

Season of Hope: Unleashing the God of Hope into Daily Living

Romans 15:4,13

Hope is our breath of life.

As humans we can live about 40 days without food;

And about 4 days without water; and about 4 minutes without air.

But as humans we struggle to go on even for a moment without hope.

That is why we so desperately need this Season of Hope,

Because God is the God of Hope.

Our goal these next few weeks is to learn what the Bible says about:

Unleashing the God of Hope into Daily Living

Only God can offer real, enduring, and unshakeable hope.

Open with me to Romans 15.

In this chapter God offers a life overflowing with hope.

Please stand and follow along as we read v. 4-6, 13-14, 33

Romans 15:4-6, 13-14, 33 (NKJV) For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, **that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.**

(Hope is dispensed by the Spirit of God through the Scriptures. Little Scriptures = Little Hope)

⁵ Now may the **God of patience and comfort** grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, ⁶ that you may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(God given, Spirit powered, Scripture fed Hope transforms all of our relationships)

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.**

(God is characterized by hope. The Spirit overflows us with hope, joy, and peace. All we do is surrender, ask, and believe God can do what He promises).

¹⁴ Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that **you also are full of** goodness, **filled with all** knowledge, able also to admonish one another. ³³ Now **the God of peace** be with you all. Amen.

(God's offer is to overflow our lives, fill our hearts, and enable us to have His hope in our everyday lives.)

Pray

The Beginning of Our Hope

The justifying death of Christ opens for us the sanctifying life of Christ.

Part of the new life Christ brings is becoming our hope.

This season of hope is a time to examine the reality that the God who offers hope, is the God who brings hope, and secures hope.

As Paul sat in Corinth the world was in the iron fisted, vice-like grip of Rome.

Paul was writing to a group of believers he wanted to visit in Rome.

But knowing the perilous times they lived in, Paul was moved by the Spirit of God to pen some of the most hope filled words in the Bible.

On what basis does God offer such limitless hope? Turn back with me to Romans 5.

As we open to Romans 5 we see that the justifying death of Christ opens for us a life overflowing with hope.

Here Paul rapidly describes the seven byproducts of justification in v. 1-5.

Paul lists what God does in us when He saves us, and then ends in v. 5 with the way God accomplishes such amazing changes inside of our hearts, minds, and lives. In this tiny section we see that the Spirit of God is the OS we have in Christ.

[Romans 5:1-5 \(NKJV\)](#) Therefore, having been **justified by faith**, we have **peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have **access by faith** into this **grace in which we stand**, and **rejoice in hope** of the glory of God. 3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that **tribulation produces perseverance**; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 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.

The Spirit of God, operating within us, is the source of limitless hope.

Justified by Faith =>(grants us) >

Peace with God => (which opens to us) >

Access by Faith => (for a supply of endless) >

Grace in which we stand => (so we can) >

Rejoice in hope => (so we understand that) =>

Tribulation produces perseverance => (because God has given us His) =>

Hope that does not disappoint => (because the) =>

Love of God has been poured out in our hearts.

God through His Spirit gives peace in v. 1; access, grace and rejoicing hope v. 2; and inexhaustible hope mixed with a river of love in v. 5.

So that is what God has done for us. Starting at the instant of our salvation Romans 5 tells us that we have all these precious, unlimited resources.

Learning to Live Securely in Hope

The safest spot on earth is just over 1,000 miles from us this morning in Colorado. It is a super secure military command center called NORAD. There in the Rockies, under Cheyenne Mountain, a mile deep in the granite corridors, is the heart of America's missile defense center.

The main entrance to the complex is approximately one-third of a mile from the North Portal via a tunnel which leads to a pair of steel Blast Doors each weighing 25 tons. Behind the

25-ton blast doors is a steel building complex built within a 4.5-acre grid of excavated chambers and tunnels and surrounded by 2,000 feet of granite. Excavation began for the new NORAD Combat Operations Center in Cheyenne Mountain in May 1961. The excavation was nearly complete one year later.

