

# Don't Lose Heart

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Preacher: Pastor Cathy Hall Stengel

[ 0 : 00 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 2 : 30 ] Thank you. It's on now. We'll try that again.

Good morning. Good morning. It is good to see you on this beautiful day and good to have those of you with us who maybe have been away or we have people who may be coming home from college and just being here for the summer.

And we're always grateful for every person who is here in person with us or watching online. We're all a part of the same community.

So I will ■■■ colonizing thead■m Archive Amazon and get married from Christ. If you require gluten-free, please make sure that your cup says gluten-free.

And if it doesn't, please make sure when you come in that you ask them specifically for a gluten-free communion cup. We don't want anybody to take any chances.

[ 3 : 40 ] So we used to have all gluten-free, and the gluten-free are more expensive, and we've been doing this now for a long time. So we started ordering the ones with gluten that don't say anything, and we have the gluten-free ones that say gluten-free.

So if you got one that says gluten-free and you don't care whether you have gluten or not, that's fine. But if you can't have gluten, please make sure it says gluten-free.

I believe this is the day that the Lord has made. And there's a response to that. Do you know what it is? This is the day that the Lord has made? Wonderful.

Let's pray. Oh, God, we do rejoice. Here we are. We are alive in all the different versions of being alive. Some wishing they might still be in bed.

Some might be thinking how grateful they are to have the opportunity to be here. It is good when your people come together and worship you.

[ 4 : 48 ] It is good when people come who haven't been here, who we don't know, who are listening, watching, sitting. We are blessed because we call we all the people, all the people who gather in praise to your name.

In Jesus' precious name we pray. Amen. Please stand if you're able.

regular electing, if Borders, if the one has received ready to live. I love the world, you step down into darkness Open my eyes, let me see Beauty I've made, it's hard to ignore you Oh God, I've spent with you So here I am to worship, here I am to bow down Here I am to say that you're my God You're altogether lovely, altogether worthy Altogether wonderful to be

King of all days, so highly exalted Born as in heaven above Come, you came to the earth  
you created All for love said, became poor So here I am to worship, here I am to bow  
down Here I am to say that you're my God You're altogether lovely, altogether worthy  
Altogether wonderful to be And I'll never know how much it costs

To see my sin upon that cross And I'll never know how much it costs To see my sin upon  
that cross Here I am to worship, here I am to bow down Here I am to say that you're my  
God You're altogether lovely, altogether worthy Altogether wonderful to be Here I am to  
worship, here I am to worship Oh Lord, fill this place with your spirit, with your presence  
Open our hearts and our minds to receive you more And draw closer to you in this time.  
Amen.

[ 8 : 32 ] Please. My grandma always says, when life hands you lemons, make lemonade I didn't  
know what this meant until I heard about Alexandra Scott When Alex was four, she set up  
a lemonade stand in the front yard Her idea? To give the money to doctors So they could  
help find a cure for kids like her with cancer Alex left us in 2004 when she was just eight  
But not before her idea inspired others And raised over a million dollars towards cancer  
research Today, Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation Continues to carry out the work that  
she began Together, we can all make lemonade to help save lives Alex's Lemonade  
Stand Fighting childhood cancer, one cup at a time Good morning church Good morning It  
is always a joy to be gathered together That we may indeed worship our God as one  
community of faith As we come this morning, we are mindful that our love is made real in  
how we give

And so, when you see things like Alex's Lemonade Stand Know that that's our mission  
moment for today A place where we are going to focus our giving so that we can be a  
blessing to the folks who are continuing that wonderful ministry Now, not only do we want  
to give to that special particular out that particular special way we can make a difference in  
the lives of others But we also want to make sure that we continue to support the ongoing  
ministries that we do here as a whole church So all that having been said know that you  
can give online through electronic giving You can also leave your gifts here in person in  
one of the boxes And if you prefer, you can send your gifts in to the church Giving is one  
of the ways we make our love real One of the ways in which we show our love for God  
and one another So let the Spirit move in your hearts and consider how you might give  
today Adventist and prayer

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 12 : 10 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 14 : 40 ] Loving and eternal God, we come to you grateful for the gift that is this morning. We come  
with hearts full of praise today. Praise because we have seen you at work in so many  
different facets of our lives.

