

Podcast 269 The God of All 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." (Romans 15:13)

Scott Moore: Welcome to the "Building Faith Families" podcast with Steve Demme. I'm your host, Scott Moore. Thanks for joining us today. Good morning, Steve. How are you today?

Steve: Just peachy.

Scott: You take your walk already?

Steve: No, I haven't. I have been up preparing because not only am I doing a podcast today, I have two appointments/consultations this morning after that, and then I have to film two videos segments this afternoon.

Scott: You're busy man.

Steve: I feel like I'm back in the saddle again, so to speak. Conference season is coming upon us. Emails are going back and forth with conference coordinators. I received a couple in my inbox. By the time people will be listening to this or willing, I'll be on the road again.

Steve: I really like this topic that we're going to study today. I have been edified and enriched just reading through the Scriptures and meditating on it. I'm looking forward to discussing it. I hope that our listeners will as well.

The topic is taken from Romans 15:13. "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." It's a wonderful passage. Our Father is the God of hope.

Let's pray. Father, thank You for being the God of hope. Thank You for Your Spirit that fills us and gives us all hope and faith while believing. Thank You for this positive characteristic that You embrace and that You give to us.

Help us to assimilate hope today. We're going to be going through difficult times as the body of Christ. We know that even as members of the body of Christ, we experience trials and tribulations. Yet, through it all, You continue to give us hope. Help us to tap in to Your hope today in Jesus' name. Amen.

Steve: If I was to ask you though, think of a verse that has the word hope. Of course, you can't pick the one we just did. When you think of the word hope, what verse or

verses jump out at you? It would be so interesting to see what our listeners would say. I generally think of 1 Corinthians 13:13, "Three things will last forever, faith, hope, and love. And the greatest of these is love." When I read that verse, love takes the pre-eminence.

Paul gives credence to faith. He's giving credence to hope. Yet he's making his point that the greatest of these three is love.

We know that love is essential. God so loved the world that He gave His Son. God is love. Here are two passages here reveal how hope and love are interwoven. You can't see my hands, but they're making interwoven motions right now. [laughs]

Psalm 33: 18–20 in the NLT says, "The Lord watches over those who fear Him, those who rely on His unfailing love. He rescues them from death and keeps them alive in times of famine. We put our hope in the Lord. He is our help and our shield."

Psalm 147 says "The Lord's delight is in those who fear Him, those who put their hope in His unfailing love."

We observe this interweaving between love and hope. The second member of our threesome in 1 Corinthians 13 is faith. We live by faith. We're justified by faith. He that comes to God must believe that He is.

Faith and hope are also tied together, especially when you think of the definition of faith which is, "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1)

Abraham is the father of all the faithful. Romans 4:18 speaks of him when it says, "In hope, against hope, he believed, in order that he might become a father of many nations."

He didn't see that he was going to have a son. Even when he had one son, he certainly never saw the plethora of children that would emerge through his seed beginning with Isaac then through Jacob and eventually the 12 tribes, until in the book of Exodus, we see over a million.

Romans 8:24–25, "Hope that is seen is not hope, for who hope for what he sees, but if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience." Thus we see that hope and faith are tied together as well.

In my mind, hope is usually dwarfed by love and faith because so many of our sermons are about love and faith. However as important as they are, hope is what gets us up in the morning.

Hope is what keeps us going. The best illustration I heard of this was a friend of mine named Mike King. I may have spoken of him earlier. Mike King, 19 years old, was in a tragic motorcycle accident. He was fulfilling a lifelong dream. He wanted to ride his motorcycle to Alaska. He made it as far as Banff in Canada, then he was hit by a car.

He's been paralyzed now from the waist down and is confined to a wheelchair. When he was going through rehab, which was extremely difficult, not just physically but emotionally. What does your mind go through when you have an injury of this magnitude. If you have read Joni Eareckson Tada's biography, you see the depression that she battled. Mike observed that the difference between the Christians and the non-Christians was, the Christians had hope.

I've known Mike now for many years. This man was an athlete. He still is an athlete. Mike is now married, Praise the Lord. He's got a wonderful ministry in Texas, called Powered to Move. Mike pushed his wheelchair all the way from Alaska to Washington DC. Mike is a wonderful guy.

Well, I thought of that many times. Which makes me think of Jeremiah 29:11, which is probably the second most quoted scripture to do with hope. If I was to do a study or a poll of people, when they think of the word hope many people would probably quote Jeremiah 29:11, which for many folks is their life verse.

"I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare, and not for evil, to give you a future, and a hope."

Jeremiah's talking to the people that have already been taken out of the land of Israel because of their sin. They're now living in Babylon. They're yearning to go back to Jerusalem. They feel totally forgotten, you might say. God tells them, "No, I'm going to give you a future and I'm going to give you a hope."

