

Gentiles Rejoice in the Root of Jesse

by John Piper

The sermon emphasizes the importance of welcoming others for the glory of God and finding hope in Jesus Christ, the root of Jesse.

Duration: 45:48

Scripture: Romans 15:4, Romans 15:12

Topics: "Hope And Faith", "Welcoming Others"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on verses 9 to 13 and argues that their main purpose is to awaken overwhelming hope in believers. The evidence for this is found in the fact that the Bible is written to bring hope, and the speaker quotes several passages to support this claim. The climax of these verses is verse 12, which promises the fulfillment of these Old Testament passages. The speaker also mentions the importance of welcoming others as Christ has welcomed us, and emphasizes doing so for the glory of God.

Transcript

The following message is by Pastor John Piper. More information from *Desiring God* is available at www.desiringgod.org. Romans chapter 15, verses 7 through 13. Therefore, welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you for the glory of God.

For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, Therefore, I will praise you among the Gentiles and sing your name. And again it is said, Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.

And again, Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him. And again, Isaiah says, The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles, in him will the Gentiles hope. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit, you may abound in hope.

Let's pray. Father, in accord with this text, I plead with you that we who have gathered together here and at North Campus would abound in hope so clearly. This is your heart for us in this hour.

That we would, by the power, the omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit, in this third weekend of Advent, abound, overflow, brim with hope. And since it is a work of the Spirit, I'm pleading for it. For I know there are many who do not feel hope.

They feel frightened. They feel oppressed. They feel discouraged.

They feel unclean. They feel unprotected. They feel broken.

The feelings are not brimming. They're almost empty. The cup feels almost empty.

And so I'm asking for a miracle in these services, Lord. The miracle that this text is intended to work. So come.

Name is like honey on our lips. Your spirit like water to our souls. Your word now is a lamp to our feet.

And this text shows the lamp shining far into the future with incomparable happiness. So God, come and do this text. I pray now in Jesus name.

Amen. Our focus is verses 9 through 13. Last part of verse 9, especially.

And we will come there in a few moments. But first, let's review. Because we'll understand these verses better if we go back and do a little five-minute time with last week's message.

OK, so verse 7 was the main practical behavioral change he wants to bring about at Bethlehem and Rome. Namely, welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you for the glory of God. Have your arms stretched wide.

Get them around people. Cross aisles, move around in pews, linger in commons. Walk with your head up in the parking lot and not down.

Be ready and alert to greet, to fold in, to invite over. That was the main point of verse 7 and last week. Do it the way Christ did it.

That would take a year to unpack, would it not? And do it. We put stress on this because it is the stress in the flow. Do it for the glory of God.

Be the kind of church who welcomes each other and guests. The kind that are easy and the kind that are hard to welcome. Do that for the glory of God.

Do it in a way that makes God look really good. Strive in your mind and in your way to make God look great in this. Now, the question arises for some at that point.

Does that make pawns out of people instead of persons? In other words, if you're just kind of always thinking, glorify God. Okay, got to glorify God. So what should we do? Okay, you're supposed to welcome people to glorify God.

And now we're sort of maneuvering people for this other end. And they're not persons anymore, they're pawns. Is that a question that troubles you? Does that have any legitimacy? Well, the human heart is deceitful above all things and desperately corrupt.

And it just might be conceivable in our kinds of fallen hearts that one could treat people like pawns for the glory of God. But that's not what Paul means. And it's not what I mean.

When I say welcome each other and do it with a view to the glory of God, I don't mean treat people like pawns. There is in my mind, I believe in Paul's mind, God's mind, no conflict between loving persons and in loving them, aiming that God get glory in that. I don't think there's any conflict there.

And the reason is this. The reason is that loving someone means doing what is really good for them. And it is always good for someone to make much of God.

So when we welcome someone for the glory of God, to make God look great, we're hoping and we're praying that we will welcome in a way that will awaken in the welcomed a love for the glory of God that is more intense and more lively and thus gets him glory and knits their hearts more deeply in friendship with us. That's what you would want, isn't it, if you really welcomed somebody? And you don't do that to pawns. You don't try to make pawns awaken to the glory of God so that they're satisfied in God and thus have a common vision with you and are knit together in a deep friendship.

That's person talk. In fact, I will go so far as to say, loving people for the glory of God is the only way to love people. Because if we don't aim to help people see and savor the glory of God, we don't love them.

I don't care what we do for them. I'll say it again. Loving people for the glory of God is the only way to love people.

Because if your aim in welcoming and loving someone is not that they would see and savor God more deeply and more fully than they do, you don't love them. There's no conflict here. We are not turning people into pawns when we're ready to lay down our lives that they would know God.

