

Hope that is Unswerving, August 7, 2022

Romans 5:1-5

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.

Introduction:

Romans 5:1-4 teaches that God gives people love, peace and ultimately, through trial, hope.

This passage details how all the members of the Trinity contribute to God's gift of peace, love and hope.

The peace we have is God's. (vs. 1)

That peace, along with grace, comes through Jesus Christ. (vs. 2)

And God's love is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. (vs.5)

Theology of Hope:

Christian hope is not wishful thinking. Nor is it a matter of mind over matter when times get tough. Christian hope anticipates, by faith, that a loving God, who has poured out peace into the hearts of the forgiven, will also nurture, especially through suffering, a positive orientation for life.

Psychology Today describes the benefit of hope this way:

Hope structures your life in anticipation of the future and influences how you feel in the present. Similar to optimism, hope creates a positive mood about an expectation, a goal, or a future situation. Such mental time travel influences your state of mind and alters your behavior in the present.

I like this description. But Paul's reasoning and explanation compares and contrasts to the modern secular one. For Paul, the present and future are influenced more by what God has already done in the past, not some cognitive time-traveling. A summary of Romans, chapter 1-4 is helpful: Sin had a devastating impact on all people. All have fallen short of God's glory. The situation was far from hopeful. God responded to this sad state of affairs. Out of love, God gave his righteous Son, Jesus, to all those who believe and confess him as their Lord. They, by God's grace, inherit Christ's holiness and stand justified before God. (Romans 3:21-26). Their adherence to God's rules and regulations (The Law) or the lack thereof are no

longer the grounds for spiritual pride (Romans 3:28). Rather, they live justified, Holy Spirit filled lives even while they navigate hardships of all sorts.

Modern Psychology: The power of hope creates a positive mood in the present based on optimism for the future to the credit of the individual's will. Expectations for a better future helps foster a brighter outlook for today.

Biblical Theology: By faith, the peace of God through the work of the Holy Spirit gives purpose to suffering, which anticipates the formation of hope "in the glory of God". Faith in God and the work of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit produces character, which, in turn produces perseverance and a hope for God's glory to be fully realized in the future. Later, Paul will ask in Romans 8:24: "For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have?"

Application: Practically speaking, the threat to Christian hope is sticking with it through the suffering - perseverance - character- hope process.

Hebrews 10:23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

Communion allows us to re- affirm our confident trust in God's new covenant through Jesus Christ. "Unswerving " means a consistent, steady belief in God the Father, Jesus, God's Son and the Holy Spirit, strengthened through Word.

God is faithful to His promises. This, then, is the ground of our hope and confidence—God is true to His Word. He will never fail to keep His promises.

Confident access to God gives the believer the possibility to hold unswerving **confidence** in God's promises.

This is the **second** challenge to believers considering their privileges established by their Mighty Priest.

23 Let us hold fast [*keep on holding fast*]

Previously we had the words "hold fast" ([He 3:6](#), [14](#); [4:14](#)). The idea is that Christians should have a **steady** disposition about God's promise. The problem with some believers to whom

Hebrews was addressed is that they were about to lose hold of the confident trust in God's promise of the New Covenant.

the confession of *our* hope

The "confession" here is our trust in God's promises, of what God **eternally** affords the believer. The content of our hope is our complete salvation in Christ. We hold this in the face of difficulties, doubts, and discouragements. There is no despair in "hope."

Since believers have a confident hope, they will share with **certainty** the hope they have in Christ. God will use that kind of faith. The "confession" here is to maintain what is true about the finished work of Christ.

**without wavering,
for He [God] who promised *is* faithful.**

PRINCIPLE:

It is important to maintain full confidence in the reliability of God's promise.

APPLICATION:

Christians today live in a culture where values constantly shift. That is why we need to "hold fast" to what is true. Fidelity in the content of God's promises is essential to strong Christian living. There is a danger that a Christian can move into revisionism or a constant loss of trust in God's promises for him or her.

It is important to be resolute in our faith and not bend to accommodating to cultural belief systems. The reason we can be confident is that the One who makes the promise is faithful to what He says. He is faithful and trustworthy. Our hope rests on Him and the promises in the Word. Nothing shakes the confidence of the believer rooted in the Word. The fleeting values of this culture are temporary and are there for only a moment.