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Here's Hope  
by Rev. Jerry Rea

Now We Wait

We are encouraged to wait for our “blessed hope.” The hope that is awaited is the appearing of our Lord, Jesus. We believe in a *second* coming of Jesus. He came the *first* time and we celebrate that advent once a year at Christmas. His promise, however, extends far beyond His earthly work and ministry. At Titus 2 we get a whole list of things we need to be doing as believers. Then at the end of that chapter (verse 13), he reminds us that we are looking for our future hope. So I guess, that means we are in the *waiting* period now. No one likes to wait. Waiting for the doctor, dentist, or even fast food is sometimes grueling. We like things quickly. We think that we need things quickly. But promises usually involve waiting. A young man might promise his intended to always be true. How will she know? Well, she'll have to wait and see. Time will tell. God promised in the Old Testament that He would send a Messiah, and He did. The Old Testament saints had and heard His word, but then they had to wait for its fulfillment. We've received a blessed hope, and now we wait.

Titus 2:13 has another encouragement. As we wait, we *watch*. We “look” for His appearing. Here the idea is an air of expectancy. What child has not watched for Santa? What anxious grandparent has not expectantly looked forward to a visit from the “kids?” Like a “watched pot,” it seems like the event will never happen... then there it is. We watch for a cake to rise. We watch for a seed to sprout. We watch for our birthdays and our graduation days. Hunters watch for a deer. Parents watch for maturity. It's a normal part of life. It's normal for this life, and it's normal for eternal life. There is a part of every believer that makes him/ her long for the will of God both now and forever. We even pray, “thy kingdom come.” Praying for it and expecting it, we watch for it.

Our hearts are watching, but in expectancy we are *working*. Jesus went about doing good. He knew the realities of this life and the next one. He, too, watched for the redemption of the Father. Jesus, however, never expected the Kingdom of God to kinda “drift” His way. No man ever drifts into salvation. Jesus joined forces with the Father and worked to build the eternal kingdom. If a better world is made we, too, must work for it. We don't simply sit around looking up for the descending Savior. On the contrary, when our Lord returns we want Him to find us in the fields. We have somehow cut the “work” out of the kingdom. I believe in grace with all my heart, but feeling “graced” we work. It is the favor of God that motivates us to work. We work with the blessed hope that when He returns He'll be able to say, “well done.” Work is not a bad thing and neither is servanthood. It is a gracious honor to serve Him. The saving of Jesus and the filling of the Holy Spirit overwhelmingly push us to serve Him. With joy we love the world as Jesus did. With enthusiasm we share this good news. With the compassion of Jesus coursing through our veins, we reach out in compassion to others. We are not some candle flickering in the wind; we are a bonfire shining magnificently with His light.

Together we Wait,... and we Watch,... and We Work!  
Jerry Rea