

Series through Romans: TRUTH: UNASHAMED, PART III
Sermon Title: Week 5, Hope in Christ- what it is, what it isn't.
Principal Scripture: Romans 8:18-25 Date: December 2, 2018

† A different kind of Advent

- **Welcome to Advent season... celebrate coming of birth of Christ**
- **Traditional themes... HOPE, PEACE, JOY, LOVE**
- **Metaphor- Christian life as a HOUSE.. Often, we may think of these as the roof, or even the sky above the house... HPJL as things we experience when everything is going really good!**
- **THIS ADVENT... we are looking at HPJL as the foundation... Cement truck analogy... because if we really look at scripture, we will see that HPJL are absolutely integral to life... and if they are part of REAL LIFE, then HPJL are connected to a particular reality...**

† The reality centuries of Christian culture has tried to avoid

John 16:33 *"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble...."*

- **Everyone acknowledges that life brings trouble... what CC has tried, somehow, to avoid, is the reality that Christians are not exempt from this trouble, no more than we are exempt from the temporary consequences of words and actions.**
- **You see, over the generations, Christianity has tried to figure out some way- if we are sincere enough, do the right religious things, pray enough, live right, you name the formula... that somehow we should expect God to exempt us, or deliver us, from the reality of suffering. BUT THIS IS NOT MESSAGE OF THE NT...**

2 Corinthians 4:16 *Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away... SO MANY MORE SCR*

- **Reality is that our HOPE as followers of Christ is NOT that our circumstances will work out the way we want them to.**
- **Does God have the power to supernaturally intervene? YES! Do we pray for this? YES! But supernatural intervention- at least in the sense of physical circumstances- is not promised to us, and more importantly, if we define hope this way, we will miss out on the true and greater hope that IS PROMISED to EVERY BELIEVER...**

† So, just what IS our Hope?

- **In a word, our hope, through faith, is CHRIST**

John 16:33 *"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 *Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*

1 Timothy 1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope*

- **As Christians, Because our hope is CHRIST HIMSELF, who he is, the truth of what he has done, everything we've learned thus far through Romans.. we possess a CERTAIN HOPE**

that we don't have to beg for, even ask for, because it is OURS, we are IN CHRIST, he dwells in us.

- *This is the HOPE of the gospel, it is rooted in eternity, and it is the hope of a new heart and transformed life, not a new job or a healed body. It is the profound hope that life as it is, is not all there is, and at the end of the story is the fullness of God's glory, not the decay of our current experience.*
- *SO the question is, how does this HOPE OF FAITH take on power in our lives, right now, today?*
- *Two big thoughts as we continue in Romans 8, verses 18-25*

† The HOPE of EXPECTATION

Romans 8:18-21 *I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*

- *Wow. Just stop there. Consider this!*
 - *Present sufferings... overwhelming*
 - *Paul- God- doesn't minimize these at all. WHAT GOD DOES HERE IS SAY that as intense as this can be... WHEN WE FULLY COME INTO GOD'S GLORY, the magnitude of this will drown out the pain and suffering we experience now.*
 - *HERE's the incredible thing... Paul speaks of the GLORY OF GOD... that will be revealed IN US.*
 - *As much as we now have pain and suffering IN US, the GLORY OF GOD will be fully revealed IN US. FRIENDS! THIS IS A HOPE OF EXPECTATION! Not only us, but...*

¹⁹ *For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.* ²⁰ *For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.*

- *Ok. There are doctoral dissertations out there on this passage. BIG PICTURE- God, in his sovereignty, (what this means), chose to subject all of his creation- the created universe- to the consequences of sin. The fall. AND YET, He did this knowing- by creating THE CERTAIN HOPE, that all of creation will one day be delivered from BONDAGE TO DECAY/ SLAVERY TO CORRUPTION (nasb).... And brought into complete and total freedom... THE FREEDOM AND GLORY THAT WILL BE OURS AS CHILDREN OF GOD.*
- *LIFE AS IT IS, IS NOT ALL THERE IS.. friends, and at the end of the story we will step out of the decay of this temporary world, and into the eternal fullness of God's glory- that somehow, will be revealed... made fully known, IN EACH ONE OF US.*
- *BY FAITH, my friends, THAT IS A SOURCE OF HOPE!*

