

## Today's Sermon

# The God of Hope

## Romans 15

Pastor Phil Layton, GCBC, June 19, 2022

Please turn in God's Word to Rom 15 and I'm eager to bring to you words of hope and help from this chapter. This is a passage for the discouraged in need of encouragement, or the weary worn out soul in need of endurance, or those who feel like a situation is hopeless. If you lack peace or joy, our God inspired this passage and particular truths in it to fill you with peace and joy and to help you be able to counsel or comfort others. If it's well with your soul today, praise God, this will help you in soul care for others around you.

Look at Rom 15:4: *For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through **endurance** and through the **encouragement** of the Scriptures we might have **hope** ... <sup>12</sup> And again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him [Jesus] will the Gentiles **hope**." <sup>13</sup> May **the God of hope** fill you with all **joy and peace** in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may **abound in hope**.*

Notice v. 4 ends with the encouragement of the scriptures that give us hope. v. 12 ends with nations putting their hope in Jesus. v. 13 starts with '**the God of hope**' and ends with how to '**abound in hope**' by the Spirit (Trinity). The key word in this section is hope, and this is **key in every season of life**.

In other sections of Romans we've seen the God of judgment, God of peace and grace and wrath and righteousness, love, etc. Today the God of hope. Hope isn't an attribute of God that He DOES, it's a truth of God that He IS. All things are from Him, through Him, to Him, and all true hope is in Him.

You won't find a chapter on hope in theological works on God, but Paul's theological master work of Romans focuses chapter 15 on the God of hope. Not as a technical attribute of God; as our practical attitude of hope in God. God doesn't need to hope the way we use the word, we need hope in God.

A PHYSICIAN DIAGNOSIS, FRIEND/FAMILY, FUTURE, FINANCES.

HOPE NOT IN POLITICS, PLACEBOS – power of hope in God's reality.

Ps 62: '*set no vain hopes...my hope is from [God]...I shall not be shaken...*'

Hope doesn't depend on a person or situation changing, it's a change in you

Outline:      **1. Hope in God through His Word (15:4, 13)**  
                   **2. Hope in Christ and His Gospel (15:12)**  
                   **3. Hope in the Spirit for Heaven (15:13, 5:1-5, 8:16-26)**

**1<sup>st</sup>, hope in God.** <sup>13</sup>May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing... So this hope involves believing or trusting in the God of hope. Peace is hope resting, joy is hope dancing. 12:12 '*Rejoice in hope...*' 5:1-2 '*we have peace...and we rejoice in hope...*' Hopefulness leads to happiness.

Hope's peace comes as we believe. Hope is expectation based on revelation. Biblical hope is believing in biblical truth God has revealed. Not a worldly hope that's based on your bank account, this hope banks on God's promises

v. 13 hope isn't an unknown or unlikely wish, it's knowing God who can do the unlikely or impossible. Ch 4 talks about Abraham, 100 years old and as good as dead and Sarah barren almost as long, but God promised offspring. *'In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations...fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.'*<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet 3 says Sarah is an example of submissive wives who hope in God and are beautiful and precious in God's sight, you can be her daughters by faith.

Heb. 11:1 *'Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.'* It's not an uncertain wishful thinking, it's being certain of what I'm not yet seeing but keep believing. Heb 6 calls it *'full assurance of hope...hope we have as an anchor of the soul...hope both sure and steadfast ['hope...firm and secure']*.<sup>2</sup> Gal 5:5 *'by faith we eagerly wait for the hope.'* A Bible dictionary says hope is what one 'expects but does not yet possess'<sup>3</sup>

1 Tim says don't *'hope in wealth which is so uncertain...put hope in God... The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her **hope in God** and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help'* (6:17, 5:5 NIV). There are widows and widowers in this room who put hope in God and His certain promises. You don't hope in uncertain promises of wealth or health.

Several in this room live alone but you're not all alone because your hope is in God who is always with you and who you always talk to in prayer. That's a great ministry and model of how not to grieve like the world without hope

But notice also in Rom 15 this 1<sup>st</sup> point: **Hope in God through His Word.**

v. 4 says whatever was written before is for our instruction and endurance so that through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. It makes me think of Lam 3, where **Jeremiah** says *'my soul is bereft of **peace**; I have forgotten what **happiness** is; so I say, "My **endurance** has perished; so has my **hope** from the LORD"... My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me. **But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him"*** (v. 17-24).

