

4x8 | The Power of Perspective

Petie Kinder | Romans 8:18-30

What's good church? How are we doing today? Alright. Alright. Happy Mother's Day. Could we celebrate the moms in the room at every campus? Yeah!

Moms, come on, you all play such a pivotal role in the life of our church, in the kingdom, in our society and, man, we're just so grateful for you today.

For those of you sons, daughters, fathers, husbands—make sure you make the mothers in your life feel extremely loved and appreciated today. And I don't just mean buying them a gift and giving them some flowers and kind of moving on.

I'm talking about really saying something significant to them. I think it's one of the gifts that we don't give enough—the gift of truly sincere and encouraging words of love and affirmation. So, man, look them in the eye today and tell them how much they mean to you and how grateful you are for them.

Now, I also know that we can't get to a day like Mother's Day and not recognize that this is not always a happy day for everyone. This day often brings up a lot of negative emotions and a lot of pain, like if you're here and you've dealt with the issues of infertility, of miscarriage, of infant loss.

Or maybe today is a reminder of broken relationships that you have with your mother or your children. Or maybe today is one of the first Mother's Days that you've experienced without your mother because she's passed recently.

And we just know that this day can bring up a whole host of really difficult circumstances and pain. So you just need to know that as a church we celebrate with those who celebrate, and we grieve with those who grieve. So if you're here and you're grieving today, we are there with you, we're for you, we're praying for you and we're standing with you.

But you need to know even more than that, God is with you. God is for you. God knows exactly what you're going through and his word tells us that he is near to the broken hearted.

And my hope and my prayer is that today we can give you a gift, alright? That no matter what you came in here with, no matter where you find yourself on the spiritual spectrum, no matter if you're here celebrating or you're here grieving—no matter where you are today that we could give you a gift through the passage that we are going to unpack today.

That is the gift of a greater measure of hope—the gift of a greater measure of peace, a greater measure of confidence, and a greater measure of joy.

I know those are some big, lofty things that I believe that God wants to give to you today, but I believe they are possible because of the power of the passage that we're going to be walking through.

We're in a series called 4 X 8. We're spending four weeks in Romans, chapter 8, one of the most impactful chapters of the Bible. And I believe today that God wants to really bless you with those gifts. And I think it is possible because this passage is just so powerful.

So if you have a Bible or a Bible app, go ahead and get to Romans, chapter 8. We're going to spend some time in there starting in verse 18.

Today the title of the message is called *The Power of Perspective*, alright? The Power of Perspective...

And perspective is a very fascinating thing because you could be in the same circumstances. But, depending on your perspective your inner turmoil could be totally different. Depending upon your perspective, you could respond and speak and act in a completely different way in the same set of circumstances all based upon your perspective.

Runners in the room—by a show of hands at all of our campuses how many of you are runners? You run on a regular basis. You freaks—that's crazy. Now, good for you, man. That's great.

I find it funny though because I've always heard that there is such a thing as runners high. And I laugh at that every time because I've gotten high off of some things in my life (before Jesus) running was never one of them. Not once did I ever experience that.

But you know—if you're a runner, you know the power of perspective, right? You know if you're running 10 miles, mile three and four aren't that bad. You get to miles three and four and you're like, "Man, I'm good. I've still got six or seven to go and I'm feeling alright."

Now you know the power of perspective because if you're running five miles, mile three and four are very different. Mile three and four—you're starting to panic, and you can feel the finish line, but you're starting to notice the pain more and you don't know if you can make it. Your response is totally different. It's the power of perspective.

I saw the power of perspective at work in my children recently. I took them to a Pacer game. And this was not their first experience at a professional basketball game. This was actually the third. But the difference between this time and the prior two times is that the prior two times I did not purchase the tickets for them, we were gifted those tickets.

Now if you have a friend who is a ticket hook up you know what a special friend that is. And if you are someone who blesses people with great seats and great tickets, you are earning jewels in your crown in heaven one day. Just keep doing it, man. We all are loving it. Please, please keep doing it.

But the first experience was a Pacer game 10 rows off of the court. It was amazing. It was the coolest experience ever. Their second experience was not a Pacer game; it was a WMBA team, The Fever. And we actually have a ticket hook up there because we are friends with the mascot, Freddie Fever.

So not only do we get the tickets but at this game Freddie Fever himself, in full costume, comes up and interacts with my kids during the game, gives them a gift bag full of free Fever swag.

