die. Unless a seed of wheat falls into the ground and dies.

It will not bear fruit. And so I want us all to go away from the service this evening. And ask ourselves. What do I need to die to? It is actually the way of life, isn't it?

Certainly the way of marriage. Marriage. My life for my wife. I was actually reading a book on that. Why losing my temper with Claire and the kids this week.

[18:46] It is ironically. But it is actually a very, very helpful thing, isn't it? How do marriages work? By husbands dying. So that Jesus may be made known.

That is the first thing. The second contrast. Is on the seen and the unseen. Verses 13 to 18. Paul says fix your eyes. Not on what is seen. Verse 18. But what is unseen. And the Corinthians are impressed by what they can see.

The Corinthians measure success by results. And often. In Christian work and in Christian churches. You don't have anything to show. And you can labour away for years and years and years.

And have little or nothing to show for it. Don't we feel that in the ministries that we are involved with? And that can be very dispiriting, can't it? It is often particularly tempting for ministers on a Monday morning to want a jump ship.

It is called a work in McDonald's. Or America. It is tempting to apply for another job. The gospel doesn't seem to be working in people's lives.

[19 : 53] And that is the way a lot of pastors and elders feel. And do you see what Paul says? Paul says when you feel like that, Leica, you are looking in the wrong place. Because you fix your eyes. Not on what is seen, but on what is unseen.

And he quotes in verse 13 of Psalm. He says we believe and so we speak. We believe and so we speak. That is very refreshing isn't it? To have someone who believes what he is preaching. And that is what Paul says.

That is his motto for ministry. We believe and so we speak. So you remember 1 Thessalonians chapter 1. How that starts. And it says our gospel came to you and took root.

Our gospel came to you not only in word, but in power also. And in the Holy Spirit with full conviction in the preacher and the hearers. We believe and so we spoke. And you believed what we spoke.

And so what do we believe that makes us want to speak? And perhaps the reason that you don't want to speak is you don't know what you believe. So what do we believe that makes us want to speak? Look at verse 14. Knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.

[20 : 59] Think about that. He who raised the Lord Jesus will also raise us with Jesus. Do you believe that? Think of the Protestant martyr who was led to the stake and he looked down at his persecuteers on a beautiful sunny day.

And as they lit the fire that was going to burn him alive. He says if God gives a world like this to his enemies. What kind of world will he give to his friends?

The world looks on and says loser. What a waste of life. But this is the victory that overcomes the world our faith. We look at not what is seen but what is unseen.

We've heard the missionary John Payton. And there was an elder in his church. He was going to be a pion missionary at the risk of his life. To a place where they were cannibals.

And an elder in his church tried to dissuade him from going and said it's too dangerous a place to go John. There are cannibals there and they will eat you. To which John replied Mr. So and so you are getting on in years now.

[22 : 04] And soon they are going to put your body in the ground. In the ground. In the resurrection what difference does it make whether you have been eaten by cannibals or worms. The question is do you believe in the resurrection.

That is the question. Because if you believe in the resurrection. You will speak. But if you don't believe in the resurrection you won't say anything. We will keep our heads down.

But if we believe as Paul argues in 1 Corinthians 15. If Christ is not raised then our preaching is useless. Our faith is futile. So we may as well close shop and go home. But Christ has been raised. And that is what we believe. And that is what we fix our eyes upon. The resurrection. And if we believe that then all the discomforts. The disappointments. The suffering. And the sacrifice we have to make. They are worth it. Don't focus tonight.

This year on what you can see. Focus on what you can't see. And then he holds before us. This magnificent picture of Christian ministry in verse 14. Knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus.

[23 : 10] Will raise us also with Jesus. And bring us with you into his presence. We don't focus on the here and now. We focus on resurrection day. And if you believe in resurrection day.

You believe in a day when you must all stand before God. And you will speak whatever the cost. And you will speak with whatever reception you get. Whatever people think of you.

You will speak. I don't mean that. You go into work. And you know announce on Monday morning. You know.

