

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 6-30-13 AM NOTES
"THERE IS HOPE" [PART 2]
ROMANS 5:1-5
#5 in Series, "Faith, Hope, Love: Three Distinctives of the Christian Life"

Review:

I. The Perception of Hope

Hope is the joyful confidence and expectation that what God has promised, He will accomplish in His perfect timing.

II. The Purchase of Hope

1 Peter 1:21 (NKJV) "who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God."

III. The Products of Hope

1 Thessalonians 1:3b (NKJV) "... patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father".

1 Peter 3:15 (NKJV) "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for **the hope that is in you**, with meekness and fear."

Romans 15:13 (HCSB) "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may **overflow with hope** by the power of the Holy Spirit."

*My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand.*

—Edward Mote (1832)

IV. The Perfection of Hope (vv. 2b-5a)

We are to turn tribulation from being our master to being our slave.

There is a four step process that leads to the perfection of hope that results in a lifestyle of hope.

A. Tribulations (v. 3a)

The Greek word translated "tribulation" is not so much the idea of great suffering, but being under pressure that comes from the world around us.

How would you answer this atheistic reasoning? "If God were good, He would desire to make His creatures happy; and if God were all powerful, He could do what He desired. But God's creatures aren't happy, because so many of them suffer. Therefore, God lacks goodness or power or both."

Epicureanism—The way to handle the tribulations of life is to load your life with more pleasure than pain so the bottom line is positive. The epicurean battle cry was "Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow you may die."

Existentialism—All that matters is this present moment, therefore live for the moment.

Stoicism—Take whatever life gives you and hold your head up high and refuse by the power of your own will to let it defeat you.

Philippians 1:29 (NKJV) “For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.”

Acts 5:41 (NKJV) “So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.”

2 Corinthians 4:17 (NKJV) “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory.”

James 1:2 (NKJV) “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials.”

1 Peter 1:6-7 (NKJV) “⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

“Look, as our greatest good comes through the sufferings of Christ, so God’s greatest glory that He hath from His saints comes through their sufferings.”
—Thomas Brooks

B. Perseverance (v. 3b)

Perseverance—To live under tribulations without wiggling out and running away.

C. Character (v. 4a)

1 Corinthians 9:27 (NKJV) “But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”

“Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience at trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired, and success achieved.”
—Helen Keller

D. Hope (vv. 4b-5a)

Romans 5:2b (NKJV) “... and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

“Hope fills the afflicted soul with such inward joy and consolation, that it can laugh while tears are in the eye, sigh and sing all in a breath; it is called ‘the rejoicing of hope’ in Hebrews 3:6.”
—William Gurnall

“What he means, therefore, is that we shall never be put to shame in this life, neither shall we be put to shame on the great day of judgment. But, primarily, we shall never be put to shame in this life. It does not matter what happens. There will be trials, there will be problems, there will be tribulations, there will be difficulties, but if you have this hope you will never be put to shame, you will never feel ashamed, you will never be disappointed, you will never feel that you are let down.”
—Martyn Lloyd-Jones

*Because He lives I can face tomorrow
Because He lives all fear is gone.
Because I know He holds the future
And life is worth the living just because He lives.
How sweet to hold a newborn baby,
And feel the pride and joy he gives.
But greater still the calm assurance
This child can face uncertain days because He lives.*

—Gloria Gaither

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 6-30-13 AM

“THERE IS HOPE” [PART 2]

ROMANS 5:1-5

#5 in Series, “Faith, Hope, Love: Three Distinctives of the Christian Life”

1 Corinthians 13:13 (NKJV) “And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

Let’s take a moment to review part 1 of “There Is Hope”.

I. The Perception of Hope

We gave a somewhat more extended definition of hope than the one we used when examining faith. We saw that Hope is the joyful confidence and expectation that what God has promised, He will accomplish in His perfect timing. One of the main reasons for hopelessness is an ignorance of what has been promised and when the promises are known, there is often a lack of patience to wait on God’s perfect timing.

II. The Purchase of Hope

Our hope was purchased by the resurrection of Christ Jesus from the dead. **1 Peter 1:21 (NKJV)** “who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.”

