

## Our Blessed Hope

Bill Elliff

I was visiting a wonderful, godly lady yesterday who has faced tremendous, continual suffering in this life. She nearly died recently, unconscious and failing for many days, and then she woke up, right on the brink of death.



She told me that when she awakened, she was disappointed at first that she had not been taken on to heaven. In my head, I completely understood this natural thought, although I cannot imagine the depths of her experience. Heaven would have completely released her from this life of suffering. I have pastored many people who are at the point in their journey where heaven is what they long for.

God reminds us that it is near. James records this from God for us. It is in the context of suffering that we are experiencing at the hands of others, but its truth is applicable to every situation.

Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door. (James 5:7-9)

Whether Christ returns in our lifetime, or we, as believers in Him, are taken to Him in death, He is near. And, when He comes, all things will be made right. All suffering will end for us. All wrongs will be corrected, all sickness healed.

We can trust Him in this and walk in this hope. "Hope" in the Biblical terms is not a wish, but the "confident assurance of sure coming events." I saw it in my friend's face today. She believes that God has more for her to do and in God's perfect timing she will shed her earthly house and be

ushered into a "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

It is why Paul calls it our "blessed hope" which nothing in this life can take from us. It is sufficient to strengthen our hearts in this life and it will carry us as needed until that blessed day.