

Lives Filled With Hope

by Bob Hoekstra

God's remedy for discouragement is to fill us with all joy and peace, and to give us a living hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 48:55

Scripture: John 16:33, Romans 15:13, Ephesians 1:18, Ephesians 2:12, Colossians 1:27, 2 Thessalonians 2:16, 1 Timothy 1:1, Titus 2:13, Hebrews 6:19, 1 Peter 1:3

Topics: "Hope In God", "Holy Spirit"

Description

This sermon focuses on the theme of lives filled with hope, emphasizing how God's remedy for discouragement, worry, and despair is unique and distinct. The key verse, Romans 15:13, highlights the God of hope filling believers with joy, peace, and abounding hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. The speaker shares personal experiences of relying on this verse during challenging times, encouraging listeners to trust in God's promises and be flooded with hope.

Transcript

Well, our scripture subject this morning is found in Romans chapter 15, Romans chapter 15. Our specific subject matter could be called this, lives filled with hope, lives filled with hope. And we'll see this truth comes straight out of the terminology in this great verse we'll look at in a minute, Romans 15.

Every one of us struggles at times with discouragement, with concerns that might build to worry or anxiety, doubts, strife in the mind. Even despair and hopelessness is not uncommon to all of humanity, including us. And in those struggling times, our hope seems to be quite meager, sometimes it seems as though it's just disappearing.

But the wonderful truth is that God has a remedy for that. That's not unusual, but his remedy is unique and distinct. His Holy Spirit wants to flood our lives with hope.

The verse is Romans 15, verse 13 reads, 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. This verse became very precious in my life in the early 1970s when I was a young pastor in Dallas, Texas. And I also had been studying at the seminary there, and three children born during those years, very busy years, very blessed years, very challenging years.

And I found all of that, including pastoral ministry, bigger than I had anticipated. And I found out that my own personal resources to handle all of that, that they were less than I thought they were. And I must say, I came to love this verse not just out of interest and excitement over discovering it, but actually through veils of tears, crying out before God to do this wonderful work in my own life.

And I found out that this is a place to come often. And I have been there untold numbers of times through the years. I commend it highly to you.

It's a phenomenal verse, few words, but enormous in implication, and not complicated like the religions of man, but simple like the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our God is here declared as a God of hope. It's put in kind of a benedictory prayer where your expectation is toward the Lord, but your proclamation of what's needed is toward people.

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace and believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Our God is a God of hope. He produces hope in people's lives.

He offers hope to us, and it's never more precious than when we're the most hopeless. A God of hope is the God we serve. But hope is a powerful, beautiful, lofty word in the New Testament.

The same word brought into many languages is quite weak. We often say hope. I hope the wind won't blow too hard today.

Kind of the tone of voice tells you, but I don't think it's going to come this way. And we even do that old cross fingers thing. I hope it doesn't blow too hard today.

I hope it's not this, I hope it's not that. And the cross fingers, whatever that strange cultural phenomenon is, basically we kind of tip each other off. Hey, I really don't think this is going to be good.

But I hope so. Couldn't be further from the New Testament term. That's just filled with all kinds of uncertainty, you know.

The New Testament term is an astounding word. Let's think about a few synonyms for hope. Other ways to say the same word.

Hope has to do with confidence. But not the philosophical, humanistic kind of confidence. What would that be? Self-confidence.

You know, it's one of the great cultural virtues in many nations. And certainly in our land. Self-confidence.

It's not that. That is meager and anemic compared to this word. Confidence.

It's confidence in God. That's what this word hope is all about. Expectation.

You know, anticipating good things to come. This again is not human philosophy, you know. Which probably would translate into the philosophy or therapeutic program of positivism.

You've got to stay positive. Not that. That power of positive thinking is like child's play compared to this.

This is expectation anchored in the Lord. We're expecting good things because of who God is. God is good and He likes to pour out His goodness upon His people.

Another synonym for hope. Certainty or guarantee. And not like people say it, you know.

Here's what's going to happen and I'll tell you what. I guarantee. That's the way it's going to be.

Well, that doesn't stir great hope in a biblical sense because it's anchored in man again. This is certainty and guarantees because God has spoken on the subject. He's declared and promised and He is faithful.

He's going to do what He has said. All of that kind of truth is caught up in this word hope. And our God is a God of hope.

You remember what the scripture says about where we started out without Christ? Places like Ephesians 2.12. Ephesians 2.12. At that time you were without Christ. Being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise. Having no hope and without God in the world.

Now that's a desperate situation. Our God is a God of hope. Before we came to know Christ, we had no hope.

