

Series: Romans
Title: Hope, Patience and Prayer
Text: Romans 12: 12
Date: October 27, 2019
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Romans 12: 1: I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service.* 2: And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. [One of the ways we do this in]...12: Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

These are three states of those chosen, redeemed and regenerated by God: rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer. These three are so interconnected. In tribulation we are supported on two sides: hope on the one side and prayer on the other—and in all we are looking to Christ so that we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

REJOICING IN HOPE

Hope is an earnest desire for an expected end. As it is used in the Bible, “hope” is the expectation of faith, based upon the oath, promises, grace, and goodness of God in Christ.

We use the word “hope” in everyday language as a wish, which has no foundation, no reason for expectation. When I was in school, I might say, “I hope I make an “A” on this test.” That usually was a wish without a good foundation. But the believer’s hope is not a wish. We have an earnest expectation of something to come. The apostle Paul called it “my earnest expectation and my hope” (Php 1:20).

What is our hope? It is salvation by Christ Jesus our Lord. The Psalmist said, “Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation” (Ps 119:116). Every child of God has the earnest hope that one day we shall see our Savior and be perfectly conformed to him.

1 John 3:2: Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3: And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure

Galatians 5:5: For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

Our foundation for this hope is solid. One, it is the very word of God who cannot lie. God says to his people in his word, “I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” (Jer 29:11) We have the “hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began” (Ti 1:2). Three times the Psalmist declared that his hope was in the word of God, “Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope...My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but I hope in thy word...Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word” (Ps 119:49, 81, 114).

Do you see why the devil’s very first deception was to get our mother Eve to disbelieve the word of God? The first problem sinners have is not believing this book is the very word of God. How can a sinner believe God and have a good hope if he will not even believe this is the word of God?

But to you, believer, who God has made to know that this is God’s own word, at all times—before, during and after trouble—bury yourself in this word, “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Rom 15:4).

Two, our hope is a confident expectation because it is given to us by the grace of God. If hope was of our will, of our works, then our hope would be nothing more than wishful thinking. But hope is God’s gift to us by grace. Paul wrote, “Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace...” (2 Thess 2:16).

Hope is a gift through grace. Like everything else we have, it is the gift of God. Faith and repentance and every fruit of the Spirit is a gift of God’s grace. Righteousness and Holiness and Redemption in Christ is the free gift of God’s grace. What do you have that you did not receive?

Nothing in salvation is by our works. Everything is the gift of God’s grace. We were born again—“not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God”(Jn 1:13). We did not first choose God, God first chose us, “For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth” (Rom 9:11). Nothing heavenly, nothing godly is of our will—“So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy” (Rom 9:16). Our justification from all our sins is not of our works—“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom 3:24). Likewise, our hope is the gift of God by grace—“our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace.” Why is that good news? Because what God gives, God sustains by his power—“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost” (Rom 15:13).

Three, true hope is a confident expectation because true hope is in Christ Jesus alone. Christ himself is our Hope. I am a sinner who can have no hope of entering heaven with holy God unless I am made the righteousness of God—you too. Christ alone is the righteousness of every true believer. What does that mean? It means my righteousness is by Christ's obedience, not my own! It means my righteousness is God's gift freely given by grace. That is the only way dead sinners are made the righteousness of God.

Romans 5: 17: For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)...

I have been corresponding with a man in another country. He wrote that Christ's work made it possible for us to be redeemed. Adam's disobedience did not make it possible for his people to be made sin if we would just do something. No, he made all his people sinners. Likewise, Christ's obedience did not make righteousness possible if the sinner will just make it effectual by his will. No, by Christ's obedience he made his people the righteousness of God in him.

Romans 5: 19: By one man's disobedience many, were made sinners. So by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

And Christ is not only my only righteousness—it is by Christ that I believe and hope in him.

1 Peter 1: 18: Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; 19: But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, 21: Who BY HIM do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and HOPE might be in God. (1Pe 1:18-21)

True hope is a confident expectation because true hope is in Christ Jesus alone—Christ is our Hope—that is one of his name's, "*the Hope of Israel*". So whatever our condition, every believer rejoices in hope.

