

Morning Sermon November 8, 2015

“Our Hope” Romans 8:23-25

I. The Amazing Way Paul and the Romans saw themselves, and truly were –

²³ Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves (Romans 8:23 NKJ)

1. Those who HAVE the firstfruits of the Spirit –

A. Meaning those who possess the fruit of the Spirit, the BEST

FRUITS, the best things, highly privileged people, *Extremely*

BLESSED people ...

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23 NKJ)

B. Even now, in this wicked world; Christians / believers, have the happiest life –

“There is more joy in the square inch of being ‘in Christ’ than the square mile of the outside world of rebellion.” E. Stanley Jones

I had forgotten that it was E. Stanley Jones that said the above quote, I had remembered the quote, but couldn’t remember who said it ... so I decided to look it up online ... I remembered it before I found it online, but in my search I found another quote, the MOTTO of Christians in Syria, where some people think ISIS reigns –

“The church is growing, and the graveyards are empty!”

This is the message that Christians (persecuted Christians) in Syria want to get out to us who are not persecuted. It is not a cry; it is not ‘please come help us’ rather it is please know, WE ARE WINNING! Please know, “we are happy people” We are people who have the firstfruits of God’s Spirit!

Who is happier, the persecuted Christian or the ISIS persecutor? It is NOT the persecutor! **Psalm 1 Blessed is the man ...**

2. Paul and his Roman friends were in this sense opposite of the stiffneck grumblers who complained against God in the Old Testament wilderness –

A. They were privileged too –

^{NKJ} 1 Corinthians 10:1 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, ² all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³ all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

B. Yet, they were NOT SEEING their privilege -

⁵ But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. ⁶ Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. ⁷ And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.” ⁸ Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; ⁹ nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; ¹⁰ nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. ¹¹ Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (1Corinthians 10:1-11 NKJ)

3. Application –

We have good examples: Paul & the Roman Christians, people who endured hardship and persecution because they were rejoicing in God’s grace!

Bad examples: Most of the Hebrews who died in the wilderness, they also had great privileges, but because of hardship they complained against God!

II. The meaning of their inward groaning -

²³ Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. (Romans 8:23 NKJ)

1. Even we (us extremely HAPPY PEOPLE)

2. We groan within ourselves –

“Groan within ourselves” must refer to the inward groaning in the hearts of believers, not to groaning among believers as if they groaned to one another and joined together in a “symphony of sighs”.

John Murray

3. *We groan, yearn for, eagerly await, something even better, SOMETHING MORE -*

²³ **Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.** (Romans 8:23 NKJ)

A. *You could ask, are not we already adopted?*

¹⁵ **For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."**

¹⁶ **The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,** (Romans 8:15-16 NKJ)

Yes, we clearly are ↑↑↑ the above verses are clear and powerful!

B. *Yet we groan inwardly because we know, the best is yet to come, as Christians we are awaiting for a fuller, clearer closer adoption and redemption of our body (bodies).*

III. *This is OUR HOPE –*

²⁴ **For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?** ²⁵ **But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.** (Romans 8:24-25 NKJ)

1. *We have tasted and we have seen, the goodness of God –*

Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man *who* trusts in Him! (Psalm 34:8 NKJ)

2. *The taste of what we have seen MAKES US KNOW, what we have not seen is even BETTER!*

3. *“Our HOPE” Our Hope in Christ is THE ONLY HOPE –*

¹³ **But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.** (1Thessalonians 4:13 NKJ)

4. *What is the nature of our glorious HOPE?*

A. *It is for things unseen, yet real, things we both wait and strive for –*

²⁵ **But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.**

¹² **Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.** ¹³ **Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.** (Philippians 3:12-14 NKJ)

²³ **Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?" And He said to them, 24 "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.** (Luke 13:23-24 NKJ)

B. *It is a hope that does not disappoint –*

⁵ **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.** (Romans 5:5 NKJ)

¹¹ **You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.** (Psalm 16:11 NKJ)

C. *It is a hope in God's Word –*

In the movie Hook, the dad played by Robin Williams was always saying “My word is my bond” yet he was constantly breaking his promises! Even when we are sincere in our promises, things can happen in life to prevent us from keeping them. Nothing can stop God from keeping His Promises –

⁸¹ **KAPH. My soul faints for Your salvation, But I hope in Your word.** (Psalm 119:81 NKJ)

¹¹⁴ **You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in Your word.** (Psalm 119:114 NKJ)

¹⁴⁷ **I rise before the dawning of the morning, And cry for help; I hope in Your word.** (Psalm 119:147 NKJ)

⁵ **I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, And in His word I do hope.** (Psalm 130:5 NKJ)

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the ONLY WORD of HOPE to a lost world -

³ We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, ⁴ since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; ⁵ because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, (Colossians 1:3-5 NKJ)

D. *It is a hope based on Christ and His righteousness and in nothing in ourselves –*

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

Refrain:

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand.