And all of the kids in the room are like, “Who are they? It’s not fair.” And my kids are like, “Ha, ha. Awesome to be us.” Right?

Those are their first two experiences. Now the big difference—when I saw the power of perspective in play is that the third time, we did not get a ticket hook up.

I did what every other normal person does, StubHub, and I bought the cheapest tickets I could possibly find, which happened to be so far up in Bankers Life that by the time you get your family up there, you’ve walked, you’ve done a full 20 minute exercise on the stair master, you are profusely sweating in every possible place.

And you get up there and you realize that you’ve got to hold your kids really tight up there, because it’s so far up and it feels so steep you feel like if they took one wrong step, they would just free fall to center court to their sudden death. You’re that far up.

Now I saw the power of perspective in play when I saw my seven-year-old’s face. When we got up there and we sat in our seats in the nosebleed seats, the cheap seats, I looked at my seven-year-old and he had a disgruntled look on his face. He was disgusted, confused like, “Whoa, wait, wait, wait, wait.”

And he looked at me and he said, “Dad, what is this?” I said, “This is basketball, son.” He goes, “This is not basketball, Dad. You can’t even see them. They are like little ants on the court, little dots running around. What is this?”

And then I knew when we had lost him, I knew that the power of perspective, that this thing was gone, when he turned to me and he said, “Hey, Dad. When is Boomer,” the Pacer mascot, “going to come up and give me my gift bag?” Oh, Lord, son. Boomer ain’t never coming up here, alright? He ain’t never coming up here.

And sure enough, my seven-year-old left and he was super ungrateful, and super discouraged. And I was mad, right? Because this was the one where I spent my money on the tickets, “I actually bought you these.” It’s the power of perspective. He had a different set of expectations. He saw things from a different perspective, which led to that sort of inner turmoil.

I just believe that many of us walk through life with a great deal of anxiety and fear, regret, frustration and anger—I think many of us walk with a great deal of fear of the future and worry, just a ton of inner turmoil.

And I don’t believe that God necessarily wants to change your circumstances, because they may or may not change. But I believe that God wants to liberate you from some of that today, to liberate you from some of the fears, to liberate you from some of the anger, some of the frustration by giving you a different perspective.

Here’s the deal. The earliest followers of Jesus, the people who were there in the beginning starting the church, they had the worst circumstances that you could ever imagine. They endured crazy stuff that most of us will never have to endure.

Most of them were imprisoned for their faith, most of them were murdered for their faith, most of them—their families—the minute they became Christ followers, their families disowned them.

And if their families didn't disown them it's because they too became Christians and for those families, many of them watched as their family members were murdered because they believed in Jesus.

These people endured horrific circumstances, yet—yet, they walked with an unshakeable joy, and unwavering confidence, an uninhibited peace. It was just unreal, but because they had perspective. Their circumstances didn't change, but their perspective completely changed.

I believe that's what we're going to get to today in Romans, chapter 8. In these few verses, Paul wants us to climb a mountain, to see things from a different perspective.

And I actually want to give the perspective before we even jump into it—three simple statements that Paul is going to walk us through in these verses. Here's how it goes:

- What we hope for has been promised.
- What has been promised will come to pass.
- It will come to pass no matter what.

What we hope for has been promised, what has been promised will come to pass, and it will come to pass no matter what.

Let's just jump in. Romans, chapter 8 starting in verse 18. Here's what he says. He says, "Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are.

"Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

"And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us. We were given this hope when we were saved."

Now, Paul says climb the mountain with me, climb the mountain and get up to this first kind of look-out point. It's kind of a point for us to stop and take in a perspective. And this perspective, the reality that he draws us into, is actually mildly depressing at first, but I believe it's very liberating.

It's mildly depressing in the sense that what Paul brings us to in this perspective that we get to look out on is the reality that all of creation is groaning, all of creation and everything in it is suffering, all of creation and everything in it is going through difficulty. It is hard, it is not easy, it is painful—we're all groaning.

And like I said, that's mildly depressing at first. But think about it. It's actually very liberating because that means that if you're here today and you're going through it, you find yourself in the middle of an incredible storm in your life that you don't know...

Man, if you're here and you're going through difficulty, you're suffering, or you're in pain—guess what? You're not crazy! It's totally normal. It's actually par for the course. It's what we deal with. This is what it is like to be human, to live in a broken world.

