

THE HOPE THAT DOESN'T DISAPPOINT

(Romans 5:1-5)

INTRODUCTION

Hope is a 'big' word today. Politicians campaign on hope. Our president wrote a book titled, "The Audacity of Hope." We all respond to hope. We name colleges after the word, "Hope College." We name scholarships after the word, "Hope Scholarship." We name our children "Hope." We all want hope. We all are looking for hope. We all need hope.

But hope in this world is too often fleeting. It seems to evaporate on a moment's notice. The protestors in Iran gained some hope that things would change, but their hope is fading. When miners are trapped in a caved-in mine, hope starts strong, but many times fades into tragedy. A person goes to the doctor and hears the dreaded words, cancer, and hope fades. Hope is a fickle thing. Hope is many times disappointing!

What is hope? A common definition is "Hope is a belief in a positive outcome related to events and circumstances in one's life." Hope is a positive belief in the future.

Our Roman's passage talks about hope. Three times in five verses hope is mentioned. Paul had been talking about faith in chapter four. We are justified by faith. We are saved by faith. He used Abraham as the great example of faith in God's promises. Abraham also had hope. **Verse 4: 18 who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be."**

Paul now turns from emphasizing faith to hope. Paul won't mention faith again until chapter 9. He also turns from focusing on Abraham to focusing on Christ. He answers the question, "Will having faith that justifies last throughout life and into eternity?" "Will it give me a sure hope?" The answer is yes, because the object of our faith, Christ Jesus, guarantees it. It is only in Him that we can have lasting hope. It is only in him that we can have enduring hope. It is only in him that our hope will never disappoint us.

Let's see why this is.

WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD THROUGH CHRIST

First, we have a hope that doesn't disappoint because we have peace with God through Christ. Verse 1:

(Rom 5:1 NKJV) Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

The peace spoken of here is not the peace we have in our heart, i.e. the tranquility of soul. That is something we can know as Philippians 4:7 describes:

(Phil 4:7 NKJV) and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

The peace spoken of here is the removal of hostility between you and God. The hostility was caused by your sin being an affront to the holiness of God. This peace with God is the peace that Jesus won for you on the cross. It is the peace that comes in the absence of God's wrath towards us. This will be explained further in Romans 5:10.

While we were in our unsaved state we saw God mainly as our celestial Judge and his wrath was hanging over us. But because of God has justified us by faith He is no longer our Judge, but our Savior and Christ is our Advocate. This is why our hope will never disappoint because Jesus has secured our peace with God. We are no longer at war with God. The treaty has been signed!

Now we need to accept the treaty and live in light of the treaty because the war is over.

On January 8, 1815, Andrew Jackson and his troops defended the city of New Orleans against the British and won the battle. The campaign culminated in the British frontal assault on Jackson's lines, in which the attackers were cut down by concentrated rifle and cannon fire with losses of almost 2,000 dead and injured. American casualties were 6 killed and 10 wounded. Unknown to Jackson and the British, however, was that a peace treaty had been signed on December 24, 1814, two weeks before the battle. But because of the slowness of communications, the troops at New Orleans didn't get the word until it was too late. Soldiers died on either side for a peace that had already been secured.

Some people don't realize that the peace treaty has been signed between the justified sinner and God. It has been signed with the blood of Christ on the Cross. If you find yourself in a seeming battle with God, stop your struggle, God is not fighting you. Peace with God is secured in Christ. This is part of our hope. And this hope will never disappoint.

ACCESS TO GRACE WHEREIN WE STAND

Next we see that we have a hope that will not disappoint because we have access into grace that surrounds us. Verse 2:

(Rom 5:2) through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand

It is through Christ that we have access into this grace in which we stand. In the computer industry access to certain information and privileges are granted by having access rights. You have to have the proper username and then the valid password to log onto a computer network. The same if you check your email or your bank account online. You have to have access rights granted to you. If you forget your password, you can't access your information. At the beginning of the school year, I will have many calls from teachers and students, asking me for their password because they have forgotten it.