Stop the office. I've got to speak to you about the Lord Jesus. I'm not saying that. But I am saying there will be opportunities. And there will be times this week. Where you will have the option.

Whether keeping your head down or speaking.

We all have that. And when the time comes. Speak. And it's for your benefit. Verse 15. It's all for your sake. We were made to glorify God. That is the chief end of man.

[24 : 05] To glorify God and enjoy him forever. It's the best thing that can ever happen to a human being. To see the glory of God in the face of Jesus. And that's the message people need to hear. For their benefit. They won't thank you for it.

But on resurrection day. What a joy it will be. Won't it? To have people standing with us. Who heard the message from us. And believed. And so verse 15.

For it is all for your sake. So the last grace extends to more and more people. It may increase thanksgiving to the glory of God. Let me give you an example of that. When Paul planted the church in Thessalonica.

You can read about it in Acts 17. He's run out of town. And they started a riot. And he was persecuted. But when he writes to the Thessalonians.

In 1 Thessalonians 2. Just listen to what he says. He says. For what is our hope. Or joy. Or crown. Or boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming. Is it not you.

[25 : 07] For you are our glory and joy. The very ones that give him such a hard time. The ones that had persecuted him. And run him out of town. Who didn't want to receive the message. He stayed for three Sabbath days. He reasoned in the synagogue in danger of his life.

For the joy of seeing those people. On resurrection day standing with him. So to sum up so far. Our weakness and our suffering brings glory to God.

Our weakness and our suffering brings others to glory. Glory. And then this. Our weakness and our suffering prepares us for glory. Look at verses 16 to 18 of 2 Corinthians 4.

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away. Our inner self is being renewed day by day. So this light and momentary affliction is preparing for us. An eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.

And as we look not to the things that are seen. But to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient. But the things that are unseen are eternal. There is a terrible story.

[26 : 08] The elderly couple. And the wife got out of bed. She looked in the mirror and she said. I look dreadful. Just look at my wrinkles. My teeth. My hair.

My figure. I can't see any part of me that doesn't look awful. And then she turned to her husband. Who was still lying there in bed. And she said. Well say something encouraging. To which he replied.

There is nothing wrong with your eyesight. I will apologise to some of you later. Now I think that that is Paul's point.

It was his eyesight that needed fixing. Fix your eyes. Not on what is seen. Now of course we are getting older. From the time you are 18. It is downhill all the way.

And the world invests in gyms. And plastic surgery. And skin creams. And the world invests in the outward. But as Christians.

[27 : 04] We are to invest on the inward. Fix your eyes. Not on what is seen. But what is unseen. Outwardly. While we are wasting away. And sometimes. The sheer pressure of being a Christian.

In the world. Like ours. Means it happens quicker. Than it might normally happen. But inwardly. Inwardly we are being renewed. And I think you see this. Particularly in older Christians.

Approaching the end of life. Frail. Fragile. Feeble. Even. Walking sticks. Ximephranes. And weakness. And their right thing for glory. When Martin Lloyd-Jones.

In his last days. He suffered from cancer. And in his last days. He suffered from cancer. And in his last days. Probably the greatest preacher. Of the last century. Lost the power of speech. And his doctor. Was very concerned for him.

And he said. Dr Lloyd-Jones. It grieves me. To see you weary. And warm. And sad. At which. Dr Lloyd-Jones. Summoned up. All his.

[28 : 00] All his strength. Not sad. Not sad. Not sad. Weary. And worn. Yes. But not sad. To see you. To see you.

To see you. To see you. To see you. To see you. To see you. To see you. and worn, yes, but not sad. If you've heard of the seven ages of man, spills, drills, thrills, bills, ills, pills, wills.

And if you live long enough, you'll go through all seven. But there is an age to come. And that is what we're forgetting. There is an age to come when we will have brilliant minds, powerful bodies, in

a transformed universe.

And if you believe that, it will influence the way you live your life, and it will give you courage to keep going and not give up. And that's the last thing, the last contrast. In chapter 5, home and away, do you see what he says in verse 9?