III. The Products of Hope

We saw that when a life is grounded in biblical hope, we have a proper perspective of everything that God allows or causes to come into our lives. In addition, we have a peaceful patience that only true hope can bring. **1 Thessalonians 1:3b (NKJV)** speaks of the “patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father”. The third product is that we have a prepared proclamation to give to anyone who observes the difference that hope makes in our lives and then we have an opening to share the reason for our hope-filled lives. **1 Peter 3:15 (NKJV)** “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear’.

In today’s message we will look at the perfection of hope.

In a world full of despair and hopelessness God desires that our lives be so full of hope that the world will be coming to us asking a reason for the hope that that is in us (1 Peter 3:15). It is sad indeed when we who are to be the beacons of hope to a hopeless world are just as hopeless as the world. A hopeless Christian seems like it ought to be an oxymoron! The norm for a Christian ought to be that we are overflowing with hope! **Romans 15:13 (HCSB)** “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” During WWII, an American submarine was torpedoed by a German U-boat off the coast of England. A distress signal was sent out from that sinking submarine. The Allied forces picked up the signal and immediately a rescue ship was dispatched. When the rescue ship arrived at the scene, they found only an oil slick on the surface. When the divers got down to the sub, they began to swim around it. They took the handle of their knives and began to peck on the steel wall of the sub. Soon they heard a response from inside. They recognized that the response was in Morse code. As they carefully listened to the taps, they discovered the one thing those survivors inside the submarine wanted to know was “Is there any hope?” I believe in our culture sunk in the mire of our own sins, deceived by the promises of the devil is now, more than any recent generation crying out, “Is there any hope?” When we who know Christ answer, we ought not stutter or hesitate in saying, “Yes there is hope in Jesus Christ!” That is not just a little cliché; that is the Gospel truth!

Our hope is not “finger crossing” type hope; our hope is rock solid.

My hope is built on nothing less

Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness;

*I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground in sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand.*

- Edward Mote (1832)

IV. The Perfection of Hope

Romans 5:2b-5a (NKJV) “²...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...” Every week we get numerous requests for prayer from the body of Christ. Some are just gut wrenching. In a recent week there was a wife who loves the Lord with all of her heart requesting prayer for a husband who does not know Christ and doesn't seem to be at all interested in knowing Him. There were numerous requests from broken hearted parents concerning their prodigal children. There was prayer from a distraught husband whose wife has left and refuses to even consider reconciliation. There was prayer for a man who is in the last stages of a horrible cancer. There was a request for the family of a young mother who died of Leukemia leaving behind a 6 year old daughter, and on and on. Most if not all of these requests come from people who know the Lord Jesus Christ. We could sum up what all of these people are going through as “tribulation”. What we see in Romans 5:2-5 is that when Paul talks about tribulation, he doesn't just tell us to stoically endure it; he says that we must use tribulations for God's purposes. He refuses to give us the option of becoming the victim of tribulation; we are to turn tribulation from being our master to being our slave. The world, the devil, and other people who make ungodly decisions fling tribulation at us. The enemy of our souls seeks to use these tribulations to bring us to hopelessness. The text in Romans says, “No, the tribulation has been allowed by God to strengthen our hope!”

One of the key words in Romans 5:2-5 is the word “knowing” in verse three. In the Greek it means to perceive with the mind and understand. As we'll see in a moment, the reason that we can glory or rejoice (ESV) in tribulations is because there are some things we **know** that tribulations produce. No one enjoys tribulations, but we can rejoice in the midst of them because we know what is accomplished through the tribulations. What we have in this passage is a synopsis of **mature, perfected** hope. The Apostle Paul is talking about a mature, perfected hope while we live here on a fallen planet. He is talking about a lifestyle of hope that lives in expectancy of seeing God fulfill every promise He has made to us. What we have presented to us in these verses is a four step process that leads to the perfection of hope which results in a lifestyle of hope that mystifies the world and causes them to ask us a reason for this hope that dwells in us.

