

“That May You Abound in Hope”
(Romans 15:13)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. Paul has exhorted us to be sensitive, loving, caring, towards our weaker brethren.
 - a. We are to use our strength to help him, not to stumble him.
 - b. We are to accept one another.

2. This is what Christ did for us.
 - a. Christ used His strength to obey, suffer, die for us, for our weaker brethren.
 - b. Christ became a servant to the Jews – fulfilling the promises God made, vindicating His truth.
 - c. Christ became a servant to the Gentiles – that they might glorify God for His mercy.
 - d. Christ accepts all who come to Him now in faith.
 - (i) How can we not accept those whom He has accepted?
 - (ii) How can we fail to follow His example?
 - (iii) How can we neglect His commandment?
 - (iv) We can't, without sin.
 - (v) Therefore, we are to accept one another and love one another.

B. Preview.

1. But I want you to see that Paul has opened another theme here: that of hope.
 - a. As he spoke of what Christ has done – in serving, in accepting – he remembers Christ has opened a door of hope: for all men.
 - b. Look at his last quote from Isaiah: “There shall come the root of Jesse, and He who arises to rule over the Gentiles, in Him shall the Gentiles hope” (v. 12).
 - c. Christ in His strength has brought hope.
 - d. Christ as a servant to His Father, has opened the door to heaven.
 - e. Because of these things, there is hope for us here this morning.

2. Paul pauses now for a moment to reflect on this.
 - a. Realizing the implications of what he has written, he now prays that God would fill the Roman believers with hope through faith.
 - b. This is what I want us to consider this morning:
 - (i) First, that God is the God of hope: of salvation.
 - (ii) Second, what the blessed fruits are of the hope He gives.
 - (iii) And third, how we may receive this hope.

II. Sermon.

- A. First, let's consider that God is the God of hope: the God of salvation. If He were not this, there would be no hope.
1. God gave the hope of salvation to the fathers through a Savior.

- a. When all had fallen into sin and lost all hope, He gave hope through promises: the curse on the serpent, the promise made to Shem, to Abraham, to David, *etc.*
 - b. Through types: Noah's ark, the brazen serpent, bronze altar, sacrifices, ceremonies, prophets, priests, kings, events: Exodus, Passover, Conquest of Canaan, ministries of Elijah and Elisha.
 - c. Through prophecies: the coming of Shiloh (Gen. 49:10), David's greater Son, who would be born in the city of David, enter Jerusalem on a donkey, bear the sins of His people, die on a cross, *etc.*
 - d. God gave all these things to His Old Covenant people to get them to look forward, to give them hope: hope that they wouldn't be lost forever, but saved.
2. Isaiah prophesied that He would give this same hope to the Gentiles.
 - a. They were in darkness, apart from God, without His Word.
 - b. But God had promised it to them: through the curse on the serpent, the prophecy made regarding Japheth, the promise to Abraham, through Isaiah.
 - c. They had hope, but didn't know it.
 3. God is a God of hope.
 - a. It was not His will that all men perish in their sins.
 - b. It pleased Him to save some.
 - c. Because He is gracious, there is hope: the hope of salvation.
 - d. He has become our source of hope, as we'll see in a moment.
- B. Second, let's consider what the fruits are of the hope/salvation He gives.
1. The first fruit is joy.
 - a. Knowing that you're saved, that you have the hope of heaven gives you joy.
 - (i) If you were drowning, or were in a burning building, and were saved, you would rejoice.
 - (ii) What about being on the way to an eternity in hell and being saved?
 - (iii) Knowing that heaven is ours, that we will be perfectly blessed in the presence of God forever, gives us joy.
 - b. But being given the source of joy – the Spirit – also gives us joy.
 - (i) Joy is increased by the knowledge of what God has done and what's ahead.
 - (ii) But it is also created and increased by the Spirit as He applies those truths to your heart, mind, and conscience.
 - (iii) The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, *etc.* (Gal. 5:22).
 2. The second fruit is peace.
 - a. Knowing that you have the hope of heaven also gives peace.
 - (i) Knowing you have sinned, you're guilty, looking forward to punishment, brings conviction, fear.
 - (ii) But knowing your sins are paid for in full, taken away, won't speak out against you in the day of God's judgment, gives peace, peace of conscience.
 - b. But again, being given the source of subjective peace – the Spirit – also brings peace.