† The HOPE of NEW BIRTH

- *We have a lot of new birth in our church right now! If you have ever witnessed a baby being born- or watched call the midwife on Netflix... SUFFERING!... but it is suffering rooted in the HOPE of LIFE... this is the image that Paul gives us...*

Romans 8:22-25 *We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.*

- Here Paul is referring to our physical, resurrection that we await.. Paul has already said that when we believe, place our faith in Christ, we at that moment are adopted, fully belonging to God, and as other verses say, God gave us a DEPOSIT- a first step guaranteeing what is to come- HOLY SPIRIT
- EVEN SO, having been made ALIVE (old gone, new come), living in the ALREADY of our union with Christ... RIGHT NOW WE YEARN FOR WHAT IS NOT YET.. our spirits groan with the loads we carry.
- GOD COMES TO US, saying... I KNOW what you carry. GIVE IT TO ME, follow me, know me, trust me in the next step, FOR I AM YOUR HOPE, AND IN THIS HOPE, FOR THIS HOPE, YOU WERE SAVED. So my child, be patient. Take the next step. For this is not the end of the story...

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? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

- NOW... here's what I'm thinking, as you are too... YES GOD, that is our future hope. But right now, there is the burden I'm carrying...
 - Burden of relationship
 - Burden of sickness
 - Burden of loved one
 - Burden of providing
- I need your presence and power RIGHT NOW.
- FRIENDS... God knows this, and he is the GOD OF RIGHT NOW. He doesn't promise us what will happen in our circumstances, at least not in the short run. BUT OUR HOPE IS NOT JUST A FUTURE HOPE. Because of our future, hope, we DO HAVE a present power of hope.

† Future Hope, present Power. Today, our Hope in Christ brings COURAGE.

- Courage to NOT lose heart!
- Let me give you example... ancient rome... Emperor Diocletian, late 200's. Last and greatest of all the persecutions of Christians. Diocletian saw Christianity as an existential threat to the empire. WHY?
- Diocletian is also known for wide ranging actions that setup systems of taxation, locked people into their life circumstance. Father a farmer, son a farmer. No getting out... Ultimate end is that the empire, and the emperor, had ultimate authority over the smallest detail of your life. In return, he would provide basic sustenance and protection, if that. But if you rebelled, then, death.
- Imagine Diocletian learning that these Christians had a belief... HOPE ROOTED NOT IN THIS LIFE... his threats of death meant little, because these people- these Christians believed that THEIR PRESENT SUFFERINGS WERE'NT EVEN WORTH COMPARING to the Glory of God that would be revealed in them.
- THIS IS THE HOPE, THE COURAGE, RIGHT NOW, NOT TO LOSE HEART. As we will see next two few weeks... GOD IS AT WORK.

• Courage to work for GOOD

- Because our hope is in Christ, we don't check out on the world, we invest in the world.

- *Our blessed hope is that one day we will hear the trumpet call of God announcing His return, but until that return, we are working to bring about HIS HOPE, RIGHT NOW, in this life. THIS LIFE MATTERS.*
- *Jesus said... may your kingdom come, ON EARTH...*
- **Courage to SURRENDER**
 - *This is deep end of the pool. Because of our great hope IN CHRIST... he is GOOD... he is FOR US... we can trust him... this means we can SURRENDER.. lay down our pride, our shame... and follow God with obedience into the difficult but redemptive path of brokenness, because it leads to HEALING. LIFE.*
- **Courage to LOVE**
 - *Drumbeat in our world... resent each other. Demean each other. Ignore each other. Blame each other... HEARTBEAT IN SCRIPTURE, and IN US... LOVE EACH OTHER- for love covers over a multitude of sin. LOVE BRINGS HOPES*