Jeremiah wasn't feeling Rom 15:13 initially, the God of hope wasn't filling him with joy and peace. He was thinking his soul had no peace or joy and his endurance and hope was dead. His soul kept remembering or rehearsing past hurts and as he looked inward there was only pain. Looking outward he didn't see reason to hope, but when he looks upward to God, he has hope as he calls to mind what he knows in God's Word about God's steadfast love:

*-Ps 130: hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love... Out of the depths I cry...pleas for mercy...in his word I hope...more than the watchman waits for the morning. Jeremiah hopes in that word*

-33:18 *the eye of the LORD is...on those who **hope in his steadfast love.***

-147:11 *The LORD takes pleasure in...those who **hope in His mercy.***<sup>4</sup>

-Other psalms say His love doesn't cease and His mercy will never end and every morning His faithfulness is declared (77:8, 86:15 92:2, etc.)

-Surely goodness and mercy will follow all His days and every morning

**That gives strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow**

God's Word is what Jeremiah called to mind, therefore he had hope. His life situation and circumstances didn't change, but hope changes him. His soul remembers past hurts and stays bent down, till he remembers the attributes of God and rises up as he looks up. His soul once said I have no peace or hope, but now his soul says God is my portion, therefore I will hope in God. He's quoting or echoing Ps 119: *The LORD is my portion...I rise before the dawning of the morning, And cry for help; I hope in Your word* (v. 57, 147).

**APPLICATION: Hope in God and His Word, every morning it's new, pray.**

Turn to Ps 42. What about when you're down cast, in despair, or depressed?

Some of you have heard **Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones** on ***Spiritual Depression***:

'Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself? Take those thoughts that come to you the moment you wake up in the morning. You have not originated them, but they start talking to you, they bring back the problems of yesterday...Your self is talking to you...you have to address yourself, preach to yourself, question yourself...You must turn on yourself, [don't just listen]...exhort yourself, and say to yourself: 'Hope...in God.'<sup>5</sup>

In Ps 42 the writer feels oppression and depression listening to his feelings. In v. 7 he's in the depth of despair, waves of emotion keep crashing on him. <sup>3</sup> *My tears have been my food day and night* [i.e. emotions consuming him], *while they say to me all the day long, "Where is your God?"* <sup>4</sup> *These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: how I would go with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God with glad shouts and songs* [his soul is saying, those were the good old days, but where's God and hope now?]

v. 5 turns, stops listening to himself and starts telling self to hope in God:

*Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? **Hope in God;** for I shall again praise him, my salvation <sup>6</sup> and my God. My soul is cast down [or in despair] within me; **therefore I remember you** ...*

Like Jeremiah he remembers God and His unceasing steadfast love, v. 8. In v. 11 it happens again, he tells self: *hope in God! I shall again praise him...*

Look at Ps. 43:5, let me read another version: *Why am I so depressed? Why this turmoil within me? Put your hope in God, for I will still praise Him* (HCSB). Others say 'my soul, why are you in despair ... discouraged ... disturbed?'

NAS '*Hope in God...I shall again praise Him for the help of His presence*'

**God's presence helps him turn from listening to his feelings or emotions**

- he questions his soul (*why are you hopeless*)
- he commands his soul (*hope in God*),
- he commits his soul (*I shall praise him*)
- he counsels his soul (*the help of His presence*).

But he has to keep correcting and redirecting his heart. In 42:6 his soul is down again, but he chooses to remember and trust his God. Ps 103: *bless the Lord O my soul, and forget none of his benefits...* APPLY

**Busenitz:**<sup>6</sup> **'many Christians suffer from spiritual near-sightedness...God's Word, however, serves as spiritual spectacles... put on [your] spiritual eye-glasses... Hope takes God at His Word [and] His guarantees... Hope may not change your circumstances, but it will change the way you view them.'**

Hope in God and His Word, that's #1, #2 Hope in Christ and His Gospel

Back to Rom 15 and there's more hope in preaching the gospel to yourself.

