

The Root of Jesse

Romans 15:12-13, Isaiah 11:1-3

“. . .There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in Him shall the Gentiles trust. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.”

Life is too short to be shallow. Let's go deep. You and I want to use this short "vapory" existence (that we call "life") to the fullest; life is too short to be shallow. If we desire to patiently run the race that is set before us (Hebrews 12:1-2), then we can read the information signs on the "highway to holiness:" **“. . .let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, ² Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”** We will need the help of the "Author and Finisher" of our faith.

In the message around our Lord's Table last Sunday evening, we explored Hebrews 10:36-39. This remarkable passage describes the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ; that is the faith exercised by Jesus Christ during His earthly life. By faith (in God the Father and the Holy Spirit), Jesus did not "draw back" or "shrink back" from the trials of the Passion Week. By faith, He achieved a perfect record of righteousness during His earthly life. And those who are truly in Christ exercise the faith that He "authored;" they do not shrink back from their arduous trials.

But how do we live by this faith – the faith of Jesus Christ? Romans 15:12-13 gives us a clear understanding of the power behind such faith-filled living with the words, **"through the power of the Holy Spirit."** If life really is too short to be shallow, then we need to understand how to be "filled with all joy and peace," and "abounding in hope" through the power of the Holy Spirit. And as it turns out, this is part of our celebration at Christmas time. Why? We will explore this in more detail in the next message, but for the moment, consider this: Why does Romans 15 refer to Him as **"the Root of Jesse?"** (Why not the "Root of David," or "the Branch of David?") At least part of the answer is that the phrase, "Root of Jesse," is emphasizing the humble roots of the Messiah. Jesse was no royalty, but David was. By using the phrase, "Root of Jesse" (quoting Isaiah 11:10) the emphasis is on the lowliness of our Lord: God's humble Son, the heavenly Lord of all. Here is hope for all humbled and lowly people.

His Person: The Humanity of Jesus Christ

Scripture teaches that Jesus Christ was fully God and fully man. He was not partial god and partial man. At Christmas time, our special focus is on the doctrine of Christ's incarnation – God “made flesh” (John 1:14). But what does that mean?

His Humanity Prophesied: According to Isaiah 7, King Ahaz of Judah was worried. Rezin, the king of Israel and Pekah, the king of Israel, were conspiring to attack him. The Lord sent the prophet Isaiah to Ahaz to assure him of God's promises; he should resist the temptation to form an alliance with Assyria. What was really at stake here? The real question, hovering in the background, was this: *Would God fulfill His promise of the Messiah through the lineage of David?* So God chose to give a sign to King Ahaz, recorded in Isaiah 7:14: **“Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”** This section of Isaiah is often referred to as “The Book of Immanuel” because of this verse. This prophecy of Immanuel was amplified in Isaiah 9:6-7: **“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”** Yes, indeed, the Lord would send His Messiah to rule from the throne of David forever.

His Humanity Described: What was God's answer for the disobedience of mankind? God became a man **“to fulfill all righteousness”** (Matthew 3:15). Was Jesus Christ really a man?

- Luke 2:12, **“And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.”**
- Luke 2:40, **“And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.”**
- Luke 2:52: After Jesus alluded to (God) the Father's business, but continued to submit to Mary and Joseph, the Scripture described Him: **“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”** Jesus, the human being, grew and matured.
- In John 8:40, Jesus called Himself a man. **“But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God . . .”** In Matthew 20:28 He referred to Himself as “the Son of Man.”

- In Acts 2:22, the disciples described Him as a man. **“Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you . . .”**
- In Romans 5:15, the apostle Paul wrote, **“. . . the gift by grace, *which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.*”**
- 1 Corinthians 15:21: **“For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead.”**
- 1 Timothy 2:5, **“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus . . .”**
- Hebrews 2:14-15, **“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; ¹⁵ And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”**

The reason we can be “filled with all joy and peace” this Christmas is because the Son of God (John 3:16) became a man. In so doing, He became

- ❖ God’s humble sign to all mankind – in a manger
- ❖ The pattern for every child to learn how to grow -- by the grace of God
- ❖ The faithful messenger to tell us the truth about ourselves
- ❖ The Gift of God’s grace
- ❖ The Author of our resurrection from the dead
- ❖ The Mediator between God and men
- ❖ The great Champion who destroyed the devil’s work, and our bondage to the fear of death

His Pattern: The Human Who Depended Upon the Spirit of God

Romans 15:12-13 tells us that we can be “filled with all joy and peace in believing, that we may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.” If Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was a human being, how do we see the influence of the Holy Spirit on Him in His earthly life?