Oh, we had all these maybe philosophical mind games we tried to play by the coaxing of others, you know. But we didn't have real hope. In fact, the Spirit of God works convincing people of sin and righteousness and judgment.

He wants to convince people that they don't have hope if they don't have Christ. I know I came to know the Lord Jesus Christ at a deep moment of despair. And it was kind of cumulative.

It was not just kind of a sudden wind that blew through emotionally. It was watching me destroy my own life with foolishness and selfishness and indulgence and all the rest as a young man back in the mid-60s. And the Lord convinced me that since I didn't have Christ, I had no hope in this world.

It was without God. Our God is a God of hope. If you're existing on this planet without the Lord in your life, here's where you stand now.

You have no hope. Things are desperate and they will lead to despair. Thank the Lord He has a remedy for that.

It's called new birth. You remember this verse in 1 Peter 1 verse 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Here our hope is called the living hope.

And we can bless the Lord, that is gratefully speak wonderful things about Him, because He's caused us to be born again. Some church folks say, I'm a Christian but I'm not a born again Christian. Well, not knowing that's kind of religious double talk.

Jesus did not say to Nicodemus, you might want to try being born again. No, what did He say? You must be born again. It's a non-optional issue.

Without new birth and the new life the Lord brings, we have no hope. We're without Christ. It's a desperate situation.

We're headed for eternal separation from the God of hope. But those who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus, those who say, Lord forgive me a sinner, I need a Savior who could die for my sins, pay the debt

and rise victorious to give eternal life. Those who trust in that Lord Jesus of the Bible, they're born again.

They're birthed into a new family, birthed into a new kingdom, birthed into a new life where the God of hope is involved instead of without Christ and having no hope in this world. By the way, if there are any here who have not been born again, who have not trusted in the Lord Jesus, not for a religious flipping of a new leaf, but actually for the receiving of a new spiritual life, I would just encourage you. And I know every other child of God, which is probably most of us by far, if not all of us, that these are a lot of lives someone might be here curious or reluctantly drug in by parents or friends or a young lady.

I know I chased my wife to be until God caught me. That's what I did. I'm so glad she was pursuing Him.

I only wanted her, but ended up with both. Is God good or what? Amen. Born again to a living hope anchored in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, a hope that is spiritually pulsating with resurrection victory and resurrection life.

Sometimes we say, Oh, this circumstance is killing me or this situation is burying me. You know what the answer to that is? Resurrection. Temptation is to dig harder.

No, the answer is resurrection. We find resurrection life in our resurrected Lord. And that brings us a living hope.

There's no situation so impossible, so agonizing, so depleting of vitality, but what the Lord who is risen from the dead can share His resurrection life with us and see us through it and, if He so wills, even deliver us out of that situation. A living hope. Another correlation on this truth that our God is a God of hope, Ephesians 1.18, because those born again, the Lord wants them to know, get acquainted with, learn of in the Word and experience in our walk the hope of His calling.

Remember that phrase out of Ephesians 1.18? Which is a prayer, by the way. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened that you may know what is the hope of His calling. You could summarize the basic calling of the Lord this way.

Come, follow me. Or come unto me, all who are weary and heavy laden. The call is to come to a person.

And because this person is God the Son and we serve a God of hope, there is the hope of His calling for those who answer the call of the Lord Jesus. And if you've never done this, if there's someone visiting or curious or wanting to see what these Christians are about, really, we're about the Lord Jesus Christ. Our story is a pretty big mess.

His faithfulness, kindness and work thereafter is an astounding process. The hope of His calling, those who answer that call, those who say, Lord Jesus, I just want to follow You. I want You to be my Lord and Savior.

I'm a helpless, needy sheep. I see You're the Good Shepherd. Oh, it's good for sheep to have a Good Shepherd.

So Lord, I just want to follow You all the days of my life. You know, there's a hope that comes with that. And the Lord wants us to know the hope of His calling.

There's hope there. There's a confidence that can build toward God, an expectation that can develop in the Lord. All kinds of certainties and guarantees from Him that we can stand on and rest upon.

It's the hope of His calling. He wants us in the Word, learning of these great hopes. Ultimately, our hope is a person.

And 1 Timothy 1.1 makes that very clear. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our hope. Or your translation might read Jesus Christ, comma, our hope.

Our hope is a person. Think what the world offers. Programs, therapies, philosophies, false religions that are systems of striving to try and earn a place with God.

The Christian faith. The biblical faith. It's all about a person.

A person is our hope. Oh, this is unlike anything in the world of human religion or human philosophical perspective. A person that we meet through humble repentance and faith.

