

Hope in the Glory of God

Romans 5:1-11

Key Verse: 2b

“And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”

“Hope.” No other word inspires as much. Four years ago, hope inspired an election. In 1963, Martin Luther King inspired people with hope in his “I have a dream,” speech. Hope has been the back bone to help people carry on throughout history. Many have come to this nation in the hopes of finding the American dream, of living a good life. Some hope for justice, freedom, a better job, or any job at all. Still others hope for a good husband, or wife, or a child. People have many hopes. All these things are good, but they are what we call dead hopes because they don’t last. So then what should we put our hope in? Hopefully, we’ll find that out through this passage.

Let’s take a look at verse 1. “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” Ever since the fall, mankind has been God’s enemy. Our sin leads us in rebellion against the one who created us. Thus we are at war with God. What do you think the outcome of being at war with the one who is Almighty, who created the heavens and the earth, the one who has the power over life and death? Not good. It’s a hopeless battle. And we don’t fully realize the problems that come with being at war with God. Where there is war, there is no peace. When we don’t have peace with God, our hearts are not right and we become anxious, fearful, lonely, confused, empty or any number of problems. And because we don’t realize it, or understand it, most people seek solutions that ultimately fail. Some seek peace by trying to busy their mind so they’ll forget about it, by going traveling, or shopping, or immerse themselves in movies or soap operas. While others will take up drinking, drugs or some other way to numb their souls. Still others will throw themselves into their careers or relationships hoping that will fill the void in their search for peace. But instead of enjoying peace, they become restless from the ever-increasing anxiety of those who are separated from God. That’s why in Genesis, Cain cried out, “my punishment is more than I can bear,” because he couldn’t handle being separated from God.

However when we believe in Jesus and accept him as our Lord and Savior the war between God and us is over. And Jesus ushers in a new era of peace with God. But this is not just a peace treaty like between countries after a war, who draw lines and say, “You stay on your side, and I’ll stay on mine.” God’s peace is not the same as man’s peace. Man’s idea to live at peace with one another can be seen in the example of N. & S. Korea with the DMZ between them. With this in place there is no fighting, but they’re not really friends either. Technically they are still at war because they couldn’t make peace. How about the peace treaty of Versailles? After Germany lost WWI France made them sign treaty of Versailles which wasn’t very peaceful. It left Germany in such a crippled state that they resented the French so much that they wanted to get revenge on them. This is the problem with man-made peace. Man’s peace is usually handed out by the country, or

person, who won the battle, so it is usually in their favor. But God's peace is different. God's peace is full of grace. King David experienced God's peace, even after he did very evil things. If you remember from last week's passage verses 7 & 8 say, "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered." ⁸ Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him." When God gives peace, his peace covers over all of man's sins and transgressions and God doesn't hold them against us. Usually with the peace treaties that men set up, they remember everything and forget nothing. This was the reason that France set up concrete bunkers, called the Maginot line, on their border with Germany with heavy guns pointed at their enemy because they never wanted to forget what happened. They thought by doing this, it would ensure peace but it didn't last and Maginot line couldn't stop Germany. They either went around it or parachuted over it attacking them from the rear where they were vulnerable. Man's peace doesn't last because we don't truly forgive. However through God's peace we are forgiven. We are not only forgiven, we are invited in to God's house, and not only invited in, but we are also adopted into God's family and become his sons and daughters. God's peace goes so much deeper; it's a complete restoration of a broken relationship where we go from enemies to heirs. We just don't see that kind of peace with man-made treaties.

Another thing that happens when we have peace with God, we also have peace with others. There was a Samaritan woman who made many enemies in her community because of her lifestyle. She might have spent her time hating them and being hated by them. But one day she met Jesus by the well of Jacob. Jesus gave her living water that welled up to eternal life in her soul. As a result, her soul was satisfied and she found peace with God. When she found peace, she became a peace maker and went back to her community and testified about the love of Jesus to everyone. She became a source of reconciliation with God for her whole community.

True peace comes from Jesus "through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." (v2) Before this, we never had access to God's grace because our sin separated us from him. But we gained access because of what Jesus did. When Jesus was crucified, the temple curtain that separated the most holy place from the rest of the temple was torn in half, showing us that the way for us to come to God was now opened. Our sins separated us from our heavenly father, but Jesus ushered us into the presence of God. With the presidential election around the corner, people are willing to pay \$45K per plate just to have dinner with the president or his running mate. But we have free access to Almighty God because of what Jesus did for us.