A. Tribulations (V3a)

Let's start with a word study. The word translated “glory” in verse 3 can be translated “rejoice”. What is it we rejoice or glory in? We rejoice in “tribulations.” The Latin word that translated this Greek word was “tribulum”. It referred to a threshing sledge which separated grain from chaff. The bottom was studded with sharp flints or metal. It was used to pound the wheat and then drag over it. That is what tribulation can sometimes be like. The Greek word however is not so much the idea of great suffering but being under pressure that comes from the world around us. In reality, there are a number of words that accurately translate this Greek word: afflictions, pressures, stresses, or difficulties, to name a few.

To rejoice in tribulations doesn't sound logical or natural or rational. It is not logical or rational or natural unless you KNOW what the tribulation produces. Perhaps you have heard the old atheistic line of reasoning that uses suffering or tribulation as a means of “proving” that a good and all powerful God cannot exist. The false reasoning goes like this: “If God is good, He would desire to make His creatures happy and if God were all powerful He could do what He desired. But God's creatures aren't happy because so many of them suffer. Therefore God lacks goodness or power or both.” There is something that is fatally flawed with that argument. It assumes that a good God would do anything in His power to

keep His creatures happy. To put it another way, it assumes that happiness is the ultimate end of life. That is a false assumption. God's glory is the ultimate end of life and His chief means of achieving that glory is to take hopeless sinners and transform them and then conform them to the likeness of Jesus Christ. To accomplish that goal we need to go through uncomfortable, unhappy circumstances that propel us to a life that brings glory to God. If we don't know what tribulation produces, we will likely take one of two approaches to tribulations. First, there is "Epicureanism". This philosophy of life gets its name from the Greek philosopher Epicurus (342-270 BC). Epicurus said that life is an inevitable mixture of good and bad experiences, and some bad or painful experiences cannot be avoided. The way to handle the tribulations of life is to load your life with more pleasure than pain so the bottom line is positive. The epicurean battle cry was "Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow you may die." It later morphed into existentialism which says "All that matters is this present moment, therefore live for the moment." Another option to tribulation (if one doesn't know Christ and what the tribulation He allows produces) is Stoicism. This response is the product of a group of Greek philosophers called the Stoics. This philosophy is summarized by the old British phrase, "Keep a stiff upper lip" or the more American phrase, "Just grin and bear it". It is the approach that says, "Take whatever life gives you and hold your head up high and refuse by the power of your own will to let it defeat you." That of course glorifies man and eventually fails or leads to an unemotional, joyless, bitter life. The only way one can rejoice in life's pressures, sufferings, or tribulations is to KNOW what the tribulation is accomplishing. We still won't be happy. To rejoice and to be happy may occur at the same time but they are not the same thing. Happiness is tied in to the circumstances we are experiencing. To put it another way, happiness depends on what happens. Joy is a fruit that the Holy Spirit produces and it focuses in not on our circumstances but to where our circumstances are leading and what they are accomplishing. The Bible goes beyond just enduring tribulation; the Bible tells us to rejoice in tribulation. Going through tribulation is the one and only path to a process that leads to a hope filled life that does not disappoint. That's why we read in **Philippians 1:29 (NKJV)** "For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer [go through tribulation] for His sake". This glorious truth about tribulation is taught throughout the New Testament. We see it in Acts when the Apostles were jailed and threatened with death. **Acts 5:41 (NKJV)** "So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name." Paul writes in **2 Corinthians 4:17 (NKJV)** "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory". He realized that all of his tribulations had a higher purpose. We hear the same truth from James in **James 1:2 (NKJV)** "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials". He then proceeds to give knowledge as to what those trials produce. Peter writes in **1 Peter 1:6-7 (NKJV)** "6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ". The Puritan preacher, Thomas Brooks said some 350 years ago, "Look, as our greatest good comes through the sufferings of Christ, so God's greatest glory that He hath from His saints comes through their sufferings" ["A Puritan Golden Treasury", Page 288].

Let's look at the next element in the process to mature hope.

B. Perseverance (V3b)

The word translated perseverance is an interesting word. It is a compound word that is made up of the word for "under" and the word for "abide". It means to live under something. In the context here it means to live under tribulations without wiggling out and running away. It came to mean steadfast, consistent under pressure. It is the opposite of "bailing out" every time the pressure comes. This patience, perseverance, endurance, steadfastness is developed no other way than by going through trials. The mature believer develops this hope filled "stick-to-itiveness" by going through tribulations.