And then we're joined to Him or to walk with Him the rest of the way. What a glorious message is the Gospel. Our God of hope centers in a personal, relational entry into it through the Lord Jesus Christ who is our hope.

What is our hope? That tomorrow could be better than today. Or next year, if the Lord tarries, better than this year. Or that life in general can develop and improve in the ways that really matter.

You know, spiritually. What is our hope of that? A person. And the person is unlike any other.

He's the preeminent one. He's the exalted one. He's the all-sufficient one.

Christ, I love that phrase. Christ who is our hope. And this One who is our hope, He's coming back for us.

You know, the coming of Jesus to this planet, whenever my head is clear and my heart is hungry and I'm meditating on that in the Word of God as it's revealed, what a story, what a phenomenal reality that Creator God would become a man, come to this planet, not give us a step of legalistic ritual to earn our way to heaven, but He'd come down here and get us. I mean, what a phenomenal, glorious message that is. That the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

And your pastor and some of the saints are trotting on some of the very geography where He actually walked, was birthed and grew up and walked and was baptized to inaugurate His public Messiahship and went about doing good and signs and wonders following. He taught and no one ever spoke with such gracious words the people said. Religious establishment was totally threatened by Him.

The people, oh, they heard Him gladly. They couldn't get enough of Him. He came, fulfilling hundreds of prophecies in the Word of God about His first coming.

But there are many, many, many, many promises left and prophecies that He's coming again. Oh, what a tremendous truth. And that makes the coming of Jesus a blessed hope.

Titus 2.13 Where Christians are described as those looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. It's another kind of verse that lets us know that hope in the Bible used in these contexts doesn't mean wish or maybe or I think. I hope He's coming, you know.

It doesn't fit. If He said He's coming back and He's not, there is no hope. He's not true and faithful, oh, but He is true and faithful.

Declared so in His Word and He's demonstrated it to His church for two thousand years and in our own lives countless times. The blessed hope. The great blessing of the confident expectation that Jesus is coming back for us.

It's a part of knowing and serving the God of hope. Meanwhile, between now and His return for us, there is Christ in you, the hope of glory. That great phrase is in Colossians 1.27. Christ in you, the hope of glory.

And yes, though Christ is visually seated at the right hand of God, those in heaven can look right there, see the scars upon His body reminding that He's the Redeemer who died for us. Someday we'll see Him face to face. But He's not way off there.

He is also God. He now has a human body and always will. What a condescension on His part.

What a humility on His part. No wonder we're called to walk in humility, live humbly with our God. But He's everywhere and He dwells in our hearts by His Holy Spirit.

Christ in you, the hope of glory. Our hope is not distanced from us. He's right there in our lives.

Well, sometimes we cry out like He's two billion miles away, you know. But He understands that. He doesn't chide or scoff.

He's long-suffering and patient and we're yelling, where's the Lord? He's right there going, here I am. I'm right here. Remember I promised? I will never leave you nor forsake you.

I'm right here. You don't have to wonder where I am. I'm right here.

Christ in you, the hope of glory. And all of this hope, it's a matter of grace. Grace.

The undeserved kindness and work of God on our behalf. Working for us, on us, in us and through us out to others. Hope is connected with grace.

Have you noticed this verse? 2 Thessalonians 2.16 which speaks of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and our God and Father who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and catch this phrase and good hope by grace. Why is this hope we have in Christ so good? Because it's by grace. You don't get hope from God by achievement or performance.

It comes out of trusting relationship. It's not a religious earning, deserving. By the way, the word deserving came to mind.

Have you noticed how this is becoming one of the most popular terms in our culture? Advertising is heavily into it. Get the automobile you deserve. Oh, you mean one that never runs? Get the lawyer you deserve.

Oh, you mean a shyster? It's astounding. It's overtaking our national vocabulary. In the world, that's a sign of self-exaltation.

In the church or religious world, it's a sign of self-righteousness. We do not want what we deserve. My goodness, what we deserve is too horrible to describe.

You can catch it all in one word. Hell. Now that would be justice.

But the Lord loves mercy. He's not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth. We have a good hope because it's by grace.

It's not by performance. God has for us by His mercy and grace. Other than what we deserve, in fact, good things we could never deserve.

That's what makes this hope so good. It's by grace. It's by grace.

And it also is an anchor. Do you ever feel like you're drifting? Distracted? Caught by the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, or the boastful pride of life? Or bombarded by the enemy where you just feel pushed and shoved off target, off the trail, spiritually speaking? Listen to Hebrews 6.19. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the presence behind the veil. That place on earth where God was the most magnificently manifested in the Holy of Holies.