If you're here and you're struggling to find purpose in your life, you're struggling to enjoy your job, and you're struggling to put food on the table, you're struggling with how you're going to pay the bills, if you're struggling, man—it's okay. It's okay. You can take in a deep breath and brush the dirt off of your shoulders. It's alright. You're not crazy. It's normal.

If you're here and you've got relational drama, relational tension—it's okay. I know it's hard but you're not crazy. It's normal. If you're struggling—it's okay. All of creation is going through it.

And Paul says, not only that, not only is it true that every single one of us either just went through something, are currently going through something, or are about to go through something—not only is that true, but we all share this common ground. We all long for it to end, don't we?

No matter if you believe in Jesus or not. No matter what your faith background looks like, we can all find common ground right here. We long for the day when the drama and the brokenness and the evil of this world come to an end. We long for this pain and this suffering to end.

Paul says it's like a woman in childbirth, like a woman experiencing labor pains and wanting them to end.

Now, on Mother's Day, come on now. I ain't going to pretend I know what labor pains are like. But I've seen them, right? My wife has given birth to my three children, so I've seen them, and I saw how painful... I know that she wanted them to end.

And Lord knows that I wanted them to end, okay? Because I saw a side of my wife and I was like, "I don't know that woman. The sounds that are coming out and what I see, it's just not her.

In that moment I knew what horror film producers think when they envision an exorcism. I was like, "Yeah, I get it." I was like, "Can I get a young priest and an old priest in here? I need the power of Christ compelling this, something ain't right." I longed for them to end. She longed for them to end.

And similarly we all long for what we're going through to end. And that's the beautiful first aspect of this perspective that Paul gives us—what we hope for has been promised.

The deepest longings of the human heart, the things that bother you—destroy you at your core—God knows them, God sees them, and he's met them with a promise. The Bible is full of promises from beginning to end and they address the deepest needs, the deepest longings of the human heart.

Like if you're out there and you're sick of losing family and friends and loved ones to cancer, if you're sick of struggling through chronic pain, if you're sick of dealing with anxiety or depression—God sees that, and he's met that with a promise.

In 2 Corinthians 5 we're told that we're going to get new bodies that don't deal with this stuff one day. And in Revelation we're promised that there will come a day where there is no more sickness, there is no more disease, there is no more death.

Right now we may lose a few battles to cancer, but the war is over. The war has been won. Jesus has already taken care of it. What we hope for has been promised. God sees it. God knows it.

If you're here and you're just longing for peace, if you long for peace in your home, peace in your marriage, peace in your relationships—God sees that, he knows that, and he's promised us that one day he will be our God, we will be his people and his perfect peace will rule the land. What we hope for, it's been promised to us.

Are you sick of struggling with temptation? Are you sick of knowing the right thing to do but it being such a battle to do it? Jesus sees that and he's met it with a promise. There is going to come a day where we are fully sanctified, we are fully made to be like Jesus, when we are mature and complete and we lack nothing. What we hope for has been promised.

Are you sick of dealing with doubts about God? Intellectual hang ups about why things happen or why the world is the way that it is? Well, God has promised us that there is going to come a day when we walk and talk with him face to face just like it was in the Garden of Eden. What we hope for in the deepest parts of our hearts, God see it.

I don't know about you but I long, in my heart of hearts, I long for justice. I hate every time we see... It seems like every other day we are seeing a school shooting on the news, Synagogue shooting, church bombing, a racially driven hate crime, misogamy—we see all of this stuff and we long for it to end. And God says: I see it and I promise you that one day I'm going to bring every deed out into the light kicking and screaming and I will make everything that is wrong right again.

I'm telling you all, what we hope for in the deepest part of our soul God says: I see it, I know it, and I've got a plan. What we hope for has been promised.

I think that's one of the best apologetics we can offer to an unbelieving and skeptical world around us. What breaks our hearts, no matter if you grew up in church or not—what breaks our hearts, God knows it because he made our hearts. What bothers us at our core, whether you are in church or not—what bothers you at your core, all of humanity, God sees it and God knit you together at your core. He's got a plan for it.

What we hope for has been promised. But I know that word *promise* doesn't do much for you. I know that because we live in a world of unfulfilled promises, right?

I mean, come on. We don't elect politicians anymore based upon their ability to deliver on promises; we just elect them based upon how good the promise sounds. No one is actually expecting them to fulfill this stuff.

