

THROUGH THE POWER OF THE HOLY GHOST

TEXT: ROMANS 15:13--19

INTRODUCTION:

1. In Romans 15:13, the apostle Paul says, "that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (cf. 15:19).
2. There are many references in Scripture to the power of the Holy Ghost (Romans 15:13, 19). And there are several references to the ministry of the Holy Spirit here in this chapter (15:13, 16, 19, 30).
3. William Newell, in his great commentary on the book of Romans, refers to several stages of growth in the Christian life.
4. First, there is salvation through faith in the blood of Christ. The epistle to the Romans emphasizes that we are saved by God's grace through faith in Christ. Romans 10:13 says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."
5. Furthermore, the book of Romans has much to say about holy living and victory over sin. We are taught the wondrous fact that we died with Christ, and are now on resurrection ground, free from the penalty of sin, and the power of sin (Romans 6--8).
6. Going further still, we see in Romans chapter 12, the importance of Christian service. We are to present our bodies a living sacrifice to God; thereby proving what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.
7. Regarding Romans 15:13, William Newell says, "But here, in this great fountain of water in Chapter 15:13, we find that a daily, hourly life 'filled with all joy and peace in believing, abounding in hope,' is the normal state for every one who is in Christ!" (*Romans*).

I. WE HAVE POWER TO LIVE FOR GOD BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. Romans 15:13 is a prayer.
2. It is only by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit that we can live for God. And it is by His power alone that Christian may "abound in hope," that is, the hope of eternal life (Romans 15:13).
3. God the Father gives hope — He is "the God of hope" (15:13), and He gives this hope through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.
4. Ephesians 2:12 refers to sinners "having no hope, and without God in the world." This wicked, sin-loving world is rather hopeless!
5. But the Christian has hope! And if we desire to "abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost," we must be careful not to

- grieve the Holy Spirit by sinful words, thoughts or actions (cf. Ephesians 4:25-32).
6. Spurgeon said, "There is something very touching in this admonition, 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.' It does not say, 'Do not make him angry.' A more delicate and tender term is used — 'Grieve him not.'"
 7. If I read in the newspaper that some person I do not know committed some cruel and violent crime, I may get angry.
 8. But if I hear that a close friend or relative committed this terrible crime, I would be grieved.
 9. The great evangelist R.A. Torrey wrote: "There is perhaps no passage in the entire Bible in which the personality of the Holy Spirit comes out more tenderly and touchingly than in Ephesians 4:30, 'And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' Here grief is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not a blind, impersonal influence or power that comes into our lives to illuminate, sanctify, and empower them. No, He is immeasurably more than that, He is a holy Person, who comes to dwell in our hearts, One who sees clearly every act we perform? every word we speak, every thought we entertain, even the most fleeting fancy that is allowed to pass through our minds; and if there is anything in act, or word or deed that is impure, unholy, unkind, selfish, mean, petty or untrue, this infinitely holy One is deeply grieved by it. I know of no thought that will help one more than this to lead a holy life and to walk softly in the presence of the holy One.

"How often a young man is kept back from yielding to the temptations that surround young manhood by the thought that if he should yield to the temptation that now assails him, his holy mother might hear of it and would be grieved by it beyond expression. How often some young man has had his hand on the door of some place of sin that he is about to enter and the thought has come to him, 'If I should enter there, my mother might hear of it and it would nearly kill her,' and he has turned his back on that door and gone away to lead a pure life, that he might not grieve his mother. But there is One who is holier than any mother, One who is more sensitive against sin than the purest woman who ever walked this earth, and who loves us as even no mother ever loved. This One dwells in our hearts, if we are really Christians, and He sees every act we do by day or under cover of the night; He hears every word we utter in public or in private; He sees every thought we entertain, He beholds every fancy and imagination that is permitted

even a momentary thoughts in our mind, and if there is anything unholy, impure, selfish, mean, petty, unkind, harsh, unjust, or any evil act or word or thought or fancy, He is grieved by it.

"If we will allow those words, 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God,' to sink into our hearts and become the motto of our lives they will keep us from many a sin. How often some thought or fancy has knocked for an entrance into my own mind and was about to find entertainment when the thought has come, 'The Holy Spirit sees that thought and will be grieved by it,' and that thought has gone."

10. Ephesians 1:13 and 14 says when we believed, we "were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance."
11. We see a similar thought in II Corinthians 1:22 and 5:5, where Paul says God "hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."
12. "Earnest" is literally a "down payment." It refers to money which is given as a pledge or down payment for a purchase, with the promise that the full amount will subsequently be paid.
13. Some Bible versions interpret the word "guarantee." It is the power of the Holy Spirit that guarantees the Christian power over sin. How tragic that many Christians do not recognize this!
14. Two Texans were traveling together upstate New York, and they decided to stop off at Niagara Falls. They were filled with admiration and awe at the size and power of the Niagara River, and they were particularly impressed with the rapids just above the falls.
15. They stopped there for a while to take it all in. From where they stood they could see the massive mist cloud that always hangs over the precipice.
16. One of the men, having already been there, said, "Come and I'll show you the greatest unused power in the world." Taking him to the foot of Niagara Falls, he said, "There is the greatest unused power in the world."
17. But his friend disagreed. He said, "No my friend, not so! The greatest unused power in the world is power of the indwelling Holy Spirit!"

II. WE ARE SANCTIFIED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT (15:16)

1. A preacher said, "There are some who preach a salvation from sin's consequences; but you and I want to be delivered from sin's tyranny... The salvation which God offers you and me is not only to free us from

- the penalty of sin—the consequences of sin—but also from the power of sin. " (T. J. Madden).
2. When a man receives the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour, he is regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Our Lord told Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:6-8).
 3. Then after regenerating us, and sealing us, the Holy Spirit cleanses us. It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to purify the heart of the believer, so that out of us shall flow pure and life-giving streams, and we shall be a blessing to others because of the outflow of the Holy Spirit that dwelleth within us (cf. John 7:37-39).
 4. And the Holy Spirit is not only are Purifier and Cleanser, He is also our "Comforter" (cf. John 14:16, 17).

III. WE HAVE POWER TO WIN SOULS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. The Holy Ghost gives us power and boldness to witness for God (cf. Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8).
2. Think of what happened on the Day of Pentecost. Think of how Peter, who had denied Christ three times, boldly preached the Gospel.
3. In Acts 4:29 we see the disciples praying and asking God for boldness so that they could declare the Word of God. The Lord immediately answered that prayer, and we read in Acts 4:31, "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."
4. After the disciples were baptized by the Holy Spirit, after the cleansing fire of the Holy Spirit had gone through their hearts and souls, they went out and preached the Word of God with holy boldness.
5. Acts 17:16 says they "turned the world upside down."

CONCLUSION: summary of Paul's prayer in Rom. 15:13

- * **The source of blessing** -- "The God of hope"
- * **The measure of blessing** -- "fill you" (the fullness of the Holy Spirit)
- * **The character of blessing** -- "with all joy and peace" (the joy of the Lord)
- * **The channel of blessing** -- "in believing" -- we walk by faith, not by sight.

* **The purpose of blessing** -- "that ye may abound in hope" (Christian optimism -- the Lord is coming back!) Cf. Titus 2:13, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

* **The sphere of blessing** -- "through the power of the Holy Ghost" -- not in our own strength! (W.H. Griffith Thomas)