The ways in which you continue to put smiles on our faces.

We follow. We show love and we give praise.

We share that love with our love with our brothers and sisters. We know that there are  
those who are still struggling with many diseases and injuries, that the virus is still among  
us.

And that we, your people cry out for those who are the body of Christ, that we may be the body of Christ for those who need those things with them.

[ 16 : 22 ] We know that you love and ■ councilors, we're here at the things that we let's 2010. We ■ have the power to queima.

Lord, for those around us who may not have enough to eat, may not have stable places to be, who live in fear and know great need, uncertainty in finances, and are looking for basic safety.

Lord God, help us to be the body of Christ for them, to provide what is necessary, to share what we have, to make love real in the lives of those who are asking the question, where is God?

Let us indeed be your people here today and now for all those who are hurting. And Lord, for those who need your help, need your help as they are making choices, need your help because their hearts are broken in grief, need your help because they just feel a burden that is too heavy for them.

Lord, we know that you are already at work, that you know all things, and that you have prepared the way and you have the answer. So Lord, open hearts.

[ 17 : 56 ] Let your voice be clear. Let your presence be undeniable. And let your people, we who are gathered here and those with us around the world, let your people lift you high so that the world, in all its confusion and in all its being lost, will see what is truly the answer, what is truly the way, and how they might have truly the life you intend.

God, there is so much, so much for which we give thanks, and so much for which we are still yearning and striving. But Lord, we know that all things are possible only by the gift of your Son, the one who has made us safe, the one who has saved us from our sins, the one who has overcome this world.

And it is in his name that we offer prayer this morning. Amen. Amen.

Good morning. Good morning. The scripture reading this morning is from 2 Corinthians, chapter 4, verses 13 through 5, verse 1.

We have the same faithful spirit as what is written in scripture. I had faith, and so I spoke. We also have faith, and so we also speak. We do this because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will also raise us with Jesus, and he will bring us into his presence along with you.

[ 20 : 13 ] All these things are for your benefit. As grace increases to benefit more and more people, it will cause gratitude to increase, which results in God's glory.

So we aren't depressed, but even if our bodies are breaking down on the outside, the person that we are on the inside is being renewed every day. Our temporary minor problems are producing an eternal stockpile of glory for us that is beyond all comparison.

We don't focus on the things that can be seen, but on the things that can't be seen. The things that can be seen don't last, but the things that can't be seen are eternal.

We know that if the tent that we live in on earth is torn down, we have a building from God. It's a house that isn't handmade, which is eternal and located in heaven.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Thank you, Elizabeth.

[ 21 : 26 ] It's the message this morning. It applies to people throughout all of Scripture.

Because from the beginning of time, from the beginning of creation, people were inclined to be grateful in some way for what God had given them, and yet also be like this.

Remember the Israelites in captivity, and they were before that when they were journeying on the road, and then when they were in captivity, and their thought was, I'd rather go back and be held captive than be out here in the wilderness without the luxuries of food as marginal as it was or predictability.

How many of you like predictability? How many weather checkers do we have? News checkers?

Let's see, what else? What else do we check? Sports? Facebook? Messages?

[ 22 : 44 ] All kinds of things. We just do. That's kind of how we're wired. Does it change? The way that we check so often, does it change what we find?

Not really. I mean, Buffalo, like, pretty much everywhere I've always lived, they think they created the reason for the statement that just if you don't like the weather, wait five minutes and it'll change.

That's not just Buffalo's. That's Rochester's. That's Denver's. You know, Denver was the place where people went to the hospital in the morning in parkas and sleeveless shirts on the way home.