Eph 2 Paul says remember you were once without hope and without God, *but God*. Eph 1 says the saved '*hope in Christ*' and '*the gospel*' (v. 12-13).

*My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness ...  
When all around my soul gives way, He then is all my hope and stay*<sup>7</sup>

Rom 15:12: *And again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse [Messiah] will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope."* The gospel of Matthew talks about Jesus calling all who are burdened and heavy laden to take His yoke and hope (Mt.11:28-30). Then it talks about Him healing hopeless people, '*This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "Behold, my servant...a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench [snuff hope]...in his name the Gentiles will hope*'<sup>8</sup>

**Isaiah also said 'the coastlands shall hope for' Messiah (60:9)**

He was the suffering servant, but Isaiah said the Messiah '*will not falter or be discouraged...the islands will put their hope [in Him]*' (Isaiah 42:4 NIV). Jesus didn't falter or fall into discouragement, nor should we if we hope in Him.

How many have heard of a hope chest? **The gospel is a spiritual hope chest:**

- Baby Jesus in the temple** was lifted up as Israel's hope and consolation
- Jesus **gave hope to the hopeless** in His adult ministry (lepers, widows)
- He **showed power to change** (Peter, Mary Magdalene), hope for us!
- He **specialized in the impossible** and proved there's **no hopeless cases**
- Jesus **was tempted in every way as we are**, sympathizes with weakness
- Jesus died, they said on Emmaus road '*we hoped he was the one...*'<sup>9</sup>
- Peter says we have '**a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus...** set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought you...of Jesus'<sup>10</sup>
- Peter preached in Acts 2 '**I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope...**'<sup>11</sup> APPLY
- The risen Lord ascended to heaven but **will return as our blessed hope**<sup>12</sup>

**Can you say 'in Christ alone my hope is found, He is my Lord'?**

If not, turn from your sin and any false hopes, trust Christ dying and rising. No Christ, no hope. But **if you know Christ, you know hope**. One reason we hope in Christ is the middle of 15:12: He rules the Gentiles, the nations. He sovereignly controls all and cares for us. New City Catechism Q #1. 'What is our only hope in life and death? That we are not our own but belong, body and soul, both in life and death, to God and to our Savior Jesus'

**So we sing 'what is our hope in life and death, Christ alone'**

**Heidelberg Catechism #1** adds: ‘He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood and has set me free from all the power of the devil. He also preserves me in such a way that without the will of my Heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head; indeed all things must work together for my salvation. Therefore, by his Holy Spirit he also assures me of eternal life and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live for him.’

**That takes us to our 3<sup>rd</sup> final point: Hope in the Spirit for heaven**

Look at 15:13 again: *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.*

Go back to ch 5 where he first talks about the hope of the Holy Spirit in us.

It talks about suffering produces endurance, character and hope, in v. 3-4.

<sup>5</sup> *and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts **through the Holy Spirit** who has been given to us. What is this hope God’s Spirit brings home? End of v. 2 ‘hope of the glory of God.’*

Turn to ch 8 and remember hope is a future-oriented expecting what we’re not yet possessing. **We won’t be disappointed in the hope of future glory.**

**8:16** *The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup> and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be **glorified with him.** <sup>18</sup> For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with **the glory that is to be revealed to us...** <sup>24</sup> For in this **hope** we were saved. Now **hope that is seen is not hope.** For who hopes for what he sees? <sup>25</sup> But if **we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.** <sup>26</sup> **Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness.** For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us*

...

What a hope we have, even when we don’t have the words! God’s Spirit is our Helper, the other Comforter Jesus promised. He helps our weakness or wordless groanings. The Spirit intercedes, prays for us to help us to endure suffering with a hopeful patience and heavenly perspective. Hope of glory!

