

Story: Caterpillar's Hope

November 30, 2025

Isaiah 2:1-5

Romans 13:11-14

Caterpillars don't have the easiest life. They don't get around very much – but then, when you move mostly to find another leaf to eat, you don't need to move very far. There are things about that, while you're eating leaves, would be very happy to eat you, and that makes for more than a few anxious moments. A lot of the birds I happily tell stories about would happily eat a caterpillar, and that makes them rather sad.

Caterpillars are among the most hopeful creatures on Earth, however. Each one of them hopes to go from an animal that crawls slowly across the branches to one that flies through the skies. They hope to go from someone that you hope will be overlooked (and so not eaten) to one that glows brightly in the sunlight. They hope that the beauty they feel on the inside will be mirrored on the outside.

What's amazing is that that's what happens.

Two caterpillars were sharing their hopes on a branch one day between bites of leaf. I'm going to leave out the biting and chewing, because it actually took more time than the conversation. Caterpillars are serious about eating.

"I'm really looking forward to being a butterfly," said the first.

"Me, too," said the second.

"I can't wait to fly," said the first.

"Me, too," said the second.

"I'd like to see more of the world than this flower patch," said the first.

"It's a good patch," said the second.

"I'm not saying it isn't," said the first.

"You're right, though," said the second. "It would be nice to visit another one."

"All we've got to do," said the first caterpillar, "is wait."

“Just wait?” asked the second.

“Just wait,” said the first.

“That doesn’t sound right,” said the second. “I think we’ve got to build a chrysalis, and stay in it, and then come out as butterflies.”

“Don’t be silly,” said the first. “You hope for it, and then it happens.”

“I don’t think so,” said the second. “I think you hope for it, and then you do something about it. And then it can happen.”

I don’t know what happened to the first caterpillar. I hope it made a chrysalis and became a butterfly, because the second caterpillar was quite right. Caterpillars become butterflies in the chrysalis. They’ve got to make things happen to make other things happen.

Dream of better days. Hope for them, and believe they can come to be. But don’t forget to do the work for them. Hope is good, but hope and effort are better.

by Eric Anderson