

The Certainty of Hope

Romans 5:1-11 ESV

- I. The importance of a certain hope.
 - a. Hope is future – there are many unknowns that easily lead to fear and uncertainty:
 - i. Iran, Israel, nuclear and cyber weapons that threaten us. The nations are shaking!
 - ii. The economy – affordability, college graduates that can't find well-paying jobs. Great fluctuations in the stock market.
 - iii. The deep division in our country with no one seemingly listening to the other side – no respect or value of someone else's opinion. A kingdom divided can't stand!
 - b. Yet the biggest fear is our impending death and accountability to a holy God. Jesus came to remove that fear completely from our future.
 - i. Hebrews 2:14-15 ESV “Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.”
 - ii. Our sins put us in debt to God's judgment – we must all stand before Him and give an account of our lives. *An electric bill – you are in their debt until the bill is paid. *A hospital bill – you remain under the burden of that debt until it is paid and then you are reconciled.
 - iii. Teleskai – “It is finished.” An accounting term – paid in full. The blood of Jesus was the payment of your sins against a holy God. He experienced the wrath of God for all of us. The resurrection – there were resources to cover the payment made on the cross. Your debt has been paid and so has mine!
 - c. This certain hope goes into heaven where Jesus has risen and acts as an anchor to our souls. (Hebrews 6:19-20)
 - i. We're anchored to heaven – we may get tossed and turned but we don't drift because of this certain hope Jesus has secured for us.
 - ii. 2Corinthians 5:4-5 NIV “For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.”

1. We are camping and this is our tent. We were made for heaven and long to be home forever.
2. These momentary light afflictions cannot be compared to the weight of eternal glory waiting for us. The Holy Spirit guarantees that the best is still to come.

II. How do I obtain this certain hope?

- a. Believe that Jesus died and rose again from the dead in our history.
 - i. If this didn't happen as an objective event, Paul says, our faith is in vain, we are still in our sins, and we are to be pitied.
 - ii. From the very beginning – Christianity was about the resurrection. No power or money or position for its success – only the sincerity of those who testified to seeing Him risen from the dead. *Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 15 – only men because only men were accepted as witnesses in that day. Why are the women there in all four accounts? Because it's not a story someone made up; it's our history. Time is split with the coming of Jesus – 2026 years after Jesus came to this earth.
 - iii. Jesus died on Passover and rose on first-fruits – His resurrection is the guarantee that we will be resurrected bodily on His return. Souls are immediately with the Lord, bodies are held by death, even if they're ashes – they will be resurrected on His return – guaranteed!
- b. Believe that you are a sinner who needs a Savior.
 - i. The darkness of the Gentiles is depravity – God gave them over and it just got worse and worse. (Chapter 1)
 - ii. The darkness of the religious is hypocrisy – God gave them over to their stubbornness and hardness of heart. (Chapter 2) *It's harder for the religious – John 9:41 NLT "If you were blind, you wouldn't be guilty," Jesus replied. "But you remain guilty because you claim you can see." *They wouldn't go into Pilate's courtyard because they were afraid it would make them unclean, yet they came to arrange the murder of Jesus (John 18:28). What?!
 - iii. "No one is good, no not one.... Everyone has been silenced before His holiness...there is no boast left of our righteousness. (Chapter 3)
 - iv. But none of this has stopped God from loving you. *At weddings and funerals – this is for religious people – no, God loves you and He hasn't stopped. "God demonstrates His love for us in this – while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." *While we were doing our worst to God by nailing Him to a cross, He was doing His best for us by dying for our sins. He chose to die instead of live without us.

- v. His love gave the sacrifice His holiness demanded. In Christ, we can all be forgiven and have certain hope.
- c. Experience the love God has for you. You'll never be sure until you've had an encounter yourself. "The Holy Spirit pours out the love of God into our hearts."
 - i. The young woman who came on Tuesday – I trust she'll be here today - I felt tingles – God wanted her to know directly from Him that it was true.
 - ii. My experience in the spring of 1981 – I was lonely and found that my friends weren't really my friends – a knock at the door. I was just religious enough that I presumed to be Christian but I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt the self was on the throne.