

Romans 15:1-13 “Hope in Christ” [3.15.20]

Thesis: This world can be a very hopeless place. Yet God offers a hope, joy and peace that transcends our circumstances. God’s hope is experienced in a united community of faith so that God is glorified.

Subject: God’s hope

Object: Experience hope in community and glorify God

In context, Paul is explaining how we experience life and liberty as Jesus’ followers in a community of faith.

1. Hope is experienced in community [1-5]

We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. ² Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. ³ For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.” ⁴ For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. ⁵ Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus...

Bear with and build-up others [1-3]

*We then who are strong or the spiritually mature ought to bear with or literally bear-up the scruples of the weak referring to spiritually immature legalists and new believers [1]. We are *not to please ourselves* relates to putting the needs of others before our own [1]. *Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification* [2]. We are called to put the needs of others before our own so that they are edified or built-up in their faith and in the hope of Christ. *Neighbors* are the people that God has placed in your sphere of influence where you live, work, study, play and worship [Lu. 10:25-37]. Jesus is our example, *For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me”* [3]. Jesus is the perfect example of laying aside privilege, putting others before himself, bearing with and building up [Ps. 69:9, Phil. 2:3-11].*

Learning and living your faith in community produces hope [4]

For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, is the idea that the Scriptures or the Bible are given to mankind to guide us to God. The Scriptures provide *patience and comfort* [4]. Patience is the idea of perseverance or triumphant adequacy to cope with life. Comfort is encouragement or strength. The result is *hope* [4]. Through God’s Word we discover God’s holiness, justice, mercy, grace, love, gospel, and perfect plan to redeem and restore mankind. The Bible reveals God’s desire for us to experience life with him in this life, and unhindered perfect life with Him for eternity. It is through the Scriptures that we discover that God is using all things to work together for good to those who love Him, and that nothing can separate us from Him [Rom. 8:28-39]. Our shared faith provides hope in and through God despite circumstances.

Our shared faith and hope should produce unity and community [5]. So, Paul prays, *Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus...* [5]. We are to be *like-minded toward one another* or united in a community of faith, *according to Christ Jesus*. Shared harmony and hope is a gift for Jesus’ followers.

2. A hopeful community glorifies God together [6-12]

Three times we see the phrase *glorify God* [6,7,9].

Christ came to unite God’s people for God’s glory [6-7]

That you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷ Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.

God’s people are to be united with *one mind and mouth to glorify God* [6]. Our thoughts, affections, and lives are transformed through the gospel, the Scriptures, and God’s Spirit to glorify God in a community of faith. Our shared faith, worship, gatherings are expressions of unity. Thus, we *receive one another, just as Christ also received us* [7]. The term receive is repeated twice for emphasis, and the Greek refers to accepting someone into a community and into your heart. When we receive one another, as Christ received us, with all of our imperfections and idiosyncrasies God is glorified by our unity [7]. Christ accepted us into fellowship or community with Him, and into His heart to glorify God, not because of how awesome we are. Will we do likewise to glorify God? God is glorified by authentic unity and community.

Christ came to prove that God is true and faithful to keep His promises [8]

Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers. Christ’s incarnation, ministry, sacrifice, and resurrection was to the *circumcision*, or Jews first to *fulfill the promises made to the fathers*. Jesus confirms the truth of God by fulfilling the promises made to the patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and prophecies regarding the Messiah that through Jesus all people of the earth would be blessed [Gen. 12:3]. God’s faithfulness in Christ is the basis of our hope and why the community of faith should glorify God.

Christ came to restore people to God [9-11]

and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: “For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name.” ¹⁰ And again he says: “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!” ¹¹ And again: “Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!” ¹² And again, Isaiah says: “There shall be a root of Jesse; And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, In Him the Gentiles shall hope.

Six times we see the term *Gentiles* referring to non-Jews and generally all people separated from relationship with God. Those who were separated from God and have been restored through Christ and His gospel should glorify God for His mercy [9]. *As it is written* [9], Paul quotes the Psalms, Prophets, and Torah (five books of Moses) to show God’s plan in the Old Testament to unite Jews and Gentiles in the Church through the New Testament [9-11].

“For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name” [9, Ps. 18:49]. God is declared to unbelievers to glorify His name. *And again he says: “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!”* [10, Deut. 32:43]. Former unbelievers rejoice with God’s people when they have been restored through faith in Christ. *And again: “Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!”* [11, Ps.117:1]. Former unbelievers glorify God for the gospel.

Christ is the hope for all people [12]

And again, Isaiah says: “There shall be a root of Jesse; And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, In Him the Gentiles shall hope” [Is. 11:10]. The prophet Isaiah foretold that through Jesse’s offspring King David, One would come to reign over Jews and Gentiles so that there is hope available to all people through faith in Christ.

3. God’s hope, joy, and peace are available in Christ [13]

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The true and living God is the God of hope. God wants His children to be filled to overflowing with hope, joy and peace *in believing* or through committing to follow Christ. The Holy Spirit is God's source of power for believers to experience this hope in community and glorify God.

Study Guide Qs

Q1. What are some of the circumstances that can cause people to lose hope?

Q2. Where might people try to find hope if they don't know God? What are some potential pitfalls to those sources of hope?

Q3. How has living and learning your faith in community helped you to grow in hope?

Q4. How does a united community characterized by hope, peace, and joy glorify God?

Digging Deeper

1. Here is an interesting article regarding a Christian's hope: <https://www.gotquestions.org/hope-Bible.html>

2. Here is a recommended resource: [Cure for the Common Life: Living in Your Sweet Spot by Max Lucado](#)