That place where the high priest could only go one day a year. Nobody else. Now we are anchored in there with this hope.

The Holy of Holies is now our family den. And who's there? Abba, Father. We don't dread to go in.

We don't go in for fear of death. We rush in boldly. Not irreverently.

But Holy God is our Heavenly Father. And our elder brother is our Lord and Savior, God the Son. What a hope.

We put our hope in Him. It anchors the soul. And I'm held in that union with Christ.

That oneness with Him. I'm not out here trying to qualify to get behind that veil. That's where I now live spiritually speaking.

Hebrews 10 The new and living way we go boldly into the Holy of Holies. That's a long way, isn't it, from without Christ and having no hope in the world. And it's all because of who He is and how He loves people to know Him.

It may be today, many of us would say our hope is low. Relationships strained or broken perhaps. Finances in disarray.

Confusion. Maybe condemnation of the enemy. Perhaps we remember previous disappointments.

Recent failures. Or we look at the future and we're paralyzed with uncertainty. Well, the Lord wants to go to work in such hearts and lives as ours.

Our God of hope wants to fill us with joy and peace. Where joy and peace are little, hope does not flourish. Joy and peace here is tied to hope.

Our God of hope wants to fill us with all joy and peace. To fill us. Not just give us a momentary blessing, but fill us.

You know, do a permeating work in the more and more areas of our lives. Fill us with all joy. And I think all describes both joy and peace.

With all joy and peace. All kinds and measures of joy. All kinds of and measures of peace.

They're kind of related. They're not identical. Joy would be inner spiritual delight in the Lord.

Often humanity's highest hope is to aim at circumstantial happiness and scurry and strive to drive yourself crazy trying to get there, you know. Joy in the kingdom of heaven and for a Christian has to do with inner spiritual delight in the Lord. Verses like Philippians 4-4 would teach us that.

Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say rejoice. That's an amazing word, always. Rejoice in the Lord always.

How is it that we can rejoice in the Lord and it's always available? Because the Lord never changes. He's the same yesterday, today, and forever. And considerations of who He is and what He's like and what He has done and what He wants to do, they bring an inner spiritual delight.

It's good, good news. Who God is and what He's done and is willing to do. So rejoice in the Lord.

Circumstances can be breaking our hearts. But consideration of our Lord can bring an inner spiritual delight. They're not mutually exclusive.

Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The scriptures also tell us He was anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows. No one knew the joy of the Lord like the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace. What's the difference? Well, if joy is an inner spiritual delight, which I believe is one adequate way to think of that truth, peace would be inner spiritual rest. Like Psalm 37, rest in the Lord.

Hebrews 3 and 4, enter into the rest of the Lord. An inner spiritual calm from the Lord. A spiritual tranquility of soul brought on by the reality of the Lord in our lives.

Remember Jesus spoke about this matter of joy in a troubled world. Remember John 16, 33? These things I have spoken to you that in me you may have peace. In me, in Christ, you may have peace.

In the world, you will have tribulation. Well, how do those go together? Well, Jesus is very different from the world. This is a fallen world.

Just being on this planet means trouble abounds. You've probably noticed. When I was a kid, before I was saved, it seemed like we were always looking for some trouble to get into.

One thing has changed since I was a child. You don't have to look anymore. In the world, you will have tribulation.

It's a prophetic promise. There's no way around it. The world has fallen in rebellion against God.

You will have tribulation. But Jesus adds, be of good cheer. And again, this is not human philosophy, you know.

The world would say, don't worry, be happy. Oh yeah, I wish I'd thought of that. Now all my troubles are gone.

Not even. Not even. When Jesus says, be of good cheer, He gives a dynamic reason, a heaven-sent reason that we can cheer up in the troubles all around.

What's the reason? Be of good cheer. I have overcome the world. The world throws a lot of awful stuff at you.

The world threw it all against the Lord Jesus. And the God of this world was right there leading the pack. But Jesus overcame.

In it all, He never disobeyed, never betrayed the will of the Father. He always did those things pleasing to the Heavenly Father. And He's our Lord, and He's in us, and He's our hope.

Well then, how do you enter into this wonderful blessing of the God of hope filling our lives with all joy and peace? Brothers and sisters, this is more good news. Remember when you first heard the gospel, you maybe thought, this is too good to be true. A lot of us said that.

Maybe you shared the gospel with people. You know, and they hear, that's it? We're guilty, cut off from ever, and all we have to do is humbly bow and receive Christ? In fact, I had a friend from high school who said to me, after many witnesses to him and his wife, he concluded one day, well, I've heard enough now. He'd heard for years.