The next politician in Indy that runs on an, "I will fix all potholes," campaign—you know he's going to win. It just sounds too good. We've got to give him a chance, alright? We've got to give him a chance.

Nobody expects half the promises that get made anymore to actually get fulfilled. This is no more evident than when you go to a wedding, right? I mean over half of all marriages end in divorce. That means that at those weddings there are some lofty promises made that aren't being fulfilled by one or both people involved.

See, we live in a world of broken promises. So why should we believe these promises? Well that's what Paul wants to answer to take us to the next level of perspective. What we hope for has been promised and what has been promised will come to pass.

Paul wants to give us some proof, something we can actually hold on to to become confident in the promises of God. And he hints on it in verse 23. Back up just a second. He hints on the proof that we have in verse 23.

He says this, "And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory..." He says we suffer even though we kind of know what's coming, alright? We've got like a movie trailer—like a preview. We've got the Holy Spirit in us as a foretaste of what is to come.

He says this, "And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will. And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them."

Paul is like: alright, keep climbing the mountain with me. Keep climbing the mountain. Keep getting up here. And on your next lookout, here's the next level of perspective that you've got to be able to see. It's that what has been promised will come to pass.

And he says the reason you can know that the promises of God are trustworthy is the work of the Holy Spirit. He says the Spirit—it's this fascinating reality—the Spirit is at work in your life even when you don't realize it. Even when you aren't aware of it, heck, even when you are in disobedience to him, the Holy Spirit is at work in your life.

He says: For example. When you don't know what to pray the Holy Spirit prays on your behalf, asking God to give you what you need. The Holy Spirit even prays in accordance with God's will.

It's as if Paul is saying that there are times when you and I pray for really stupid things and the Holy Spirit is like: Sh, sh, sh—don't listen to them. Here's what they really mean, you know?

You didn't know that the Holy Spirit and Garth Brooks are like synced up— Garth Brooks and Romans 8. Deep theological truth when he sang, "Sometimes I thank God for unanswered prayers."

Oh come on, don't leave a Kentucky boy hanging. "Remember when you're talkin' to the man upstairs that just because he doesn't answer doesn't mean" [congregation] "he don't care." Aw you did it, you did it. "Some of God's greatest gifts are unanswered prayers."

Now pause for a second. You all didn't know what song I was going with, did you? Some of you all were thinking I was going with *Friends in Low Places* "where the whisky drowns and the beer chases my blues away." We're in church, man. It's Mother's Day. I ain't going there.

You didn't know that Garth Brooks was singing deep end theological truth, but you know that it's true. You know that some of the greatest things that happen in your life are because of the fact that God did not answer some of your prayers.

You know that some of you all were like on your knees at your bedside praying that God would let you marry that person who you were dating, the person who you liked. And then for some reason the relationship fell apart.

Fast forward ten years and you get a random Facebook friend request from that person. You do a little Facebook snooping and real quick you're like, "Whew, dodged a bullet. Thank you, Jesus. That would have been really bad. Whoo, thank the Lord."

Come on. Paul is trying to get you to see... Look at the blessings; look at the things in your life that you consider to be your greatest blessings. How much did you have to do with them? Next to nothing.

Look at your family. Look at your friends. Look at your job. I mean, come on. Most of us are in jobs that we definitely shouldn't be in. We're definitely not qualified for them. We didn't interview well for them. But for some reason God intervened and his Spirit allowed us to get there.

Most of the greatest things in our life are God's Spirit at work. They have nothing to do with us. And God's Spirit is at work 24/7 365 in your life.

Like that feeling you get inside when you're about to do something that you know that you shouldn't do. You know the feeling I'm talking about. That feeling of intense heat inside of you, like panic, like alarms are going off—"I know I shouldn't do this, I know I shouldn't do this, I know I shouldn't do this." That's God's Spirit at work in your life trying to convict you and guard you and guide you.

And you know that when you follow through and do that thing that you know that you shouldn't have done, and you know the feeling of guilt and shame and regret. You know that that is God's Spirit at work in you allowing you to feel the weight of your sin, allowing you to experience what the Bible calls godly sorrow that leads to repentance.

But you know that God won't leave you there. You know when you get that perfect encouragement from a friend or you come to church and you hear a sermon about the grace of God and how his mercies are new every morning, or you get on it and start worshipping in the car and all of a sudden God just overwhelms you with his love and his grace.