I'd never seen anything like it. People are inclined, though, to look to what they love the most, to look back in their life and remember a chapter, a time that they maybe wish they could go back to.

Anybody have a time they look back to that was within the last five years? That was the best? Ten years?

[ 23 : 59 ] Now, are you telling me nobody looks back? Fifteen, twenty? Anybody look back and say, well, I wish? Because I'd just like to tell you that we had a big church rummage sale yesterday.

And if you ever want to hear reminiscing or wishing that a certain time was when we were there, when people used all the Tupperware, when people used this, do you remember this?

And people loved seeing those things. They loved seeing those pieces, those examples of their past. And they bought them. They didn't always understand why other people didn't buy them.

We tend to do that. We tend to do that. Church people, I'm just going to say it, I'm a church person, so hear that. We tend to be really good at that. Oh, do you remember?

Do you remember when we had this? Or do you remember when we had that? And sometimes it comes out as a sweet reminiscence.

[ 25 : 11 ] Sometimes it comes out like a moan. Sometimes it comes out in a little bit of anger. Well, if we'd only do things the way we used to do them.

You know, that's close to the last, the five or seven last words of the church. Whoa. If we would only do it the way we used to, or we never did it that way before, those are among clergy, what we talk about is like the seven last words of the church.

Like there's the seven last words of Jesus. The seven last words of the church is, no change. Must not ever change. There isn't anything bad about those feelings.

But it just depends on, do we hold them in the sweet place of our heart and our memories, just like the people we've lost, who we love and we hold close, or do we find ourselves moaning, maybe close to complaining.

So I'd like to share something with you that for some of you may be familiar, we'll just find out. Wow. Bloom, despair, and agony on me.

[ 26 : 31 ] Oh! Deep, dark, depression, excessive misery. Oh! If it weren't for bad luck, I'd have no luck at all.

Oh! Bloom, despair, and agony on me. Now let me just describe to you the difference between the Saturday evening service and this.

They sang with it. LAUGHTER They knew the words. LAUGHTER And they were slightly disappointed that we cut it off. LAUGHTER I know the words.

But not because I'm a, you know, born and bred hee-haw watcher, it's because I had parents and grandparents who by golly were not going to miss hee-haw.

And when there's only one TV, if you want to be by the TV, then you were going to watch hee-haw. And there are things that I remember. Is it Minnie Pearl with the hat? With the tag?

[ 27 : 34 ] Got it. LAUGHTER You know, if you don't know what it was they were moaning and groaning about, if you listen to the whole song, they were all excited that there was a new store in town that sold clothes for the tall people.

The big and tall people finally got clothes. They went to the store and they discovered that even though there were clothes for tall people, there were only tall men.

There were no tall women. Oh, misery and despair because they wanted some tall women. It's easy to laugh, but God's people throughout Scripture held such a grip on the past that it was hard sometimes to get them to realize that God was moving into the future.

That God was going to go with them. That God was not only going to go with them, God was going to take them. I want to tell you a story about a woman in a church that I served who, she must be like 99 by now.

She was 96 or 97 when I knew her and the church was going to do a project. Now this church was only between 25 and 30 years old, the building.

[ 28 : 59 ] And a suggestion was birthed up that we build a new office that was actually by the front door. Can you imagine?

An office that was right by the front door where people could be greeted the minute they walked in the door and all kinds of things that was a new thing. Now we're not talking about major building reconstruction.

We're talking about an office. And there were people who were a part of the original building program who said, well, God told us to build this church and we did and there's nothing wrong with it.

Why should we change it? And this 97 year old would say, do you think that that was God's last good idea?

Do you think that God stopped thinking about what might be good and plentiful for this church when that building was finished 25 years ago?

[ 30 : 04 ] You know that God moved on to another church and just left us? And I'm telling you, this 97 year old could turn minds and heads faster than anybody else.