A fruit of this grace is joy. Some people think that when we become a Christian we will never get to experience any fun. But that is not true. Christian life is full of joy. In these 11 verses rejoice is mentioned 3 times. First, verse 2 says that we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Here, "the hope of the glory of God" refers to the restoration of God's kingdom. That's why we rejoice because we look forward to the day when our Lord

returns and his glory is revealed to everyone. In the past, to be a Christian in America wasn't a big deal, for America was a Christian nation. But these days to say that you believe in the Bible and in Jesus, you are ridiculed and considered foolish. When this happens we could become sad and discouraged feeling sorry for ourselves, but instead of feeling down cast, we must put our hope in God and long for the day that Jesus returns.

Second, we can rejoice in all circumstances even in suffering. This seems like a strange thing to say. How can anyone rejoice in suffering? Our culture here in America is built on the idea of avoiding suffering as much as possible, but one who is at peace with God learns to rejoice in suffering. Why is this? It's because God uses sufferings to train us to grow in faith. When we trust God and know that he loves us, we can have a positive attitude toward suffering. Then, when we suffer, we can learn perseverance; perseverance produces character. Many people don't seem to know the meaning of perseverance. When things become a little difficult, they just quit or walk away. This can open a door for bitterness and complaining to come in if we don't understand the meaning. If one learns overcoming faith, then he grows in the character and mind of Jesus. He can have real hope--hope that does not disappoint because it is hope in God's promises, not hope in the world. As we grow in the character of Jesus, God pours his love in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. When God's love fills us, we stop becoming seekers of love, and start to become givers of love. That's when our lives really start to become joyful. If we're not consumed with our self all the time, then we can be joyful.

But our greatest joy is in God himself. Verse 11 says, "not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ...." God promised Abraham, "I am your shield and your very great reward." (Gen 15:1) The Levites were not given any land in the Promised Land, instead they were promised that God himself would be their inheritance. The Catechism says that man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. When this joy in God is in our hearts, then suffering draws us closer to God and the closer we come to God, the greater our joy. People who spend their lives seeking pleasure in the world find that all the things they thought would bring them pleasure only bring them heavy burdens and meaninglessness. Worldly pleasure turns to dust and the imagined joys of a worldly life turn to hell. But joy in Jesus is real, and it is forever. The things men seek to quell and sooth their restlessness to give them peace in the end become trouble and distress; but the peace that Jesus gives is real; it is in the heart and soul and it lasts forever.

We've seen how Jesus gives us peace and how Jesus gives us joy, now let's see how Jesus gives us hope. Take a look at verses 6-8. "You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly." ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die." God didn't wait for us to come to him, he acted first because we couldn't or wouldn't. Christ arrives right on time to make this happen. He didn't wait for us to get ready. He presented himself for this sacrificial death when we were far too weak and rebellious to do anything

to get ourselves ready. And even if we hadn't been so weak, we wouldn't have known what to do anyway. We can understand someone dying for a person worth dying for, and we can understand how someone good and noble could inspire us to selfless sacrifice. But God demonstrated how much he loves us by offering his Son in sacrificial death while we were of no use to him. When we see how much God loves us, it gives us hope. When we see how faithful God is in keeping his promises it gives us hope. Our hope is not just optimism – but more like blessed assurance of our future destiny based upon God's love for us and all the promises that he's given to us. Verse 9-10 show us the assurance we have of salvation, “Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him. For if when we were God's enemies we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!” Just imagine, if God went through all this while you and I were his enemy, imagine how much more he will go through and give us now that we have been made right with him and have become his precious children. Our salvation does not rest on our changeable feelings, but on God's strong and sure grace and love. We cannot depend on our own faithfulness, for how unfaithful are we? But God, who promised, is faithful. And because of this, we can have assurance of our salvation, knowing that no one can snatch us out of our heavenly Father's hand. This is the reason we praise and worship him.

The next time you find yourself struggling with doubt, fear, or discouragement, remember how much God loves you. If he sent his son to die for you, while you were his enemy, just imagine how much more will he bless you since you have accepted Jesus as your Savior. Then you can joy in the midst of suffering as you put your hope, not in this world, but in the fact that Jesus will come again one day and bring us all back home to be with our heaven father forever where his glory will be revealed for all to see. Let's rejoice in the hope of God's glory.