Built at the height of the Cold War and able to withstand any bomb blast, chemical or biological weapon--it is self-sustaining for those inside for two years. But only if you are able to get there in time to avoid the attack.

The Safest Spot of All

The safest spot in the Universe, that is even safer than Cheyenne Mountain, is also the closest spot. Closer than that military center 1,000 miles from here, closer than your safe room, closer than a shelter, closer than anything else--is the refuge God has designed.

Jesus Christ our hope, our refuge, and our salvation--is one thought away, one prayer away. He is as close as a cry, as close as an out stretched hand, or an upturned heart. Anyone, anywhere can instantly arrive in that safest of all places--from any location.

We have already seen Christ our forerunner who has forever anchored our souls safely in heaven. If that were all there was for us in Hebrews 6—that would be enough for a lifetime of hope. But there is more.

Turn with me again to Hebrews 6 as we look again at these precious words of security, comfort and hope—because there is so much MORE from God's Word for us!

Hebrews 6:17-20 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled **for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.** 19 **This hope we have as an anchor of the soul**, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, 20 where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

This refuge is the safest spot in the universe.

But how do we get there?

God's Word says we come by “laying hold of the hope set before us” (v. 18).

What is that hope?

It is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Jesus Christ our Hope

Now turn with me back a few pages to 1 Timothy 1:1. As we stand to listen to Paul, we will find the answer.

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord **Jesus Christ, our hope.**”

The safest spot in the universe is in the embrace of Jesus.

The only way to have assurance of salvation, a strong confidence, and a steadfast hope, is to seek refuge in God by embracing Jesus Christ, who is our only hope of salvation¹.

¹ John MacArthur, *Saved Without A Doubt*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books) 1992.

Remember that the Greek word in Hebrews that is translated “refuge” (in KJV, NKJV, and NASB) is the same one used in the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Old Testament) in the passages describing the cities of refuge? We saw that last week.

The writer of Hebrews is telling us that the only way to experience the power of God that saves us is when we run to Christ in desperation--for refuge to that safest place.

And to understand one of the clearest explanations of entering into the refuge of Christ, turn with me to Joshua 20.

The Old Testament Pictures of Hope

When Israel entered the Promised Land, God gave them a constant reminder of His salvation by assigning a group of refuge cities. This reminder was ordered by God to be set up in the Land as a visible symbol of Him as God their Savior 24/7/365 across the entire land.

What was that reminder? A strategically placed group of six cities called the Cities of Refuge. There is actually a whole chapter of the Bible (Joshua 20) devoted to these cities.

The most beautiful, the most powerful, the most amazing picture of Jesus Christ is tucked away in one of those back corners of the Scriptures.

That picture is one that shows Jesus is always waiting, His arms are always open, the door is never locked—the clearest picture of Christ's as Savior is seen in the cities of refuge.

"And they [assigned] Kedesh in Galilee in Mount Naphtali, and Shechem in Mount Ephraim, and Kirjath-arba, which is Hebron, in the mountain of Judah. And on the other side [of the] Jordan by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh. These were the cities assigned for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger who sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth any person without intent might flee the avenger of blood, until he stood before the congregation." (Joshua 20:7-9)

Those Cities of Refuge were wonderful Beacons of Hope

Anyone could access these cities of refuge because they *were easy to reach* from any place in the country.

God expressly commanded that roads were to be made to these cities (Deut. 19:3). These cities were accessible. Some of them were located on mounts so as to be even more prominent.

Anyone could access these cities of refuge because they were *open to all*—to the Israelite, the stranger, and sojourner. (Numbers 35:15).

Joshua 20:9 says, “that whosoever killed a person ...” (KJV).

What verse sounds like this—that whosoever...” Right!

John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Anyone could access these cities of refuge because the great doors of these cities were **always left open** and *never locked*.

We can see why. Otherwise a man might die while beating on the door.

Anyone could access these cities of refuge because they were *a completely sufficient refuge*.