Hope is our helmet—hope comes into our mind reminded us that our Savior is the Sovereign Savior who never loses one of his sheep (1 Thess 5:8) Hope is the anchor of our soul—hope comes into our hearts reminding us of God's immutable promise, leading us into the veil where Christ our Hope is seated in heaven:

Hebrews 6: 17: Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath: 18: That by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: 19: Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, *even* Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

PATIENT IN TRIBULATION

We are not patient and stedfast in trouble by nature or by our own power, only by the grace and love of God. There is a bird that flies into my screened in porch. At first, it flaps around, flopping into the screen, never able to find the door. But after a while he settles down. Then out through the door he flies. That is us at the first sign of trouble. But after a while, God settles us and shows us Christ the Door and we enter in. By the grace of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, he makes us patient—stedfast—in trouble. So that our hope and patience/stedfastness in trouble are vitally connected.

Romans 5: 1: Therefore being justified, by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and [*by whom also we*] rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3: And not only *so*, but [*by whom*] we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4: And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

God sends the tribulation to work patience/stedfastness in his child. By the trial, God shows us his unchangeable love for us by sustaining us through the trial. So by the trial God grows us in maturity and hope. Our patience/stedfastness in today's trial is because we experienced and were matured by God bringing us through the last trial. In the last trial, our hope was that God would sustain us and he did. So in this trial we are a little more stedfast, having the experience of the last trial, with a good hope that God will bring us through this trial. And God never makes us ashamed for hoping in his sustaining grace "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Paul said, "Our hope of you is stedfast, knowing that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation" (2 Cor 1:7).

Consider Jeremiah. He was greatly troubled. His body was in pain. His name was slandered by the very people who ought to have cherished him. His life was in imminent danger. The Church of God was in bondage in a heathen land. His family had been enslaved to an idolatrous people. Yet, Jeremiah understood clearly that all was of his heavenly Father's loving hand, administered by wisdom on purpose. So in the midst of his soul's trouble, while he was sinking inside, he looked away from himself to his Savior and his soul was refreshed with hope—with confident expectation—so that he was patient/stedfast in the trouble waiting on God to save him.

Lamentations 3:21: This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. 22: *It is of* the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. 23: *They are* new every morning: great *is* thy faithfulness. 24:

The LORD *is* my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. 25: The LORD *is* good unto them that wait for him, to the soul *that* seeketh him. [he had experienced, been matured to know that to them that patiently, steadfastly endure trouble waiting on God to save, the LORD is good. 26: *It is* good that *a man* should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.”

No one likes trouble. Affliction hurts. But our steadfastness, our patience is illustrated by what Brother Bob Coffee wrote to me this week concerning his recent stroke, “*This is hard on you. But you know it is His will.*” By God’s grace, in the midst of trial, we rejoice in hope and steadfastly endure the trouble because we know it is our heavenly Father’s will to teach us he alone is our hope and our strength.

Joel 3:16 The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

CONTINUING INSTANT IN PRAYER

Our hope, along with the trials we endure, cause us to live in a continual spirit of dependence upon God. This word means more than that we are continually on our knees praying to God. It means to adhere to one, to be constant to one, to wait on God constantly. Believers live continually depending upon God. God sends the trial to keep us continuing instant in prayer: to keep us looking out of ourselves and adhering to God alone, to keep us waiting on God’s saving hand constantly rather than our own.

When my children were younger—and it is still the case—when things were pleasant they had their attention focused on their toys. But as soon as trouble came, they cried out for dad and mom. That is why God sends the trial, to keep us continuing instant in prayer.

Someone wrote, “Affliction is the godly man’s shining moment...They serve to convince us more deeply of our own weakness and insufficiency, and to endear the person, the grace, the promises, and the salvation of our Redeemer, more and more to our hearts.”

Trouble and afflictions are not to punish but to purify the believing soul. They are not in wrath but in mercy. They keep us constantly looking up to our heavenly Father with utter dependence on our Redeemer!

Remember our Lord Jesus said, “I waited patiently for the LORD” (Ps 40: 1). He willingly came into the trial of the cross as the servant of God representing his people. As he bore separation from God for his people he “*patiently waited*”—steadfastly enduring—in the sure hope and firm expectation of his Father’s help and assistance once he had fully honored the law and justice was fully satisfied toward his people. He continued instant in prayer depending upon God. He is the perfect obedient servant in whom we are perfectly obedient.

Hebrews 10: 10: By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Brethren let us ask God for more grace that he might be our hope, that we might patiently endure trouble and that we might live constantly in dependence upon him—*our times are in his hand.*

Amen!