

## Proper 6B – The best is yet to come

1. Maybe some of you might recognize the following, “Best is yet to come and babe, won't that be fine? You think you've seen the sun, But you ain't seen it shine.”
  - a. Those are some of the lyrics to Frank Sinatra’s song, “The best is yet to come.”
    - i. In the song, Frank says the best is yet to come in the context of falling in love but we hear the phrase often.
    - ii. We often hear the phrase, "the best is yet to come," as if it's a truth that comes from the Bible.
    - iii. In theory, "the best is yet to come" sounds like an encouraging phrase meant to provide a sense of hope and anticipation for what God has in store.
  - b. Because let’s face it life is difficult, we want hope in this world, the problems are real - that’s why we have sayings like this, that maybe things will get better.
    - i. But what is your hope that the best really is yet to come when you’re facing death, debility, and suffering?
    - ii. Is just saying, “the best is yet to come” enough to make it happen?
    - iii. Or is it just a pleasant platitude that we use when we don’t know what else to say to someone facing overwhelming circumstances?
    - iv. How many people do you know, Christian or not, who live like the best is yet to come, and to what horizon are you looking for it?
  - c. I usually do a fair number of Google searches in preparing for sermons, I want to see what others have had to say about the topic on which I am preaching.
    - i. Interestingly, so much of the counsel that comes from Christian leaders and writers on this topic is about this life right now – the horizon of this world.
    - ii. One pastor wrote, **“I want you to know that you haven't seen your best days as a believer yet. They are not behind you - they are ahead of you. You have got so much to look forward to in your life, but you've got to learn to stop limiting God...As God's blessing increases in your life then you can be a greater blessing to others. Your best days are just ahead of you!”**
    - iii. But as I heard another pastor relate the story of one of his parishioners who was grieved that her son had left the church because he had only been presented with “God is love” throughout HS and when he got to college he was challenged by the problem of suffering and evil, he experienced different worldviews and his faith collapsed
    - iv. When we present a God who is only there to bless us in this world, to give us our best life now, whose blessing depends on our faithfulness then when the house of cards falls we are left with two options: 1) I am an unfaithful

person and God doesn't love me or 2) God doesn't exist and what I've been taught is a lie!

2. You see apart from the verified knowledge that "the best" is yet to come that phrase means nothing, it's a wish, a pipedream
  - a. And that is all that the world has to offer, a desire unhitched from any ability to deliver what it promises
    - i. Are you truly able to change reality for the better?
    - ii. Certainly, in some circumstances we can affect the course of the future and guide it to something better with good planning, education, preventive care, etc
  - b. But these only increase the chance of a better outcome they don't guarantee it.
    - i. What about the person who exercises, eats right and abides by all the best wisdom yet still has a heart attack?
    - ii. Or the one who invests wisely and diversely but still loses everything in a market crash?
    - iii. Or any other situation that you can think of where try as we might to affect a "best is yet to come" result still ends in failure
    - iv. What guarantee do you have that the best is yet to come? When you're looking in the casket of a loved one that's when you'll know whether "the best is yet to come" was a guarantee or a just a wish.
3. Scripture's cure for facing the real problems of this world is not to focus on this world because this world is already broken, a "best is yet to come" outcome cannot be guaranteed here.
  - a. That was the whole point of the incarnation, why did Jesus come to this world – to offer real hope in the face of real problems right now.
    - i. As you have heard me say before Christian hope is not like worldly hope.
    - ii. The world "hopes" things will turn out for the best – it's a weak verb, like "I hope the weather will cooperate with our plans, or the best is yet to come..."
    - iii. Christian hope is a possession, it's a thing, a guarantee as Peter reassures us in his first epistle, "**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, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you...**" (1Pe 1:3-4)
    - iv. The only thing that provides real peace in the face of life's chaos is to know that the best is yet to come regardless of what happens in this life.
  - b. That's why Scripture continually points the believer's eye not to the horizon of this world but to that which is to come as Paul does in our Epistle, **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. For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling...**

- i. How many of us truly live in that hope, that expectation? Do we take God at His Word? Do you groan longing to put on your heavenly dwelling?
  - ii. Because that's the only thing that provides the real answer to the hopelessness and unpredictability of this life.
  - iii. Over and over Scripture redirects our gaze from this world to what is to come because we know that in this world we can't make the best happen
- c. We just sang the hymn, "It is well with my soul" written by Horatio Spafford, the ancestor of our own Dave Spafford
- i. It was written as he passed over the place where his daughters drowned in a shipwreck on the way to England
  - ii. Yet Spafford wrote, **"Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come, Let this blest assurance control That Christ has regarded my helpless estate And has shed His own blood for my soul"**
  - iii. He had peace in the face of overwhelming loss not because he hoped the best was yet to come but because he KNEW it, he built his life on what Paul told the Philippians, **"To live is Christ, to die is gain."** (Php 1:21)
  - iv. Or as he says in our epistle, **"We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord...we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord."** (2 Cor 5:6-8)
- d. When our gaze is focused on what God has given us as our eternal destination it provides real, tangible hope to face the trials that do happen in this life
- i. My brothers and sisters in Christ this is the promise that brings the peace that passes all understanding.
  - ii. Because Christ has regarded our helpless estate...He has taken our sin with Him to the cross...when He was buried our sin was buried with Him...and when He rose victorious on Easter we rose with Him
  - iii. His victory is our victory through faith so that Paul could say in Rom 8, **"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us."** (Rom 8:18)
  - iv. Beloved in the Lord, the best is indeed yet to come let that blessed assurance provide you true peace and real hope in whatever storms you face in this life.