

Eternity Daily Bible Study

Romans 9-16 The Implications of Salvation

I am looking for preaching opportunities in churches in Southern California – if you know of any that might be interested please email me at johned@aibi.ph

Number: 622

Verses: Romans 15:13

Topic: The God Of Hope

Date: 20th February 2007

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.*

How can a God who knows everything have hope? Surely hope depends on incomplete knowledge? How can we anticipate a sure thing? I think back to my twelfth birthday when I was given a watch. I knew I would receive that watch, but it was really special and I looked forward to it with great intensity. It was hope in a reward that I had literally waited for years to receive (this gives away my age and my era...) and I never doubted it but I still hoped for it. Hope is in our hearts as the future unfolds towards a good and certain ending.

God knows how we are going to turn out, He knows we will become immortal, imperishable, glorious, spiritual sons of God without spot or wrinkle and that Jesus will be the first among many brethren from every tribe and tongue and nation who will worship before the throne. God is delighting in this outcome and so is full of glorious hope. He is the God of hope because He knows the wonderful ending of the story of this Age.

Because God's purposes are always unfolding towards glorious and wonderful ends there will always be hope. **1 Corinthians 13:13 HCSB** (13) *Now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.*

This verse follows on after Paul's discussion of the salvation of the Gentiles (v. 8-12) and his assertion that this was part of God's glorious plan from long ago. Just as God hoped and delighted in the salvation of the Greeks and Romans and Scythians and so forth so He has other great purposes that He is working out even today.

When despair grips our heart we need to place ourselves in God's great unfolding plan of redemption and realize that He will "work all things together for good" (Romans 8:28). Our hope is grounded in God's own hope in the absolutely certain outworking of His plans towards the creation of a world "in which righteousness dwells".

2 Peter 3:13 MKJV *But according to His promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

Our hope is based on trust in God's good processes; the slow, sure processes of justice, redemption and unfolding glorification:

Romans 8:28-30 MKJV *And we know that all things work together for good to those*

who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (29) For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, for Him to be the First-born among many brothers. (30) But whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, those He also justified. And whom He justified, these He also glorified.

God's continuous hopeful intervention in human history is a far cry from evolution – where things improve themselves by random mutation and natural selection. The divine “working all things together for good” is a moral and spiritual action that involves the whole universe and is not in any way “accidental”.

As we grasp the fact that the end of the Story is always good and always joyful then we can be “filled with joy and peace in believing”. The hope we have in who God is and in the way God works gives us a sure joy and a deep peace.

Now faith in God's processes is different from hope in a particular outcome – such as a large house or a red Mercedes-Benz. Sometimes God fills us with hope in a concrete and particular outcome such as Abraham's faith in the birth of Isaac but at other times we are called to a faith like Job's – that in the midst of pain God would turn up and work redemption “ I know that my redeemer liveth and will take His stand upon the earth.”

We can make big mistakes when we decide to put our hope not in God's character or ways of working - but in some cherished thing such as someone loving us, or a certain level of lifestyle or a certain problem being solved in a certain way. When this does not happen we feel disappointed in God. Yet God may be leading us through the trial to a deeper and less superficial form of faith. A faith in the invisible rather than in the visible. (Now I am not saying that we should not pray for tangible things such as healing, just that we should do so with faith in God and the way He works.)

The God of hope wants His sons and daughters to be people of hope who are confident that the end of all things will be good and will be joyful. God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all – no despair, no pessimism, no unbelief, no cynicism, no negativity, no wet blanket theology, no small-minded fault-finding and no dream-stealing AT ALL! Now we are to be like Him (1 John 3:1-3) and to walk in the light as He is in the light and to be positive and hopeful as He is positive and hopeful.

1 John 1:5-7 MKJV *And this is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. (6) If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. (7) But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*

The old man is a grumpy, cynical worldly-wise pessimist – but the new man is hopeful with the power of God “so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” The Holy Spirit assures us that we are God's and that we are loved by Him and reveals to us the wonderful things God has in store for those who love Him (1 Corinthians 2:9-16). When I feel that I am sinful and wretched and hope-less then the Holy Spirit tells me that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses me from all sin, that I am justified and acceptable to God, and that a wonderful eternity awaits me so I can have hope!

Blessings,

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