They not only providing legal protection, but also meeting a man's needs once he was inside. The cities of refuge were completely adequate for the needs of the endangered ones. So long as the slayer remained in the city, he was safe, and he would be freed when the high priest died.

Anyone could access these cities of refuge because there was *no other hope*.

Note that the slayer is told to flee to the city.

Such a person could not afford to delay!

Christ our Hope was portrayed by the Cities of Refuge

The similarities between the cities of refuge and Christ, our refuge, are striking. We can compare them point for point.

Anyone can come to Him for *Christ is easy to reach*.

Hope because: Christ is easy to reach

We may cast ourselves upon Christ at any time, in any place. The Church is to be the teller of this good news. The Church is to cry, "Refuge! Refuge!" to the lost world. This emphasis is made at the very end of the Bible in the book of Revelation:

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).

So has the Savior placed Himself within the reach of all.

He offers hope even to those in the utmost peril of His wrath.

Jewish tradition declares that there were posts at the cross roads with "Refuge! Refuge!" upon them, pointing out the way.

Hope because: Christ is open to all

Anyone can come to Him for *Christ is open to all* — the Jew and the Gentile, the Greek and the barbarian, to all people.

Listen to the echoes of Christ's open arms throughout the Scriptures: Genesis 3:9 Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?"; Isaiah 45:22 "Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other; Matthew 11:28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; Revelation 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

Hope because: Christ is completely sufficient

Anyone can come to Him for *Christ is a completely sufficient refuge*.

Christ's death in space-time history is completely adequate to meet our need for refuge

from the true moral guilt which we have. It is final because of who He is. He is the infinite second person of the Trinity; therefore, His death has infinite value. And just as even the suburbs or borders of the city were a sufficient security to the offender.

Numbers 35:26-27 “But if the manslayer at any time goes outside the limits of the city of refuge where he fled, 27 and the avenger of blood finds him outside the limits of his city of refuge, and the avenger of blood kills the manslayer, he shall not be guilty of blood.”

So there is virtue even in the hem of Christ’s garment for the healing and saving of poor sinners. If we cannot reach to a full assurance, we may comfort ourselves in a good hope through grace².

Anyone can come to Him for ***if we do not flee to the refuge*** which God has given to us at such a great price, ***there is no help for us***.

Hebrews relates this negative emphasis to the Old Testament:

“He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, with which he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” (Heb. 10:28, 29).

There isn’t one of us who does not stand in that situation. We have heard the gospel, and if in the Old Testament ignoring God’s law brought death, what about us if we despise the work of Christ and the grace which He showers upon us? Nor can lost sinners today afford to delay in fleeing to the only refuge, Jesus Christ.³

Hope because: Christ never locks His gates

Anyone can come to Him for ***Christ never locks His gates***.

Jesus told us that He is the Door—and we know that He is the Door that is never shut, never locked, never barred. To the very last words of the Bible is Revelation 22 He is still saying, “Come.” There is no need to wake Him. He is infinite; He is God; He is never asleep. We do not have to beat upon the door and die because He does not open it. Many have stood by a deathbed and seen sinners believe in the last moments of life. It is good that there is no gate to unlock and that men can enter quickly. What a picture of Christ! Certainly the “way to the city” is clear! No one need ever wonder how to come to Him, for we come to Him by faith. He will never turn any sinner away (John 6:37). High roads led to each city, and their gates were always open.

Jesus is Our Hope

So Christ is easy to reach;
His arms are open to all;
His entrance is never locked;
He is a completely sufficient refuge, and
He is the only hope.

² Henry, Matthew, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Bible*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers) 1997.

³ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the Old Testament*, (InterVarsity Press: IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament) Downer’s Grove, IL.

How wonderful. But there is so much more as we examine the differences between the cities of refuge and Christ our refuge. Christ is portrayed by the cities of refuge but He is so much better!

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(God is characterized by hope. The Spirit overflows us with hope, joy, and peace. All we do is surrender, ask, and believe God can do what He promises).

Turn your eyes upon Jesus