His Pattern Prophesied: Isaiah 11:1-3

¹ And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: ² And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; ³ And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD . . .”

Here is the great blessing that the Bible refers to as “the Branch.” He is **“a rod (Hebrew [choter]) out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch (Hebrew [netzser]) shall grow out of his roots . . .”** This is a picture of a great tree that has been felled, and only the living roots remain. Blessed by God in a magnificent fashion, mighty Israel came crashing to the ground through disobedience. Was there any hope? Yes, the [netzser], the Branch out of the living roots, would rise to reign. This is the word that Matthew apparently had in mind when he wrote Matthew 2:23: **“And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.”** (Can you hear the “netzser” in Nazarene?) When Peter preached in Acts 10, he described, **“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: . . .”** (verse 38). When the people wondered, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:46), Peter could gladly proclaim the blessings of the Branch. God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah predicted that the Spirit of God would rest on the Son of man – Jesus as a human – and the Spirit is still resting on us and guiding us today. He is

- The Spirit of the Lord
- The Spirit of wisdom (practical, moral skill)
- The Spirit of understanding (discernment: the ability to discern between choices)
- The Spirit of counsel (making plans like a “Wonderful Counselor” Isaiah 9:6)
- The Spirit of might (strength, as “the Mighty God” Isaiah 9:6)
- The Spirit of knowledge (of the Lord)
- The Spirit of the fear of the Lord

(This passage is likely being referred to in Revelation 5:6 when it describes “the seven Spirits of God.” The meaning is “the seven-fold Spirit of God.”)

His Pattern Described

- Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit in Mary’s womb (Matthew 1:18) as promised (Luke 1:35).
- John predicted that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:16, cf. John 20:22).
- At His baptism, Jesus was baptized by the Holy Spirit, descending like a dove (Luke 3:21-22)
- Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit and led by the Spirit (Luke 4:1), just as John the Baptist was (Luke 1:15).

- Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit, as He prayed (Luke 10:21).
- Jesus was raised from the dead and proclaimed by the Holy Spirit (Romans 1:4).

In the human being, named Jesus, we can see the remarkable work of the Spirit of God. Yes, Jesus is fully God, but in His earthly, human life, He set aside the free exercise of some of His privileges. He did so to be born as a human being, and to give us a pattern to live by. How does “the Root of Jesse” Jesus Christ cause us to be “filled with all joy and peace?” It is through the power of the Holy Spirit!

Applications:

Since Jesus, the Son of Man, was filled, led and guided by the Holy Spirit, believers can be too. In this Christmas season, we ought to give careful thought to this. This is the source of our joy!

- We were born again by the Spirit of God (Titus 3:5-6).
- God’s Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are truly the children of God (Romans 8:16).
- We have fellowship with God through the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:14).
- We can have the joy of the Spirit, even in trials (1 Thessalonians 1:6).
- We can be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18), as Jesus was. (2 Timothy 1:14)
- We can progressively grow more like the Lord Jesus by the Spirit of God (2 Corinthians 3:18).
- The Holy Spirit sealed us to the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30).
- We can pray in the Spirit (Jude 20).

Therefore

- Do not grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30).
- Bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).
- Do not quench the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

If you want to be “filled with all joy and peace” in this holiday season – and throughout the year – you need look no further. Here is the Root of Jesse. Here is the Holy Spirit. They are our examples. They show human beings today how to live and love others with new joy. Life is too short to be shallow.

Immanuel, God Dwells with Men

Immanuel, God dwells with men
The Miracle of Bethlehem

For God gave us His Son, His Lamb
The sacrifice for sins of man
To save poor sinners, just like me
To save for all eternity
To bring His new adopted sons
To glory through His Promised One

How wonderful, this Counselor
The Mighty God and heaven's door
The Everlasting Father: Christ
Who paid our sins most awful price
For unto us a Child is born;
The Son we greeted with our scorn
But His great reign shall never cease,
The everlasting Prince of peace

This King of kings and Lord of lords
Is Jesus Christ, the Living Word
His government shall never end
Through peace that He alone extends
Because He died for sins of men
And conquered death and rose again
So, He alone can end our strife
The Christ: the Way, the Truth, the Life.

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