So whether we are at home or away, chapter 5, we make it our aim to please him. Whether we're at home or away. I think I've told you the story, the missionary couple who came, they came home after a lifetime of service in Africa.

[29 : 13] And they were on the same boat as Teddy Roosevelt, the president. And when they got to New York, the bands were playing and the flags were waving and the media were there and all the reporters were out to welcome home the president.

He'd been on a shooting trip to Africa, hunting big game. And this couple who had given their lives to serving the Lord, came home and recognised that there was no one to meet them. No one from their home church.

They'd find their own accommodation and there was just nothing. And it really got to the husband. And he said to his wife, it's not fair. God is not teaching us fairly. Why should the president get such a tremendous welcome?

But no one comes to welcome us home. And his wife turned to him and said, we're not home yet. We're not home. And remember that, we're not home yet.

And that simple perspective changes the way we live our lives. So tonight, if you're feeling dispirited, and if you're feeling discouraged, and you're disappointed, and you're feeling let down, you're not home yet.

[30 : 14] Now he said, chapter 5 and verse 2, for in this tent, it's our bodies, in this tent, we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling. We're living in a tent, it's one of our earthly dwellings.

Do you remember when you were small? When you were tiny, the first time you slept in a tent, and you were in the garden, and it was great fun, wasn't it? It was great fun, until the sun went down, and the wind came up.

And then you were very glad to get back in your own bed, even when you were camping today. Seems to me the best thing about camping is coming home. He said, you get back in your bed, it feels so great, doesn't it?

Jesus said, let not your hearts be troubled. He was naive. Yes, it's going to be stormy. Yes, it's going to be uncomfortable. In this tent, in this temporary dwelling, that we've got here, there will be tough days ahead.

Aren't there? There will be tough days ahead, in your life, and in my life, but let not your heart be troubled. I've gone to prepare a house for you. In my father's house, there's plenty of room.

[31 : 26] And if this earthly temple, this earthly dwelling, is destroyed, we have a home to go to, eternal in the heavens, a building not made with hands. Thomas Brooks, in his excellent, excellent book, Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices, said this, afflictions are the dark entry to our father's house, the dirty lanes of the royal palace.

And don't forget, that is where we're going to the royal palace. Occasionally, I get called to go and see dying people.

There's a family in Australia that asked me to go and see a dying relative. I visited her a number of weeks. I'm trying to share the gospel with her and to comfort her. And it was Eve. And I didn't know really what to do.

I'd only been here a couple of years. And when you go to see somebody who's dying and they're not a Christian and you share the gospel and they don't want to know, you really are out of your depth. And I remember saying to her on the last time I visited her, I was there on the night she died, I said, if you will trust in the Lord Jesus, you will go to be with him.

And she said to me words which I will never forget. She said, I don't want to go and live with strangers. Is Jesus a stranger to you tonight?

[32 : 44] You can come to a church like this for years and Jesus will still be a stranger to you. And if he is, I've got to tell you this, you have got no home to go to. Whatever the undertaker says in their glossy brochures and whatever your friends might say to you, it is false comfort.

That if you do not know Jesus and if Jesus by his spirit is not living in your heart, if you don't trust in Jesus, you have no home to go to. The Bible says all you've got to look forward to is out of darkness.

Say all my friends will be there, they won't be friends then. All my family will be there, no they won't. Don't kid yourself. But if you turn to Jesus, if you take Jesus to be your saviour and your Lord, he will come to live in your heart.

And by faith, and on the last day, he will rise you up from the dust of death and you will live with him. In the new heavens and the new earth, brilliant minds and powerful bodies in a transformed universe.

And that is not pie in the sky when you die, that is well-founded hope on the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth from the dead. The hope of heaven is not a sedative to send you to sleep.

[34 : 01] It is meant to be an adrenaline rush to get us going. The hope of heaven is not a sedative to send you to sleep. It is meant to be an adrenaline rush to get us going.

Therefore, Paul says, we do not lose heart. Heavenly Father, we...