And he just picks you back up and he says: keep going, man. You are forgiven. You are loved. That is God's Spirit at work in your life. He's always working. He's always bringing you up. He's always at work in your life.

And it's so important for you to notice it. You've got to step back, and you've got to notice the work of God in your life, because the work is proof of the promise. The work is proof of the promise. The work is proof of the promise. When you see him working in your life, you know that he has not forgotten about you.

My wife and I live in downtown Indy. And there was this home being built across the street from us. Or, at least that's what we thought. Right? There was this empty lot right across the street from us and we found out that they were going to build a home, so they start digging a hole out for the home.

And it's going to be a big, old home. It has a massive basement. They're digging this thing out like crazy and it's just like a huge pit. And we're like, "Yes, a new home is coming in, new family in the neighborhood. It will be great. Home values increase." All good things. Except for the fact that they dug the pit and then they never did anything with it.

It was like, "Ugh," like for three or four months—nothing. Just a massive pit. And if you try to welcome new families to the neighborhood or maybe get more people to move to your area, it's not the best thing in the world.

"Hey, it's a great neighborhood. Real close to downtown. Close to restaurants. Close to the Monon. Very inclusive. Family friendly, minus the massive pit that your children could fall into and die. There is that, okay? There is that.

But three or four months went by and nothing happened. No foundation, no walls, no nothing. We all started worrying like did the builder back out? Did the people run out of money? Did the buyer back out? Like, what happened? We just weren't sure.

But, oh, I can tell you... I remember the day because the text message thread on our neighborhood block—we've got like a neighborhood group chat and the text messages started blowing up when we heard that glorious beep, beep, beep sound of a cement truck backing up, "Beep, beep, beep."

All of the neighbors were like, "What's happening?" "Concrete's happening! Let's go!" Everyone was so excited, right? That thing backed up—pretty little truck—and started pouring the concrete and we knew, we knew that the work was proof that they were back on track. We knew that the commitment was going to be upheld.

You see, God wants you to see that the work of the Spirit in your life is proof that you have not been forgotten about. It is proof that his promises are on schedule. They are on time. The work is proof that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion. You don't have to worry about it. He's not forgotten about you. The work is proof of the promise.

See, what we hope for has been promised. And what's been promised will come to pass. And it will come to pass no matter what.

Paul is going to seal the deal for us in verses 29 and 30. Let's look at what it says. It says, "For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

"And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory."

Do you see what Paul is doing? It's all on God. He knew in advance. He chose, he called, he gave, and he gave some more—it's all on God. It's all on the sovereign, all-knowing, all-seeing, all-powerful, all-present God. It has nothing to do with us.

You see, the promises of God are going to come to pass in your life whether you like it or not. They are fixed. They are set in stone. There is nothing that can thwart the plans of God. There is nothing that can remove his promises from your life. There's nothing you can do about it.

My wife and I are about to take our kids on a very dangerous trip this summer, alright? We're about to take our kids on a trip that we've never done before. We're going down to that magical kingdom where Mickey Mouse is the king, but he's the kind of king who shows you a good time and takes all of your money—very high taxation rate in his kingdom.

We've never done it before. We've never done the Disney trip and our kids know nothing about it. So, like, do us a solid and don't say... Like if you see us out in the lobby with our kids or you see us out, don't say anything because, if you ruin it, my wife will murder you. Do not cross her on this one, okay?

We're going all out trying to make this the most incredible trip in the world for them. We just want it to be an amazing memory. They are the perfect ages: seven, four, and two. It's going to be incredible. We just can't wait to bless them. We can't wait to love them in this way.

And I'm telling you, we're going all out in preparation for this thing. We've got coordinated outfits depending on the park that we're in. So like when we're in Toy Story Land, my boys are about to be looking like Buzz Lightyear and Woody and my girl is about to be looking like Jessie. Beauty and the Beast, my girl will be wearing her Belle dress and just twirling around. I mean, it's intense.

We've got this friend helping us who is like an expert Disney trip planner. And when I see the plan, I'm like... It is on par with the CIA counter terror and insurgency plans. It's like: 8:30 a.m.

show up at breakfast to meet Donald Duck and Goofy, 9:35 you're going to go to this ride and use this fast pass that uses the ride share and then you're going to hit this place...