*2 Cor 3:12 Since we have such a hope, we are very bold*

The **Puritan John Bunyan** wrote in **Pilgrim’s Progress** how they endured ‘against Doubting Castle, and had slain Giant Despair, they went forward, and went on till they came to the Delectable Mountains, where Christian and Hopeful refreshed themselves with the varieties of the place’ (7<sup>th</sup> stage). There is a **celestial city**, a sweet by and by, a beautiful shore, a paradise, a Father’s house with many mansions, a new world with no sorrow or sin, etc. Eye hasn’t seen nor has ear heard what He prepared

**In Rom 8 the Spirit makes us children and heirs of this inheritance**

In Eph 1 Paul says the Spirit is the guarantee of heaven and ‘*I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know **the hope** to which he has called you, the riches of **his glorious inheritance...***’<sup>13</sup>

In **C.S. Lewis’** book ***The Last Battle***, a character sees heaven and says: ‘I have come home at last! This is my real country! I belong here. This is the land I have been looking for all my life...Come further up, come further in!’

Paul starts Colossians talking about '*the hope laid up for you in heaven*' and ch 3 says '*Seek those things which are above... Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.*' Or '**set your heart on things above...**'<sup>14</sup>

Where is your heart at today? Where's your affections? What do you seek?

Is your treasure in heaven? Jesus said where your treasure is \_\_\_\_\_

A radio preacher announced that he would be speaking the following Sunday on the topic of "Heaven." During that week, he received a letter from an elderly gentleman who was very ill—on his deathbed. The man wrote: "Next Sunday you are to talk about heaven. I'm interested in that land because I've held a clear title for a bit of property there for over 55 years. I did not buy it; it was given to me without money and without price, but the donor purchased it for me at a tremendous sacrifice. I'm not holding it for speculations since the title is not transferable. It's not a vacant lot ... Termites can never undermine its foundation, for it rests upon the Rock of Ages. Fire cannot destroy it, floods cannot wash it away, no locks or bolts will ever be placed upon its doors. No vicious person can ever enter that land where my dwelling stands, now almost completed and almost ready for me to enter in and abide in peace eternally without fear of being ejected. There is a valley of deep shadow between the place where I live in California and that to which I shall journey in a very short time. I cannot reach my home in that city of God without passing through that dark valley of shadows, but I'm not afraid because the best friend that I ever had went through the same valley long, long ago and drove away its gloom. He has stuck by me through thick and thin since we first became acquainted 55 years ago, and I hold His promise in printed form, never to forsake nor to leave me alone. He will be with me as I walk through the valley of the shadows and I shall not lose my way when He is with me. I hope to hear your sermon on heaven next Sunday from my home in California, but I have no assurance that I shall be able to do so. My ticket to heaven has no date marked for the journey, no return coupon, and no permit for baggage. Yes, I'm all ready to go and I may not be here while you are talking next Sunday evening, but I shall meet you there some day."<sup>15</sup>

Jesus said '*The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field*' (Mt 13:44). And He said we're to store up treasure in heaven and seek first His kingdom (Mt 6). In joy we should trade it all for Christ, and treasure Christ. That's what will make heaven so heavenly, we will be with and like Him. 1 Jn 3:2 ...*what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.*<sup>3</sup> *And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself...*

**Hope in Christ and the Blessed Hope of His appearing any moment purifies us.** It not only purifies, **it evangelizes**, like Peter tells us to always be ready to give a reason for the hope within you. If you have hope in this hopeless world, it will stand out and be a platform to give out gospel hope. So let's hope in God through His Word, hope in Christ and His gospel, and hope in the Spirit for heaven. And let's **share the reason for hope in us with others.**

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<sup>1</sup> Romans 4:18, 22.

<sup>2</sup> Hebrews 6:11, 19 NASB, NIV.

<sup>3</sup> Ryken, ed. *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, p. 399.

<sup>4</sup> NKJV.

<sup>5</sup> Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Spiritual Depression*, chapter on Psalm 42.

<sup>6</sup> Nathan Busenitz, *Living a Life of Hope*, 18-19.

<sup>7</sup> Edward Mote, "The Solid Rock."

<sup>8</sup> Matthew 12:17-21.

<sup>9</sup> Luke 24:21.

<sup>10</sup> 1 Peter 1:3, 13.

<sup>11</sup> Acts 2:25-26 NIV.

<sup>12</sup> Titus 2:13.

<sup>13</sup> Ephesians 1:14, 18 NIV.

<sup>14</sup> Colossians 1:5, 3:1-2 KJV, v. 1 NIV.

<sup>15</sup> Busenitz, 14-15, citing letter from Dr. Harry Rimmer to Charles Fuller.