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00:07

Thank you, Bill. That was beautiful. Well, our passage for today that we're going to be looking at is just one verse. It's from the book of Proverbs. It's Proverbs 13:12. And it says that hope deferred makes the heart sick. But a longing fulfilled is a tree of life. We're gonna talk about that passage and get into it in a second. But before we do that, would you join me in prayer once more. Father, as we get into your Word, May the words of my mouth, may the meditations of all of our hearts, be acceptable in Your sight, Lord, and give us your spirit that we would be both hearers of the word and doers of the word as well, and love you more through hearing of who you are. pray all these things in Jesus name, and then go from your country, your people, and your father's household, to land I will show you those are the first words that God spoke to Abraham in Genesis chapter 12. We don't know exactly how these words came to Abraham, but we know that he was convinced enough that it was really God speaking to him that he obeyed them. God promised to make Abraham a blessing to all the nations that he would be blessed, and that all the nations would be blessed through him. And once Abraham committed himself once he took the first steps with his family, and all of his possessions, away from everything he had once known, and headed out into the unknown. He was binding himself, he was binding himself for better or for worse, to a hope that was beyond his control. And as our passage today explains, that is a risky proposition. Because hope deferred, makes the heart sick. Years later, Abraham did become wealthy. And though he was a foreigner in Canaan, he was he was a wealthy foreigner. But Abraham's heart was still sick, because he did not have a son through his wife, Sarah. You see, hope can be a mighty engine that pushes us outward, into the unknown into difficulty. But hope can also be an acid that eats away at our heart. To continue to hope in something that is deferred is to invite pain into your life. So usually, it's easier to just not think about it, to distance ourselves from Hope. When God tells them he will give him a son, Sara laughs It's not the laughter of joy. It's the laughter of bitterness, the cynicism of a scarred and broken heart that doesn't dare to allow the acid of Hope back in. So it's especially appropriate that when the son of the promise is born to Abraham and Sarah after they're nearly 100 years old, they named him Isaac. He laughs The bitter and cynical laughter that a compromise that had been changed the laughter of pure joy, and wonder, hoped for deferred makes the heart sick. But a longing fulfilled, is a tree of life. The branches of that tree of life, Abraham's descendants continued. And while Abraham and Sarah's hopes were in grand promises of God's promise of God's promises to them and to all people. Their granddaughter in law, Leah's hopes were much simpler. You see, Leah was ugly. Scripture says that she had weak eyes, which is sort of saying that she's not easy on the eyes. While her sister Rachel was beautiful. The men flocked to Rachel. But no one noticed or cared about Leah. So she longed for a husband, who would see her who would love her, who would value her the way that the men valued

Rachel. Unfortunately, the husband that Leah gets is Jacob, who only marries her because he thinks she's Rachel. And when he figures out that he's been tricked, goes on to marry Rachel as well, thus tying Leah to her rival for the rest of her life.

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And yet this hope this desire that Leah has, it doesn't diminish because of that. When she has children before Rachel does, she doesn't play coy about what she hopes will result from those children. She names her first child Reuben saying, because the Lord has seen my misery, I have this son, surely my husband will love me now. She has a second son. And she calls him Levi, saying because the Lord heard that I am not loved. He gave me this one too. Then she has a third son. And she names him Judah saying now at last. At last, my husband will become attached to me. Because I have born him three sons. Hope deferred makes the heart sick. It would be easy to diagnose Leah's codependent to want to sit down with her and explain to her how she shouldn't base her self worth on what a man thinks of her. But heart sickness, it doesn't always mean that we distance ourselves from it. Sometimes it means that we double down on the things that we desire. It becomes almost almost an addiction for us and with all the terrible consequences that addictions bring. Still, after the birth of Levi, something shifts in Leah. Her desire to be loved by her husband, which really is defined her whole life up to this point. It fades to the background and supplanted by something else. So when she has her fourth son, she named him Judah, saying this time, I will praise the Lord. What happened to her deferred hope to her heart sickness. Here's what I think happens. Leah, out of the ruins of her misery and pain, recognize something that while our husband had refused to desire her, to hear her to see her, the Lord had while she was pursuing, even begging Jacob to love her. The Lord was gently pursuing and loving Leah, even while she like Jacob was blind to it. So with the birth of her fourth son, a tree of life is born for Leah. Not because Jacob loved her. But because she realized she had already known a love more deeply than she ever imagined. Longing fulfilled, is a tree of life. The branches of Leah's tree grew outward and flourished, becoming a large people grew up in Egypt. And yet, the hope of Leah's grandparents had that they had for their descendants that they would live in a land that was their own, that they would possess their own land that that remained elusive. So God called one of the descendants of Leah, a child of Levi Moses, to lead the people of Israel into the promised land. Moses was the one who was going to see the fulfillment of this promise that have been given all the way back to Abraham and Sarah. He led a rebellious and stubborn people out of Egypt, through the wilderness, always keeping his eye on the land of Canaan, that place where he could step down from the burdens and the trials of leadership. And finally, rest. Finally, rest. Yet following another instance of the Israelites grumbling and complaining, Moses becomes frustrated, and he disobeyed God. And because of that, God says, You're not going to enter the promised land. Moses, his emotional and physical labor would be enjoyed by a servant Joshua, and the next generation, not him. His life project, the thing that he had given himself, for, he would not see completed. Hope deferred makes the heart sick. As a result of this, Moses, he has an edge to his final speech to the people in Deuteronomy. And the first four chapters Moses in three separate occasions says to them that it was because of the Israelites it was because of them, that he's not going into the promised land that God is angry with him. And this is despite the fact that in chapter 13 to God, God directly tells Moses it is because of your sin, that you are not entering the promised land. Moses, his anger towards the people have has blinded him from his own sin.