So the practical command was clear, was it not? Verse 7. Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you. Be that kind of person and do it all so that God is made to look good. God gets glory.

Then verses 8 and 9 were the motivation that Paul uses to prompt that behavior. And the argument went something like this. Do that for each other because Christ became a servant to Jewish people for two things, two goals, two aims.

That he might help the Jews in confirming their promises, glorify God for his truthfulness. That's verse 8. And he became that servant to the Jews, giving his life a ransom for many so that it would spill over onto Gentiles and they would give God glory for his mercy. That's verse 9. So you see how the argument works.

Receive each other. Welcome each other. Accept each other.

Pursue and engage and welcome over and be hospitable towards each other for the glory of God because Christ came so welcoming and hospitable to this world and became a servant for Jewish people to fulfill all the promises made in the Old Testament to them and confirm them so that they would see in him a validation of the truthfulness, the covenant-keeping faithfulness of God. And then he did it in such a way, amazingly, that we Gentiles would be grafted in to the rich root of the olive tree of Abrahamic covenant and every blessing for Israel is now ours in Messiah Jesus. And we now glorify God for his mercy to us Gentiles.

And that was the argument for why we should be a welcoming people. Now, now, verses 9 to 13, what are these about? I think it's pretty plain, but I'll try to justify it. I think the goal of verses 9 to 13 is to awaken in you overwhelming hope.

So here are my three questions. Why do I think that? Where's the evidence for that? Why do you think the main point of these verses are to produce hope-filled, hope-overflowing people? Question number two, hope in what and hope for what? Hope based on what and hope for what treasure or happiness? That's question number two. And question number three is how does he do it? How does it work? What do you do and what do you say when you want to help people have hope? The how question.

Okay, so those are my three questions. I'll tell you ahead of time, lest you be too full of anticipation for number three. I'm going to do it next week.

I'm going to say a little bit about this week, but I knew I'm preaching two sermons in these services. And so I'm trying to be chaste and limited. Question number one.

Why do you think that these verses are designed by God, by Paul, to awaken overflowing hope in us here in these services? I have three answers to that question. Number one, verses 9 to 12 are quotations from the Bible, the Old Testament. In fact, they're quotations from, interestingly, all three parts of the Old Testament.

The Tanakh, made up of Torah, prophet and writing. And he's got quotes from all three. You see that at the beginning, you know, at the end of verse 9, right there in the middle there, as it is written.

So he's going to bring some Bible in underneath his motivation in verses 8 and 9. He says, as it is written. So everything from verse 9 to verse 12 is all Bible quotations, four of them. Psalms, Isaiah, and Deuteronomy.

Now, I remember very clearly that he just said five verses ago why the Bible was written. Do you remember why the Bible is written? Verse 5. No, verse 4. Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through the endurance and through the encouragement of the scriptures, we might have, say that word, hope. Oh, all right.

Argument number one is, if you just said, all of the scriptures were written that we might have hope, and now you are doing what you almost never do, namely giving bang, bang, bang, bang, four quotes from that book back to back, you must want us to feel hope. That's my first argument. Here's my second one.

Verse 12 is the climax and the most explicit promise that these Old Testament passages are going to come true. You know, if you read these, they're interesting. The first one is a man testifying among the Gentiles that he's rejoicing in God.

And then the next two are commands to the Gentiles to rejoice with the people of Israel. And neither of those sound like a guarantee that it will happen. But verse 12 is a guarantee.

The root of Jesse will come, even he who rises to rule the Gentiles, in him will the Gentiles... Now, say it again. In him will the Gentiles hope. That's a promise.

That's not a command. It's not a witness. It's a promise.

When Messiah comes, the Gentiles, the nations are going to put hope in him. So Paul is clearly choosing verses that are not only from the Bible, all of which are designed for hope, he chooses the climactic verse to make it explicit. So my second argument is that he's all about hope for you here because he chooses verse 12 from Isaiah 11:10, which says that we're all going to hope in Messiah.

Here's my third argument. Verse 13 begins and ends with the explicit statement that his aim is hope. So let's read verse 13.

This is one of my favorite, favorite benedictions and favorite verses for my soul. May the God of hope... Let's just stop there and let that sink in. He could have said God of peace.

He could have said God of love. He could have said God of justice. He could have said God of truth.

They're all true. They're all glorious. I love this one.

Do you not? God of hope. It's as though he would identify God as the hope-giving God. That's who he is.

So feel that. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that by the power of the Holy Spirit, you may abound in hope. So that's his goal.