C. Character (V4a)

Perhaps a better translation would be "proven character" or "tested character". The word means to be put to the test and approved. It brings up the picture of heating gold or silver ore until the impurities float to the top and are skimmed off. What is then left is "tested and approved". We read in **1 Corinthians 9:27**

(NKJV) “But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.” The word translated “disqualified” is this same word translated “character” with a negative particle in front of it. Helen Keller the Godly woman who was blind and deaf said, “Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience at trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired, and success achieved” [Helen Keller, source unknown]. You don’t gain proven character in a classroom or from reading a book. It comes as a result of going through tribulations and standing fast or persevering.

D. Hope (V4b, 5a)

Martyn Lloyd-Jones said that hope is both the parent and child of perseverance and proven character. Here is what he meant by that. We see in **Romans 5:2b (NKJV)** “...and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” Here it is speaking of that ultimate hope that gives us an eternal perspective – that hope of seeing Him and His glory and participating in that glory. In other words, hope makes Heaven more precious. As we go through tribulations, hope is the parent that produces perseverance and proven character. It is also the child in that the tribulation that leads to perseverance and proven character produces a mature hope that not only sees out into eternity but sees the promises of God for today and confidently, joyfully lives in expectancy of seeing them fulfilled. What this passage is saying that a Christian is to live encircled by hope. Our hope takes us through the suffering that leads to endurance that leads to proven character which leads to a stronger hope or confidence in God and His promise which enables us to endure more suffering leading to even greater character which leads to an even stronger or more mature hope, etc. Knowing this, do you see why we can rejoice in tribulations? The Puritan William Gurnall spoke of this mature hope when he said, “Hope fills the afflicted soul with such inward joy and consolation, that it can laugh while tears are in the eye, sigh and sing all in a breath; it is called ‘the rejoicing of hope’ in Hebrews 3:6.” [“A Puritan Golden Treasury”, Page 144]. Verse 5a tells us that this mature hope will never disappoint us or as the KJV says, “and hope maketh not ashamed” Martyn Lloyd-Jones comments on that: “What he means, therefore, is that we shall never be put to shame in this life, neither shall we be put to shame on the great day of judgment. But, primarily, we shall never be put to shame in this life. It does not matter what happens. There will be trials, there will be problems, there will be tribulations, there will be difficulties, but if you have this hope you will never be put to shame, you will never feel ashamed, you will never be disappointed, you will never feel that you are let down” [Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Commentary on Romans, Page 75]. One translation says, “...such hope is no fantasy” (REB).

CONCLUSION

The emphasis in this message has been how hope gets us through tough times here. When your world has fallen apart, it is good to focus on when we go to be with Jesus or He returns for us in His second coming which Titus 2:13 calls our “blessed hope”. However, hope enables us not only to look to that future time that we are with Jesus; hope also enables us to face tomorrow. Bill Gaither tells how back in the 60’s, he and his wife Gloria were going through a really tough time. Bill had been enduring a draining illness and Gloria was struggling through some mild depression. In addition, she was expecting their child. Gloria looked around at the world in those turbulent morally disintegrating 60’s that were much like today filled with despair and hopelessness. With this child on the way she began to think, “What kind of people are we to bring a child into this messed up world?” One day she was in her study, just quietly waiting before the Lord, when the Holy Spirit began to impress biblical truth upon her heart. He impressed upon her this hope that we have in the resurrected Christ. He began to help her understand that His life always conquers death. She then began to apply that glorious truth to their life and their situation. She was so overcome by the truth of the hope that is ours because of the resurrected Savior that she began to express it in the lyrics of a song. You may have heard it. It says:

Because He lives I can face tomorrow

Because He lives all fear is gone.

Because I know He holds the future

And life is worth the living just because He lives.

The background I shared earlier explains why she wrote this second verse.

*How sweet to hold a newborn baby,
And feel the pride and joy he gives.
But greater still the calm assurance
This child can face uncertain days because He lives.*

There is hope!