

# **Being God's People in 2021!**

*Sunday January 3, 2021  
2021 State of the Church Challenge*

*"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice."*

*Philippians 4:4 ESV*

***Joy is One Way I Witness to Others!***

## **I. Be a Living Hope**

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,"*

*1 Peter 1:3 ESV*

*"But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;"*

*2 Corinthians 4:7-9 ESV*

### **1. I Know that God is Preparing Me for Heaven**

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

*2 Corinthians 4:16-18 ESV*

### **What I Have to Look Forward To**

*"He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."*

*Revelation 21:4 ESV*

### **Paul's Resume'**

*"Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches."*

*2 Corinthians 11:23-28 ESV*

*"For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."*

*2 Corinthians 5:1 ESV*

## **2. My Place in Heaven is Guaranteed**

*“He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.”*  
2 Corinthians 5:5 ESV

*“You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.”*  
Romans 8:9 ESV

**If you were to die today, do you know for certain that you would go to heaven and be with Jesus?**

## **II. Living Hope 2021 Challenge**

### **1. Live with Courage**

*“So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord,”*  
2 Corinthians 5:6 ESV

### **2. Live with Confidence**

*“for we walk by faith, not by sight.”*  
2 Corinthians 5:7 ESV

### **3. Live with Contentment**

*“Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.”*  
2 Corinthians 5:8 ESV

### **4. Live With Commitment**

*“Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others... Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”*  
2 Corinthians 5:11a,20 ESV

### ***Will You Accept the Challenge?***

*”Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!  
According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again  
to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,”*  
1 Peter 1:3 ESV