Argument number three is that it's just stated bluntly, specifically, explicitly. God, do it. God of hope, do it.

Do it by your spirit. Make this people abound in hope. So my answer to my first question, why do you say that the main point of these verses 9 through 13 is that God wants us as a church to be overflowing in hope in these services when we leave, and all through the Advent season, and all through our pain and troubled lives? Those are my three reasons.

And I should probably pause here to say that the implication of this that word abound in verse 13, let that have its proper effect. Pray that. Pray that.

And here's what the effect would be. So let's just be praying it because it's never perfect. This is not perfect.

It's just we want more of this, right? You may have about this much of this, and you get this much more if you pray tonight. And some of you got this much. You want that much.

What this text is saying is, oh, God. Your people struggle to have hope. Otherwise, this text wouldn't be written.

Grant that that it would overflow and therefore push out depression and discouragement and grumbling and bitterness and anxiety and fear. There are emotions that are incompatible with hope. Are there not? That's why we want it so bad.

We hate these emotions. We don't like them. They make us miserable.

And we know that the alternative is abounding hope. Because when it abounds, the cup is filling. It's filling.

And the fear is just jumping over everywhere. These little frog fears are jumping out because that doesn't really work. I just made that up.

Whatever air air is going out of this cup, fear, air, grumbling air is just moving out of this cup as the fluid of hope rises. Lord, do it. Do it.

OK, question number two. It's really my only other question. Hope in what hope for what? What's he referring to? We've got the word hope one, two, three times explicitly.

More if you go back to verse four, more if you go back further. The clearest answer to the. On what basis and for what is in verse 12.

It's a quote from Isaiah 11:10. It's a great Christmas text. And.

Numerous carols are built on this term, root of Jesse. And again, Isaiah says. The root of Jesse will come.

Even he who rises to rule the Gentiles. In him will the Gentiles hope there it is very clear. In him will the Gentiles hope.

Now, let's just step back and get this root of Jesse word clear. That's not plain. If you're not a if you can grow up in the church, you know what in the world? Who's Jesse? Jesse, Jesse Ventura.

Root. How's that work? Root is before, not after. This is not working here.

Help me. OK, take a few minutes on this. Jesse was King David's father.

King David was the greatest king of Israel and the Messiah, the long hoped for one. Who would be the king and defeat the enemies and establish the kingdom and produce peace and righteousness forever and ever was often called the son of David. Because David was the greatest.

And the prophecy in 2 Samuel 7 was it's going to be your seed, David. He's going to come and he's going to sit on your throne someday. And so you have you have lepers and you have blind men say, son of David, son of David, have mercy on me when Jesus walks by.

So the root of Jesse is the Messiah. So I thought about this root issue root or shoot. Here's the way I think that works.

I'm not sure, but I think so. I looked around and not many commentaries even try to explain this. I think root seems like a problem here.

Shoot would make sense. Root doesn't make sense. Root is before.

I think it works like this. If you have a tree and it gets cut down like David dies. The root grows up, the root grows up.

But that's as close as I can get to making sense out of this. We know what it means, whether it whether it works for us or not. We know it refers to the coming one who is the seed of David and the branch.

He's called the branch elsewhere in Isaiah's his root and his branch. Don't stumble over the word root. What's he saying about him? Why do we hope in him? How can we hope in him? And what is so hope worthy about him? Let me take you.

Jesus stopped the mouths of people more often than once, and he did it by the way he handled scripture several times. And one of them was with the son of David issue. Do you remember this one? Let me read

it to you.

This is Matthew 22, 42. He's talking to the Pharisees. He says to them, he's taking the initiative now.

They've stopped asking questions. He's going to ask a question and it's over. They have they have no answer to this question.

He says, what do you think about the. Christ, the Messiah, the Messiah, the Christos, the Messiah, what do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he? That's Jesus asking the Pharisees. They said to him, the son of David.

In other words, the root of Jesse, the son of David. He said to them, well, how is it then that David in the spirit that is inspired by the spirit when he wrote Psalm 110, verse one, how is it that David in the spirit calls him Lord, calls the Messiah Lord saying, and then he quotes it. The Lord, that's God, the father said to my Lord, that's the Messiah, sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.

And then Jesus says. If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son? End of conversation. Just they don't have anything to say.

They just what's he doing? I mean, what's going on there? I think what's going on is this. You're right. You're right.

I mean, you're right. Son of David is the right answer. That's who Sonny is.

Let me give you a little more insight into who it is. He's Lord of David to. Jesus.

Often pointed to his deity. When he didn't just explicitly say, I and the father are one. And we should hear those pointers as well as those open, explicit sayings.

