

COME THIRSTY
#2: Dying to Drink
September 23-25, 2006

¹Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. ³Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. ⁶You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! ¹¹Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Romans 5:1-11 TNIV

Introduction: As we continue our churchwide study together of Max Lucado's "Come Thirsty," let's get rid of a second cultural myth that could prevent us from cultivating a thirst for righteousness. Many people seem to believe that the ultimate goal of life is "happiness." God's Word teaches us that the goal of life is relationship with God that is rooted in the hope of Jesus Christ.

- I. The Difference Between Happiness and Hope
 - A. Happy: "feeling . . . pleasure or satisfaction." (Cambridge Dictionary)
 - B. Hopeful: "having confidence about what will happen in the future." (Cambridge Dictionary)
 - C. Happiness is entirely subjective, measured entirely by one's emotional perception.
 - D. Hope is objective, rooted in assured conviction.

- E. There is no word in the New Testament that is rightly translated "happy," but words like contented, blessed, joyful, and hopeful are common.
 - F. While emotions are important and affirmed by God's Word, they are inadequate barometers of faith.
 - G. If happiness is the desired end, then the avoidance of pain and pursuit of pleasure will be the means.
- II. Embracing Suffering in Pursuit of Hope
 - A. Paul teaches us that we should "glory in our sufferings. . .
 1. because suffering produces perseverance, perseverance: "doing something in a determined way, despite having problems." (Cambridge)
 2. and perseverance produces character, character: "the quality of being determined and able to deal with difficulty." (Cambridge)
 3. and character produces hope." hope: "confidence in the future." (Cambridge)
 - B. The hopeful believer knows that they can deal with whatever life brings their way: "Lord, help me to remember that there is nothing that is going to happen to me today that you and I together can't handle."
 - C. Unlike mere happiness, hope is grounded in the promises of God and does not produce shame, the product of self-indulgent sin and the barrier that separates us from God.
 - D. A Profound Irony: People who make happiness their end seldom find it, except for a fleeting moment, but those who live out of hope discover true joy.
 - III. Dying to Drink
 - A. The hopeful believer dies to self and lives to Christ in order to drink deeply of relationship with God.
 - B. The hopeful believer lives in the power of Christ, not by self-effort, and boasts of Jesus' death.
 - C. The hopeful believer accesses God's grace through the justification of Christ's blood alone.

Conclusion: God's Word teaches us that "faith is the assurance of things *hoped* for." (Hebrews 11:1) Those who make happiness their God never find assurance, but those who live in Christ's joy discover true meaning and purpose.