It's amazing. But our kids have no clue about it. No clue. You know how I know they have no clue? Because they still complain about everything. Like, "I want vanilla ice cream, not chocolate." Put a cork in it kid. When I was your age, we didn't have ice cream." I don't want to hear that. But they find a way to complain and to not do their homework and to be crazy and disobedient.

And I just sit there thinking, like, "Man, if you knew what we have in store for you there's no way you'd be acting like this. There's no way that you'd be letting anything get you down in the dumps, because the plans are just too good. The future is just too good. There's no way that you'd be acting like that if you knew.

Then I started thinking, is there anything that my kids could do between now and this trip that would cause me to get so frustrated, so angry, so disappointed that I would decide to cancel the trip? Is there anything they could do that would be like, "Man, you have gone too far, forget it. We're not going. The plans are canceled."?

No. I mean, come on. My love for my kids is not conditional, it is unconditional. We have decided that we are going to give them this. We're going to love them in this way. There's nothing they can do about it. My love for them is fixed. They are my children and I've decided to give them good things in their future.

And I just think God sent me here to tell somebody at one of our campuses that there is nothing he or she could have done in the past... There is nothing that could have been done to you in the past that could disqualify you from the future that God has in store—nothing. His promises are unshakable.

There is nothing that you can be struggling with in the present that could anger God to the point that he would remove his promises from your life, because he knew you in advance. Whatever you are dealing with, it doesn't surprise him. He's good.

There is nothing that can happen in your future that could thwart his plans. If you don't get the grades, if you don't get the job, if that relationship doesn't work out—there's nothing you can do to change the plans that God has for you, to change the promises that God has for you.

Jeremiah, 29:11 is a verse that many people know. It says, "For I know the plans that I have for you." It's not an *if*. "... I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "Plans to prosper you not to harm you. Plans to give you a hope and a future."

It's set in stone. Now, that does not mean that you're going to be healthy and wealthy because God knows that stuff doesn't really make you happy in the end anyway. What it does mean is that there is no way—if you trust Jesus, there is no way that you're going to get to the end of this thing and be disappointed.

God is too good. God loves you too much. He knew you in advance. He called you in advance. He chose you in advance and he gave you this right standing through Jesus.

When Jesus stretched out his arms and he died on the cross he made a definitive and irrevocable statement about his love for you. And when Jesus arose from the grave and he conquered death he made a definitive and irrevocable statement about his plans for you. There's nothing you can do to change it. He's that good. His promises are going to come to pass no matter what.

And come up with me for a second. Come up with me because you just reached the top. This is it. This is what Paul wants to show you. You've reached the mountaintop. And now you've got to take in the view.

Once you're up here you've got to breathe in for a second. Everybody at all of our campuses, take a big, deep breath with me. What we hope for in the deepest longings of our hearts, what we hope for has been promised; what has been promised will come to pass and we know it because of the work of the Spirit in our lives; and it will come to pass no matter what.

God's love for you and his future for you and his promises for you are set in stone.

Now, from this view, from this perspective up on top of the mountain that Paul just took us up to in Romans 8, I want you to look back down at the thing that you came in here worried about. Look back down at the thing that you came in consumed with and angered by and frustrated by. Look down at the thing that was causing such grief and such heartache. Do you feel it? Just a little lighter? "I've got a peace." That's hope; that's joy; that's the power of perspective.

This is what enabled the early followers of Jesus to endure the worst circumstances. They never changed, they only got worse, but it enabled them to do things, crazy things, like being locked up in a prison facing execution. And what were they doing? They were not crying. They were not worried. They were singing songs of praise and songs of joy. They were filled with joy. It's the power of perspective.

And I think that God wants to liberate you from whatever you walked in here with by that perspective. So I want to give you some space to talk to God about it. I don't know what it is for you, but I know this Romans 8 perspective is meant to do something for you—to let you walk out of these doors a different person today.

So let me pray for you and give you some space to talk to God about it:

Jesus, we love you. If you are for us, who could be against us? We've seen too much; you've done too much for us and we're so grateful. Thank you for the power of perspective. Thank you that you are the God of our circumstances. You are over our situations. You are over our issues. You're in control.

So, God, meet us in these moments, minister to our hearts, help us to surrender everything that is weighing us down to you and to let your perspective give us fresh power, fresh peace and grace and hope.

Jesus, we love you. Meet us here. It's in your name we pray. Amen.