When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In ev'ry high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the veil.

His oath, His covenant, His blood,
Support me in the 'whelming flood;
When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.

This hymn was written by a man named Edward Mote in 1834. He had just got out of church when he was inspired to jot down a portion, but not this entire hymn. He went (after church) to visit a friend whose wife was dying. While visiting he joined the family in their family worship. When the distressed husband could not find a hymnal, Mr. Mote took out his notes and they sang his partially written hymn. The hymn was such an encouragement to the dying woman that Mr. Mote was inspired to add the last couple verses.

¹⁷ And I will wait on the LORD, Who hides His face from the house of Jacob; and I will hope in Him. (Isaiah 8:17 NKJ)

Christ is our reason for hope in a dark and difficult world –

⁷ "Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD. (Jeremiah 17:7 NKJ)

It was hope in the LORD that was the hope of dear Jeremiah which inspired the words Jeremiah wrote which later became the hymn "Great is Thy Faithfulness" –

²¹ This I recall to my mind, Therefore, I have hope. ²² *Through the LORD'S mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.* ²³ *They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.* ²⁴ "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him!" ²⁵ The LORD *is* good to those who wait for Him, To the soul *who* seeks Him. ²⁶ *It is good that one should hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.* ²⁷ *It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth.* ²⁸ Let him sit alone and keep silent, Because God has laid *it* on him; ²⁹ Let him put his mouth in the dust-- There may yet be hope. (Lamentations 3:21-29 NKJ)

E. It is the hope of the resurrection –

¹¹ Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!' ¹² "Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³ "Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. ¹⁴ "I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken *it* and performed *it*," says the LORD.'" (Ezekiel 37:11-14 NKJ)

¹⁵ "I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of *the* dead, both of *the* just and *the* unjust. (Acts 24:15 NKJ)

This resurrection hope (or something a lot like it) was the hope of Abraham and Sarah when they were childless –

¹⁶ Therefore *it is* of faith that *it might be* according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all ¹⁷ (as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations ") in the presence of Him whom he believed-- God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; 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." (Romans 4:16-18 NKJ)

Paul uses the phrase “contrary to hope” because the faith and hope that Abraham and Sarah at ages 100 & 90 respectfully, was beyond / contrary to ordinary hope, it was resurrection hope, connected to faith which Abraham would again express later when asked to offer up Isaac

—
¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 of whom it was said, “In Isaac your seed shall be called,” ¹⁹ concluding that God was able to raise *him* up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense. (Hebrews 11:17-19 NKJ)

The apostle Peter calls this hope of the resurrection a “living hope” —
³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to **a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1Peter 1:3-5 NKJ)

Note the “living hope” mentioned in 1 Peter 1:3, is the basis for great unstoppable joy referenced in the following verses —
In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, ⁸ whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹ receiving the end of your faith-- the salvation of *your* souls. (1 Peter 1:6-9 NKJ)

F. This hope is the hope of glory —
And rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (Romans 5:2 NKJ)

This is not only “glorifying God” 1 Corinthians 10:31 which hope helps us to do. But also sharing in God’s and Christ’s glory, which in Heaven will —

NKJ ¹ John 3:1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. (1John 3:1-2 NKJ)

This hope is a motive for our sanctification —

³ And everyone who has **this hope in Him** purifies himself, just as He is pure. (1John 3:3 NKJ)

G. This hope is a very real, substantive thing —
¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, (Ephesians 1:18 NKJ)

⁵ because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven (Colossians 1:5 NKJ)

H. This hope is a helmet we wear in our battles with Satan and something we should not let get away from us (or us away from it) —
⁸ But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. (1Thessalonians 5:8 NKJ)

²³ if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister. (Colossians 1:23 NKJ)

I. It is a hope that is a motive for godliness and righteousness —
¹⁷ Do not let your heart envy sinners, But *be zealous* for the fear of the LORD all the day; 18 For surely there is a hereafter, And your hope will not be cut off. (Proverbs 23:17-18 NKJ)

*Hope in immorality is always vain, empty, worthless “crime does not pay” not ultimately -
¹⁰ Do not trust in oppression, Nor vainly hope in robbery; If riches increase, Do not set *your* heart *on them*. (Psalm 62:10 NKJ) See also Proverbs 11:7-8

J. God given hope is something we should pray for MORE and MORE of —
¹³ Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may **abound in hope** by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13 NKJ)

¹¹ For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and **a hope**. (Jeremiah 29:11 NKJ)

K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z In God and His Word we have an alphabet of Hope!

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