No pastor could say that and get away with it. And they kept on. But, but, it's so good.

It's so perfect. Why would we change it? We worked so hard. We raised so much money. I remember walking in the parade from the old church to the new church and we carried hymnals.

We carried stones. We carried whatever it is that was precious in the old church to the new church. Why?

And the woman would say, God raised up those people. God raised up you and your gifts and your funds and your excitement and your inspiration to do a brand new thing.

[ 31 : 16 ] Now we have brand new people who have come because of what you built. And God is speaking through them.

Because God can. God did not stop when the last wall was painted. Well, the office was built.

And that 97-year-old woman smiled graciously and was willing to talk to anyone who was suffering from any change to this building.

The people of God, as you know, because you've either been a part of this church or another church, whether it is a new seating plan because of COVID or new hymnals or different kind of Bibles or right now we don't have Bibles in the pews or chairs.

Sorry. Pews, chairs. Sometimes things... Wait. Do things stick in our heads because that's the way they're supposed to be? We do that.

[ 32 : 31 ] Things are different. And over the past couple of years, so many things have been different. And we as people, not just people of faith, have groaned with the changes.

We've groaned when the church building was empty and Scott, Sherry, and I and Adrian were here and Sue, we were just here.

Just the one, two, three, four, five of us. We groaned, didn't we? We groaned deeply because we wanted you to be here and it couldn't happen.

We have groaned over restrictions and things that cause us difficulty. We groan over changes. But the scripture tells us some version of God isn't finished with us yet.

God has new things. God has new hope. God has new inspirations for us. God has new things.

[ 33 : 46 ] If we can turn ourselves from this, do you remember? I remember. Do you remember when?

Do you remember? I wish. I want. To, I can love all of that. I can love all of what used to be.

God has new things. But because Paul tells us that God says don't lose heart. Don't be afraid. Don't lose heart. Don't be depressed.

Don't put all of what you believe and expect into what you know. To the body that you've been given. Anybody's body's changed over the last 20 years?

Some of you aren't 20 but they still have changed. And it's hard. It's hard when our ears or our legs or our hips or our brain or our hearing doesn't work the way that it used to.

[ 34 : 55 ] But don't even begin to think that God is finished with you because of that. Don't even begin to think that age has anything to do with God's hope for us.

Nobody's too young and nobody's too old. Nobody's too frail and nobody is too strong. Because our reliance comes from that which we cannot see.

So if we look at our human frailties of course we're going to moan and groan and be feeling as though we are not the human that we thought we could be.

Not in God's eyes. Not in God's eyes because God says in the scripture therefore we do not lose heart though outwardly we may be wasting away yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary but what is unseen is eternal.

[ 36 : 11 ] So that means sometimes all those lists all those messages checking the weather checking our to-do list wondering how we're going to get it all done wondering how we can even find ourselves in the midst of our own schedule is not going to give us the hope and life and peace that we are looking for because we'll lose ourselves in there.

Jesus Christ promised us forever and ever and ever I will be with you. So no matter how the wind blows and changes changes no matter no matter no matter what falls down and what builds up no matter where the empty chairs are or where the missing people are no matter God is God is God is with us and God will go with us wherever we go God will continue to make a difference through the ministry of this church with new staff members with new people standing here or doing whatever it is that God calls them to do God will still do God's thing I hope and pray to be just a little bit of a part of that and I pray that you also will be a part of that do I know do I know everything do I know the future

I can look at my phone and look at the weather forecast and tell you might be 86 today not going to rain do I know I don't know do I know the answers to all things church community Sherry Scott we don't but what we do know is God sent God's son Jesus to teach us how to live love God love your neighbor love yourself follow the ten commandments be people of integrity be truth tellers in love and always and forever remember that the Holy Spirit came to remind us that we are never ever ever alone let's pray oh Lord it's hard sometimes when we're stepping forward into places we do not know with hope and trust and confidence even the best of us can shake and pause and wonder is it right is it wrong even the strong of us strongest of us can look back and remember