Well there is a secure way for us to access the grace of God and that secure way is through Jesus Christ. Our login name is t Jesus Christ and our password is faith. He is our secure entrance. Our password and username will never expire. Our hope for being showered by God grace is in Christ. This is why our hope will never disappoint nor will we ever be ashamed when we approach God's throne of Grace, because Jesus is the way!

The phrase 'this grace in which we stand' reminds me of being surrounded by grace. It is like being in a field full of flowers, being surrounded by them. We stand in a place where God's grace surrounds us and it is more beautiful than flowers, more powerful than trees, more lovely than anything God has created. Grace, grace, God's grace. We stand in it because we have entered the field through Christ our Savior. Christ will never fail; therefore our hope will never fail.

WE REJOICE IN THE HOPE OF THE GLORY OF GOD

Next we have a hope that will not disappoint because the glory of God will be fulfilled. Verse 2b. **"...and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."**

What is the glory of God spoken of here? God's glory is God's perfections. God's glory will be openly revealed for all His creation to see. God's plan for history is that the knowledge of the Lord to fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. God's plan for history is that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of the Father. We rejoice in this hope. We have confidence in this hope, not only that it will happen, but that we will see it, that we will share in it, that we will live in light of God's glory for all eternity.

Our hope in the glory of God and we rejoice in this hope, and it will not disappoint

WE REJOICE IN OUR TRIBULATIONS

What about life on earth? It is filled with trials and tribulations. It is filled many times with sorrow and pain. It is filled with disappointments and failures. But for those whose faith is in Jesus this doesn't defeat our hope but it only strengthens our hope. Therefore we have a hope that will not disappoint even when confronted with tribulations. Verses 3 and 4 explain why:

(Rom 5:3-4 NKJV) And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; {4} and perseverance, character; and character, hope.

Tribulation produces perseverance or endurance. For those surrounded by the sustaining grace of God difficulties only strengthen our hope because we know that our hope is more assured when we see that God is able to see us through.

Endurance or experience will produce character. Endurance shows what we're made of. I like the poem about the frog. It goes like this:

Two frogs fell into a can of cream,
Or so I've heard it told;
The sides of the can were shiny and steep.
The cream was deep and cold.

"Oh, what's the use?" croaked No. 1
"Tis fate; no help's around.
Goodbye, my friends? Goodbye, sad world!
And weeping still, he drowned.

But Number 2, of sterner stuff,
Dog-paddled in surprise,
The while he wiped his creamy face
And dried his creamy eyes.

"I'll swim a while, at least," he said --
Or so I've heard he said;
"It really wouldn't help the world
If one more frog were dead."

An hour or two he kicked and swam,
Not once he stopped to mutter,
But kicked and kicked and swam and kicked.
Then hopped out, via butter!

Hope endures even through tribulation therefore we can rejoice in tribulations, knowing what it will produce more hope in those who are trusting Jesus.

HOLY SPIRIT POURS OUT GOD'S LOVE IN OUR HEARTS

Finally we know that hope will never disappoint because Holy Spirit fills us with the love of God. Verse 5:

(Rom 5:5 NKJV) Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Picture the Holy Spirit standing over your heart with a big bucket of God's love. What is He doing? He's pouring this love out into your heart. Your heart becomes fuller and fuller of God's great love for you. Don't you believe this will give you confidence in the future even though the present may be different? Yes, I believe that it can.

CONCLUSION

Hope. We all need it. We all want it. We all are looking for it. Now there are many who ask for you to hope in them, or in their policies, or in their actions. But there is only one person in whom we can have hope that will never make us ashamed or disappointed. That is when we put our hope and faith in Jesus Christ. This hope will overcome the difficulties of life. This hope overcomes the tragedy of death. This hope will be forever.

You can choose hope this morning by choosing Jesus. You can choose to have a positive outlook on the future, if you choose to believe in Jesus and believe in his hope.

Amen? Amen!