

Message Extras

a little something extra to keep you connected to Jesus this week

Message Extras accompany the [weekly message](#).

This week we begin a new series called *Unbelievable*. Through our series Miracles, we were challenged to believe in Jesus. This series challenges us to live out the implications of believing in Jesus! The resurrection of Jesus isn't the only thing that is unbelievable or even hard to grasp. The Bible has many statements that are unbelievable.

In this four-week series, we will explore Romans 5-8 (one chapter, or portion of a chapter, each week) and some hard-to-believe truths: Problems are good. We are all addicts. Everything in life is free. Death is just the beginning. As we lean into these truths, our lives will change. Changed lives will be our testimony motivating us to connect every life to Jesus.

The word "Unbelievable" can describe the awesome, the beautiful, the terrible, or the hard. What comes to mind when you think about unbelievable things?

This week's unbelievable truth – problems are good!

Read John 16:33 and Romans 4:25-5:5

What unbelievable ideas do you find which support this week's theme that problems are good?

Read them again... Can you add any other truths?

The speaker used an excerpt from a talk US Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts gave at his son's 9th grade graduation in 2017. Unbelievably frank, yet compelling, ideas to chew on.

Now the commencement speakers will typically also wish you good luck and extend good wishes to you. I will not do that, and I'll tell you why. From time to

time in the years to come, I hope you will be treated unfairly, so that you will come to know the value of justice. I hope that you will suffer betrayal because that will teach you the importance of loyalty. Sorry to say, but I hope you will be lonely from time to time so that you don't take friends for granted. I wish you bad luck, again, from time to time so that you will be conscious of the role of chance in life and understand that your success is not completely deserved, and that the failure of others is not completely deserved either. And when you lose, as you will from time to time, I hope every now and then, your opponent will gloat over your failure. It is a way for you to understand the importance of sportsmanship. I hope you'll be ignored so you know the importance of listening to others, and I hope you will have just enough pain to learn compassion. Whether I wish these things or not, they're going to happen. And whether you benefit from them or not will depend upon your ability to see the message in your misfortunes.

How do you react to that quote?

Which specific "I hope you experience..." did he share that connected with you? Why?

Has that experience brought the result noted in the quote? Why or why not?

I believe Chief Justice Roberts has underscored the biblical model of developing endurance in our lives. This endurance isn't just to run harder or faster in life, it is to develop character and our hope. Trials and difficulties in my life have kept me humble and dependent on God. I have to trust God, because I can't solve IT – whatever IT is. I don't often even understand all that has happened. To be honest, though, I haven't processed some of my life experiences well. Unresolved pain, anger or despair hides under the surface and a new and similar experience can trigger less than healthy responses. Reflection and self-awareness move us along the endurance journey toward Christ-like character. Problems become good. God can work all things together for good for those who are called according to His purposes. Not all things are good, but God CAN work them together as we soften our hearts, engage our thoughts and believe in the hope of our salvation.

Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

We experience pain and struggles in life so that we can relate to and empathize with others. I think of WRCC's GriefShare and DivorceCare ministries. The leaders have

experienced losses – death and/or divorce. This has led them to use those experiences to guide others through their hardships. In so doing, they have developed character and strengthened their confident hope of salvation. They are using the comfort they have found to navigate through roiling waters of struggle to steady and comfort other lives.

The speaker ended the service with these questions. I think they are tremendous for ongoing spiritual growth and prayer:

1. What problems have you faced in the last year or what problem are you facing now—name it.
2. How do you feel about that problem right now?
3. Offer that problem to God in prayer.
4. Ask God how he might be developing perseverance, character or hope through your problem.
5. What would it take for you to share this problem with others?