And he's saying, oh, much more than David is here. Much more than a mere child or great, great, great, great, great, great grandson like David is here. So much more than David is here.

That's what I think Paul is saying when he says you will hope the Gentiles Bethlehem 2000 years after it happens, you're going to hope in the root of Jesse when he rules the world. Your hope will be in him. So our first answer to the question hope in what is hope in Jesus, the root of Jesse, the son of David, the Messiah.

Now, the emphasis in that word in. Hope in him falls on him as the basis or ground. I know the word in English could be he's our hope as the content of our hope, like my hope is to win the game would be that the winning is the content of my hope.

Or I could say Michael Jordan is my hope to win the game. And then Michael Jordan is the basis of the hope to win the game. I'm saying this in here is the second one.

Jesus is the basis, the ground of my hope. And I say that just because the way it looks in the original, both are true. Both are true.

But linger on this one for just a moment. This text is saying, don't base your hope for the future on your intelligence. Don't base your hope for the future on your health.

Don't base your hope for the future on your money or your job or your reputation. Fill in the blank. Base it on Jesus.

Base it on Jesus. Talk like this. Develop this kind of family talk or friend talk if you're single.

Develop this kind of family and friend talk. Jesus, you are my hope. Jesus, you are our only hope.

Jesus, you are my hope for salvation. Jesus, you are my hope for marriage, for this marriage. Jesus, you are my hope for my children, the ones that are little and the ones that are wayward.

You are my only hope for my kids. Jesus, you're my only hope for my ministry. You're my only hope for this church.

You're my only hope for a million dollars in December. Talk like that. Don't say, well, there are a few things like maybe salvation where I hope in Jesus.

And over here, I really hope in my portfolio. Don't be like that. That thing will evaporate in a minute.

Tell Noelle, I've told her two or three times in the last month or two, I can't figure out reports on the economy. Is it good or is it bad? You know, I did bad, bad, bad, good, good, good. And if my hope, if my hope rose and fell with Wall Street or General Motors, or Ford, or Katrina, or I would just be knocked.

Oh, I just don't know how I would do ministry or life or family or anything. I'm so glad we have, yeah, let's call him that, a rock in which we can hope. So now the question is, for what? If we're hoping in him in the sense of he's the foundation and the guarantee and the securing of the hope, and if I have him, I've got everything.

What is the everything? Now, to answer that question, I am going to leave this text. And not going to leave Romans, just going to remind you of some things in Romans. Chapter 5, verse 2, we rejoice, middle of the verse, we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

Now we've got content to our hope. That's one answer. There's more than one answer.

We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. That's what's coming to us. The glory of God is coming to us.

The Bible says that the heavens are declaring the glory of God, and the Bible says that the gospel is declaring the glory of God. Psalm 19, verse 1, 2 Corinthians 4, 4 to 6. And what grieves us and makes us heavy-hearted is that, according to 1 Corinthians 13, 12, now we see through a glass dimly, but then face to face. Look, let's just be honest and encourage each other.

Being thrilled with the glory of God is a battle. And the Bible explains that to us. It doesn't beat us up mainly about that.

It warns us that we better fight that battle. But it doesn't assume. It's easy to see and savor what's looked at through a dark, dirty mirror of finiteness and fallenness.

That's hard. Thank God for the Bible, and thank God for church, and thank God for prayer, thank God for the Holy Spirit, and thank God for seasons like Christmas that help us. But it's a battle.

But it is, it is the content of our hope. One of the ways to taste it and feel it is this. You were made to see greatness and to admire greatness with great enjoyment.

It's one of the reasons we go to tall mountains. We go to the Grand Canyon. We go to see Narnia, and we hope it's big, and scary, and safe.

Because there's something in here that just wants to be sucked out into greatness. Those are little witnesses to what we're made for, and it's God. It's the glory of God.

It isn't Narnia, I promise you. And it isn't the Grand Canyon. It isn't the Alps or the Himalayas.

Those are dim echoes of the glory of God, but they are echoes, and they are meant to help us. So my first answer to what are we hoping for is that someday the prayer of Jesus in John 17, 24 will come true. Father, I pray that they will be with me where I am to see my glory.

Here's my second answer from Romans 8, 20 and 21. That was Romans 5, 2. This is Romans 8, 20 and 21. The creation waits.

No, the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it in hope that... What hope? What hope? ...that the creation itself would be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. So I'm going to put it like this. When Messiah rules the nations and we put our hope on or in him, one of the things we eagerly hope for, expect, and have confidence in is a new heavens and a new earth with no more earthquakes, no more Katrinas, no more threatened flu pandemics, no more sickness, no more pain, no more depression, no more crying, no more mourning for the former things have passed away.

