

Joyful in Hope – 54 – May 19, 2020
(thoughts and ideas to encourage and challenge)

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”
Romans 12:12

This 54th edition of ‘Joyful in Hope’ marks the beginning of month 3 that we’ve been socially distancing and online communicating with each other. I was reflecting back and realized that we haven’t seen some you since March 8, because we were in Texas for Mike and Priya Stack’s wedding on the 15th, which, as it turns out, was the last Sunday that Heritage folks met together for worship on Grove Street. Who would have thought that our doors would still be closed as we approached Memorial Day weekend?

Closed Doors – Open Hearts. I keep reflecting back on our Zoom Meeting last Sunday, and how good it was to see faces that we hadn’t seen in a while. It will be sweet to be together again; however, we are all keenly aware of the caution that needs to be taken in deciding when and how that “being together” will take place.

Three times in his letters, Paul talks about “longing to see” someone. The first is in Romans 1:11, as he tells the Christians in Rome, most of whom he’d never met, *“I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong— that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith.”* A few years earlier, Paul tells the church in Thessalonica, *“But, brothers and sisters, when we were orphaned by being separated from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you.”* (1 Thess. 2:17)

These are folks that Paul knew well. Some of them were followers of Christ because of Paul’s preaching. Later, he refers to them as his glory and joy.

And finally, Paul writes to his son in the faith, Timothy, as Paul is in a Roman prison, awaiting word of his fate. He’s alone, except for his faithful friend, the good doctor, Luke. He’s anticipating a cold winter, and he’s hopeful that Timothy will come to him, because he knows the strength and joy that being together with Christian brothers and sisters can bring. *“Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy.”* (2 Tim. 1:4)

We need each other, there’s no doubt. But we need to take care of each other as well. We need to look out for each other’s interests and not just our own. We need to practice the golden rule, and honor one another above ourselves. That’s why we are committed to proceeding with caution. Thanks for your encouragement and support.

I NEED YOUR HELP! –

What is the longest you have stood in line for something?

What is the thing, person, event for which you would stand in line the longest?

What is your limit for standing in line?

(Here’s some ideas to get those creative juices flowing: Garth Brooks tickets, Greg Brooks’ pulled pork, ice cream, a sale at Macy’s, shaking hands with Donald . . . you get the idea.)

Get out your phone TODAY, and take a video of yourself answering any or all of the above questions, and send to me. Thanks.

Remember to pray for Detroit today at 3:13.
(Unless you want to join Justin. He’s praying at 2:48.)