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And in the scriptural accounts, we have no account of him owning up to it. He never admits to it. And

this this to this blindness, this anger, this can be a result of heart sickness as well. And yet, in the last act of Moses, his life, God takes Moses up to Mount Niebo to look out over the promised land. And he shows him the whole land, the place that he has been leading his people to his life's work. He allows Moses to see in his commentary on this passage, Gordon McConville says, the experience of Moses at this moment is too moving and poignant to be expressed adequately. And I think that's, I think that's just right. In the 1956, film The 10 commandments, Moses ascends mount Niebo, boldly and triumphantly with his hand outstretched blessing the people while like a ray of sunshine is cast on him. It's difficult for me to imagine the scene really played out that way. I mean, the mix of fulfillment, and a disappointment of grace and shame. Of finally resting his soul from his life's burdens, his pilgrimage, yet also yearning for the fertile soil of Canaan. How could there not be tears? How can you just stand there stoically. Moses doesn't taste his tree of life, before death, but he does see it. He sees the hope that God is bringing about the Israelites in the next generation would possess the land. But the rebelliousness of Moses, his generation would reverberate throughout their history. Through wars and downfalls, exile and return, it became apparent that what was needed was not just another leader, but the Messiah, God's Anointed One. And that is what Simeon is looking forward to, in the past as a junior read just a few moments ago, like Abraham Simeon has been given a promise that he will see the Lord's Messiah before he dies. But simians getting old. And I'm sure it's easy to imagine that he's wondering, did I hear that right God, so many generations before me have long to see the Messiah and haven't, and I really going to get to see him. But then, a tree of life balloons. Simeon sees Jesus and he breaks into poetry into song, right to express the wonder of God's provision, both for himself and for Israel. And even more than that, not just for Israel, for the for the whole world for Jews and Gentiles. This is a tree of life, whose branches will stretch all over the world, and will bring a new age of hope that can never be taken away. See, Jesus is coming is not just a fulfillment of simians hopes. It's the fulfillment of the hopes of Abraham, and of Leah, and of Moses as well. Abraham and Sarah couldn't believe that the promise of God could be fulfilled that a child could come from a dead womb and a nearly dead man. And yet, the birth of Isaac is only really a foreshadow of the greater miracle that was to come. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He told Lazarus, his sister, Martha, not simply that he could raise Lazarus, but that he himself was the resurrection and the life. And so union with Jesus means, as Josh talked about last week, that there is there is no power. There is no person. There is no circumstance, not even death can separate us from the love of God and God's purposes. The resurrection, the life is in Jesus Christ. We just wanted to be seen as lovely by the person who was supposed to love her. And likely, Jesus also came as somebody not possessing physical beauty. And also likely, Jesus came to the people who should have loved him, but he was rejected by them. And yet to the tax collectors and to the sinners, to the sick and to the unlovely. He loves them and makes them lovely.

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He sees them, he hears them, he pursues them. And he shows them true beauty. Moses wanted to see his life work come to fruition, to be able to rest in a job well done. But as Synod made that impossible, his work would not be complete until after his death. Like Moses, Jesus's work would also not be complete, until after his death. But, as Isaiah 53:11 tells us, after he has suffered, He will see the light of life and be satisfied. By His knowledge, my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Jesus's work, His death on the cross brings satisfaction and results. What are those results? They're you and me. They're all sitting here today. What are your hopes? Are your hopes differed? Are you heart sick this morning? Remember that these stories of hopes differed and longings fulfilled. They come to us as as complete accounts. Right? So if we had lived through them, if you could go back and talk to Sarah, in the midst of her time, was hoping it would be pretty trite to tell her after 30 years of longing and praying for a child just to have faith trust backup. Sarah, our proverb today is a is a descriptive proverb. It's not prescriptive, Hope deferred, it just does make the

heart sick. And while heart sickness can yield sin at times, it in and of itself, it's not a failure. It's not a sin. It's simply the result of living in a fallen world. But I hope you see in these accounts, that even in the midst of heart sickness, even in the midst of heartbreak, the divine author is weaving a story. Sometimes, after a long time, that story resolves, and hope becomes a tree of life. Like with Abraham and Sarah. Sometimes it won't fully resolve until after death, like with Moses in the Promised Land. With the coming of Christ, though, we know that the very end of the story, whether in this life or the next, we will eat from the Tree of Life. Wait for him. Wait and look for him to weave his story in your life. He is writing. The hopes and the fears of all the years are met in the one that we celebrate this morning. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we thank you that you came into the darkness of pain, the darkness of hearts sickness, of a world longing for something better. And you brought the kingdom. We thank you that by our union with you that we can look forward to the hope of the resurrection, that we can watch for the ways in which you are writing your story through our lives. Father, I pray for those who are heartsick this morning. That you would comfort them and pray for those who are celebrating a tree of life or that you would have given them great joy and that all of us would look to you Jesus Christ as the tree that brings ultimate life. For all these things in Jesus name, Amen.