- (i) The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, *etc.* (Gal. 5:22).
 - (ii) He calms and comforts the hearts of believers in the truth of God.
3. On the other hand, having these fruits also increases our hope of heaven.
- a. What is hope but the confident assurance that Christ and heaven is ours?
 - b. This joy and peace strengthens that assurance, that hope, as do all the fruits of the Spirit, when we see them, when we experience them.
 - c. The fruits of salvation – joy and peace – strengthen our hope of salvation.
- C. Lastly, let's consider how we or anyone may receive this blessed hope.
1. The God of hope must fill you.
- a. This is why Paul prays to God.
 - (i) God sometimes refers to the Trinity.
 - (ii) Sometimes it refers to the Father, as it does here.
 - (iii) But certainly, the Bible never intends by this to say that the Son and Spirit are not God.
 - b. In the covenant of Grace, the Father is seen as the source of blessings.
 - (i) He purposes to save a people.
 - (ii) He sends His Son to obtain that blessing of salvation.
 - (iii) He bestows the Spirit who applies that blessing, unites to Christ, works faith.
 - (iv) He is not the austere God who stands with thunderbolts in His hands to destroy.
 - (v) He is the benevolent and gracious God who sent His Son to save.
 - (vi) This is how Paul looks at Him, in Christ – outside of Christ, His face of anger and wrath is turned towards unbelievers.
 - (vii) And so Paul looks to him in prayer to bestow this blessing on the Romans – to fill them with all joy and peace.
2. But Paul reminds us that He does this only through faith, “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace *in believing.*”
- a. These blessings are not for everyone: but to those who believe.
 - (i) Paul and Silas said to the Philippian jailer, when he asked how he could be saved, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved” (Acts 16:31).
 - (ii) Paul wrote in Romans 1:16-17, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘But the righteous *man* shall live by faith.’”
 - (iii) We’ll see this evening more about how the Word is the power of God to salvation.
 - (iv) They are for those who apprehend the mercies of God in Christ, who look to Him in faith, who receive and rest in Him – as we saw last week.
 - b. And once coming to Christ, these blessings are strengthened by stronger faith.
 - (i) The more we trust Him, the greater will be our joy, our peace.

- (ii) When we see more clearly the danger is gone, our sins are forgiven, the power of sin is broken, we have escaped hell, we have obtained heaven – most importantly communion with God – our joy is increased.
 - (iii) When we see these things more clearly, our peace is increased as well: knowing we are at peace with God, knowing we will enter the eternal realm of peace; knowing within ourselves our sins are forgiven gives us peace of conscience.
 - (iv) But of course, faith also brings more of the Spirit’s work.
 - (a) He increases our joy and peace.
 - (b) What we experience of these two things.
 - (c) Sometimes we don’t even know why we feel the joy and peace we do.
 - (d) The Spirit can simply give them to us, as in heaven, He’ll fill us to the full.
3. But when Paul tells us that this hope God gives only comes through believing in His Son and that it comes by the power of the Holy Spirit, this reminds us that faith also is the gift of the Spirit.
- a. This blessed hope comes only through believing.
 - b. But faith only comes through the work of the Spirit.
 - (i) Jesus said to those who followed, “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life” (John 6:63).
 - (ii) He said to Nicodemus, “Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit’” (John 3:5-6).
 - (iii) This is why Paul prays that they may “abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”
 - (iv) He not only strengthens our faith to strengthen our hope, He is the One who gives that faith in the first place.
4. In closing, I would ask if you have hope.
- a. Is your soul filled with joy, knowing your sins are forgiven and that heaven is yours?
 - b. Do you have peace: peace with God and peace of conscience, knowing your sins have been paid for?
 - c. Do you have the hope of heaven, and is that hope strong?
 - d. If so, rejoice, but don’t be complacent. Seek the Lord through His means for even more grace – more of His Spirit, for more joy, peace and hope.
 - e. But if you don’t have it, look to Christ, believe on Him, receive His forgiveness, rest in His righteousness. He is our only hope (1 Tim. 1:1).
 - f. If you can’t look to Christ, look to the Father for His help, for His Spirit, to give you the ability to trust.
 - g. God is *the* God of hope. There is salvation in no one else. Come to Him and receive His hope. Amen.