Righteousness and peace dwell. Did you know that in the verses immediately preceding Isaiah 11, 10, which is the one he quotes in verse 12, it goes like this? So Paul knew this. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb.

The leopard shall lie down with the young goat and the calf and the lion and the fatted calf together and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze. Their young shall lie down together.

The lion shall eat straw like an ox. The nursing child shall play over the cobra and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

If you don't hope for that, you need to start hoping for that. There's going to be a new earth and a new heaven. Some of you have been taught we die and we go to heaven and forever after we're like ghosts.

In the air and there's no world anymore, no grass, no lions, no bears. Wrong to new heaven and a new earth and all the beauty that we've ever loved will be increased ten thousand fold. That's my second answer to what are we hoping for? And here's my last one.

New bodies so that we can enjoy it when it comes. This is chapter eight, verse twenty three. We who have the first fruits of the spirit.

Grown, that's why I stressed a minute ago, the battle grown inwardly as we wait. Life now is a lot of waiting as we wait eagerly for the redemption of our bodies, for in this hope you were saved. Who hopes for what he sees? But if you hope for what you don't see, you wait for it with patience.

It is a great hope stripper to get sick when you're old. A kid gets sick. He knows he's going to get well and live 20, 30, 40, 50 more years.

An 80 year old gets sick. This may be the last one. And unless there's another hope beyond retirement, beyond getting stronger, prettier, smarter, more what's what's the adjective for memory? I can't remember.

There probably isn't one out. There isn't one. I have a better memory.

If you if you if our hope isn't. I'm going to get to see Jesus hope of glory. I'm going to get a new body in time.

And then this new body is going to be put on a new earth. And everything I thought was a pleasure in this life is going to look like a six year old's view of intercourse. It will be unspeakably glorious.

So that's the end of my two questions. And the last one, which at about one o'clock this morning, I decided to preach on next week. Goes like this.

How does that happen? How do you get to be that kind of person? What is Paul showing us here that would help us understand the dynamic of moving from the discouraged person to the hopeful person? What are the dynamics of this text? Unpack for us how it works in the heart, how texts and spirit and faith all work together so that this happens, this happens. And that's what I don't have time to do in this service. But can I pose you a question or two to be pondering till next time? How does faith work with text and spirit? Those three.

Here's another one. I'm really puzzled. Let's read verse 13.

I'll spend most of my time on verse 13 next time. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing. Now, if you stop there, wouldn't you assume that hope streaming from God produces joy and peace? I would.

I think it does. But the rest of the verse throws a wrench in the thing. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that, so that, so that now you have this joy and peace so that you, by the power of the Holy Spirit, you might abound in hope.

Well, wait a minute. Is the hope at the front end of joy and peace or is the hope flowing out of joy and peace? Does joy and peace come from hope or does hope come from joy and peace? I needed more time with that question than I have here. And so that's where we're going next time.

Let's just end by savoring verse 12 again. The root of Jesse, not will, has come. Even he who rises to rule the Gentiles, that's us.

He rules us. And in him, we Gentiles now, by that glorious saving rule, hope in him. So, Father, I ask again that you would do this text, that there'd be enough of the Bible here and enough of Christ here, enough promise here, enough beautiful future here, enough love and grace and mercy here that people who came in this room without hope would leave with hope.

And, oh, God, would you, by your great grace, by your Spirit, as Paul says, cause it to abound, overflow, brim, push out fear, push out anxiety, push out murmuring. And push out discouragement and push out just vague, low feelings. Just push them out over the top and come on up, hope, to the top of our lives, I pray.

In Jesus' name, amen. Would you stand and, without any instruments and with all your heart, sing the two verses of joy to the world, because you know them, that are rooted in this text, the first one and the last

one, comes to rule, comes to rule. And in the ruling one, we Gentiles now hope, not in President Bush and not in any rule of any man, but in the rule of King Jesus who has risen to rule the nations.

In just a short time, maybe 10 minutes, Lord willing, we're going to show one of the ways he ruled in and over the death of five of his precious missionaries. That's one thing I wanted to say. And Wednesday night, the gift of Christ, north, all the church together in a special Christmas program, and now may the God of hope fill you, do it, Lord, fill you with all joy and peace in believing that somehow, before and after, hope causing and hope resulting, you might abound in hope.

And all the people said, amen. Thank you for listening to this message by John Piper, pastor for preaching at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Feel free to make copies of this message to give to others, but please do not charge for those copies or alter the content in any way without permission.

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