He said, I've decided, that's just way too simple. So he moved his family to Utah and became a Mormon. That's way too complicated.

And it offers no hope at all. How do you enter into this? It's more of the good news that we first heard in the gospel. We enter into this as we trust in Him.

See it? Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing. We don't enter into this by performing, by earning, by deserving, by making it happen. We enter into it by trusting what God has provided and said about all of this.

We just rely upon Him. The issues of life, the battles we're in, the impossibilities, the heartaches, we take them to the Lord in the light of this and say, oh Lord God of hope, I am trusting You to be working in me all kinds of measures of joy and peace. You know, the just shall live by faith.

Hebrews 11 has come to my mind a few times today where some of the great testimonies of the saints past are listed. And you can look in there sometimes and think, well, I don't measure up to them. I can't do it like that.

Listen, it's not really a story about how greatly they performed. What is it a story about? What's the key two-word phrase throughout Hebrews 11? By faith. By faith, Abraham.

By faith, Sarah. By faith, Noah. By faith, David.

That's how we live in the kingdom of heaven. How did we get forgiveness? We deserved hell and we get heaven. How did that happen? By grace through faith.

It's the same way we enter into this wonderful reality of growing hope day by day. It's in believing. Is that kind of God? And look what we're asked to believe.

That God is God. That's basically what we're asked to believe. Here's a tough one.

Get in the Bible. Let God be declared to you His omnipotence and omniscience and omnipresence, His love, His kindness, His mercy, His grace, His faithfulness, and just take Him at His word. That's the wisest, most rational decision in any situation we can ever come to is believe that God will be who He says He is and do what He's promised to do.

And we're trusting Him and He's proving Himself trustworthy. We're relying on Him. Finding out again He's reliable and joy and peace are developing in our lives.

Faith towards the Lord, counting on the Lord, trusting in Him and His word. To what end? Until we are flooded with hope that you may abound in hope. We're not that far from the ocean, really, especially if you've spent some of your life in Dallas, Texas.

We're very close to the ocean. Oh, what a majestic scene when the oceans swell up, the breakers crash up on the shoreline. This word abound is a word that could be used in the first century to describe waves abounding on a shoreline, coming in with power, coming in with impact, coming in and what's there is shaped by what's rolling in from the ocean.

Our God of hope wants us to abound in hope. He wants us to be flooded with all-encompassing waves of confidence in God, appreciation toward the Lord, a growing certainty concerning the Lord's faithfulness, anchored in all of His guarantees toward us, and anticipating His fulfilling of all of His promises to us. Where we're the coastline and what's rolling in are abounding waves of hope.

Boy, what a picture. The ocean's so mighty, so majestic. Well, God made that.

And all He had to do was say it. He's the one that wants to be rolling His spiritual waves over our heart and mind that you may abound in hope. How is this powerful impact going to be delivered to us? By the powerful work of the Holy Spirit.

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. God's Holy Spirit is willing to take all these realities, working them into us through the Word, He being the power that brings the impact upon us. You know, so often, you've done this, you look at the Word and you think, oh man, I don't know if I can live up to that.

That's not the point. The point is, can God do that? Those who trust He can do that. The way they live is changed.

How? By God. Salvation is the work of the Lord from A to Z. That's why He's called Alpha and Omega. The beginning and the end and everything in between.

Yeah, but why doesn't it just happen? Because He wants to develop a trusting relationship with us. He wants us to seek Him for these things, count on Him for these things. He comes through and we grow in the reality of who He is and what He can do.

We're back to faith. The Holy Spirit unleashing His powerful work of convincing our heart and mind, strengthening our souls, building us up, generally impacting us with His presence in all of these ways. I think a fitting conclusion would be for us to pray together for one another, beseeching the Lord right in line with this verse.

You know, this Bible is the ultimate prayer list. How do we know what to pray about? What God has said. The troubles we'll get into, the faithfulness He wants to demonstrate.

If we ask anything according to His will, we know we've been heard. We have that which we ask. Here is the will of God.

It's revealed in the Word. Why don't we respond that way in prayer? Let's stand together, shall we? Let's pray. Lord God of hope, we appeal to You, Lord, to be working this wonderful work in our lives.

We ask You, Lord, for our own hearts and lives, for one another, for this precious church, for friends and loved ones and neighbors and work colleagues. Lord God of hope, we ask You to fill us with all joy and peace day by day, step by step, in believing as we trust in You, Lord, with the very issues of our lives, that we may abound in hope, just be flooded with Your hope, all delivered to us by the power of the Holy Spirit. Lord, for Your glory, for our need, and for the reaching of others, we ask You for this kind of hope growing in us.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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