I remember when I knew I remember what I saw I remember what I believed and trusted in you really really God want me to trust the new the next the purpose and the plan Lord may we be moved Lord may we know we've been saved in Jesus name Amen we have an opportunity to gather today at the table that reminds us that God's love for us God's grace for us is always always in the past in the present in the future

God has a steadfast love that is always with us and for us and filling us and we remember God's grace through the table and you are all invited the Lord be with you lift up your hearts let us give thanks to the Lord our God it is right and a good and joyful thing always and everywhere to give thanks to you almighty God creator of heaven and earth you formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life when we turned away and our love failed your love remained steadfast you delivered us from captivity made covenant to be our sovereign God and spoke to us through your prophets and so with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn holy holy holy lord god of power and might heaven and earth are full of your glory hosanna in the highest blessed is he who comes in the name of the lord hosanna in the highest holy are you and blessed is your son

[ 41 : 49 ] Jesus Christ your spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind to set at liberty those who are oppressed and to announce that the time had come when you would save your people he healed the sick he fed the hungry and ate with sinners by the baptism of his suffering death and resurrection you gave birth to your church delivered us from slavery to sin and death and made with us a new covenant by water and the spirit and the night in which he gave himself up for us he took bread he gave thanks to you he gave it to his disciples and said take and eat all of you this is my body given for you do this in remembrance of me and when the supper was over he took the cup he gave thanks to you he gave it to his disciples and said drink from this all of you this is my blood of the new covenant poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins drink of this often in remembrance of me and so in remembrance of these your mighty acts of Jesus Christ we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy as a holy and living sacrifice in union with Christ's offering for us as we proclaim the mystery of faith

Christ has died Christ is risen Christ will come again pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here and on these gifts of bread and wine make them be for us the body and blood of Christ that we may be for the world the body of Christ redeemed by his blood by your spirit make us one with Christ one with each other and one in ministry to all the world until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his banquet through your son Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit and your Holy Church all honor and glory is yours almighty Father now and forever Amen now let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught us saying our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name and thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever

Amen Amen I invite you to take the elements and receive the bread the body of our Lord given for you take and eat the blood of our Lord shed for you take and drink thanks be to God a couple of months ago I started the Bible again at the beginning and I'm in about 2nd Chronicles now and it struck me the other day as I'm scribbling all over in my Bible how often the scriptures talk about God's outstretched arm and steadfast love in every season in every change in all the times and stories the faith through the people in the book of scriptures

God's steadfast love remained the same God's love for you remains the same and we sing this song together here with me as we reach out knowing that God does love us and God is here with us if we just surrender ourselves to him I invite you all to stand as we worship together I long for your embrace every single day to meet you in this place and see you face to face will you show me reveal yourself to me because of your mercy love

I fall down on my knees and I can feel your presence here with me certainly I'm lost within your beauty caught up in the warmth of your touch here in this moment and I surrender to your love you're everywhere I go I am not alone you call me as your own to know you and be known you are holy and I fall down on my knees and I can feel your presence here with me suddenly I'm lost in your beauty caught up in the warmth of your touch here in this moment

[ 48 : 39 ] I surrender to your love I surrender to your grace I surrender to the one who took my place I can feel your presence here with me certainly I'm lost within your beauty caught up in the wonder of your touch here in this moment I surrender to your love thank you Jesus many of you know that I have a grandson who's going to turn one on Friday and he is thinking about walking wait a minute no he is starting to walk some because when he thinks about it he plops his little bottom right down on the ground and crawls imagine this imagine that what we do when he is walking we hold out our hands and say come to me it's going to be okay you're safe

I'll catch you don't be afraid we do that because they're little and they don't know this new thing when we don't know this new thing I want you to picture God in all his glory right there just come we'll go together Amen move and will Thank you.

Thank you.