I am convinced that hope comes from above. Three verses in the Psalms, "For God alone, oh my soul wait in silence, for my hope is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress, I shall not be shaken. On God, rest my salvation and my glory, my mighty rock, my refuge is God." That's Psalm 62:5-7.

Psalm 71: 5, "Oh, Lord, You alone are my hope. I've trusted You, oh Lord, from childhood." Psalm 39 says, "Lord, where do I put my hope? My only hope is in You." Hope comes from above. Hope gives us courage.

Psalm 31:24, "Be strong and courageous, all you who put your hope in the Lord."
Psalm 42:11, "Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God. I will praise Him again, my Savior and my God."

Psalm 146:5, "Blessed is he, whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord is God." Finally, Proverbs 10:28, "The hope of the righteous brings joy."

I like to think of two words here. Hopeful is the opposite of hopeless. When you're full of hope, you have joy. Regardless of your circumstances, regardless of whether you're living in the valley, regardless of whether you're consigned to spend 70 years in Babylon, a foreign country.

Your hope is in the Lord. Circumstances all around us are going to change from day to day, from minute to minute. God never changes. Our hope is fixed on Him. May God help us to be hopeful and not hopeless.

Here are a couple of verses that talk about hopelessness. Proverbs 13:12, "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire or a dream fulfilled is a tree of life."

Scott: If your hope is deferred, you don't have any reason to get up.

Steve: Absolutely. I've been there. We've all tasted hopelessness. Some people, sadly, a lot more than I have. May God give us fresh hope today, all those that are struggling with a sick heart.

Jeremiah experienced it. Jeremiah, one of my heroes in the Bible. Jeremiah was born probably about the end of Manasseh's reign. Maybe even while Manasseh reigned.

Manasseh reigned for 55 years, and was the wickedest king of the southern kingdom. The streets ran with blood. It was horrific. During that time with an awful ruler, Jeremiah is born. When he's a young man, Josiah is on the throne, Manasseh's grandson. After Manasseh, there was Amon. They conspired against Amon because he was evil. He continued in the way of Manasseh.

Josiah was eight years old when he takes the throne. In that time period, Jeremiah is born. Jeremiah grows up during, you might say, the golden age. Josiah was a wonderful king. He reigned for over 30 years. God touched his heart as he read the scripture. He was a restorer and turned to God with his whole heart. He fought against evil and was an amazing king.

At the same time, Jeremiah witnessed what had been sown during Manasseh's reign. The price had to be paid. Even with all these wonderful accomplishments of Josiah and his heart for God, Israel still had to be punished and. During his lifetime,

Jerusalem is forsaken and underwent an awful siege. Jeremiah watches Israel go into captivity.

Yet here is what he says in the Book of Lamentations 3:18–24, "My endurance has perished, so has my hope from the Lord." There's a man with a sick heart. "Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall, my soul continually remembers it and it's bowed down within me." Jeremiah is tempted not to get out of bed in the morning. He's hopeless.

Somehow the Spirit of God comes upon him. The next verse says, "This I call to mind. Therefore, I have hope. The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercy never come to an end. They are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, says my soul. Therefore, I will hope in him. The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks Him."

This is probably what David did when David was at the nadir of his life, in the low point where these men were going to stone him. His wife and kids were taken away. They'd gone back to the city, and there was nobody there. "David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because all the people were bitter in soul, each for his sons and daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God." (1 Samuel 30:6) Somehow the Spirit of God came upon David, as He did upon Jeremiah.

I'm trying to take this in. I don't think I'll ever be able to taste what Jeremiah taste or experience. He goes through the highs. He goes through the lows. He's up and he's down. He's hopeless. He's hopeful. When he gets his mind fixed on God and God's steadfast love, God's faithfulness, God is his hope, and he's able to rejoice.

I do get a lot of hope from the Word of God. Romans 15:4 says, "Whatever was written in former days, was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the scriptures, we might have hope."

I think about Hezekiah and Manasseh. I think about Josiah in the reforms. I think about how we're going down a slippery slope in America right now. I have to physically almost lift up my head and look to God and remind myself from scripture that He doesn't change, and that He has seen Israel go through awful experiences. Yet He was able to restore them and bring them back. They entered into the Holy Land again with Nehemiah and Ezra.

There's hope. Here are some more verses. Psalm 130:5 says, "I wait for the Lord. My soul waits and in His Word, I hope." Another verse similar to that says, Psalm 119:114, "You are my hiding place, and my shield, I hope in Your word."

God doesn't change. His Word doesn't change. There's a ton of stuff in scripture that encourage us that even in the darkest times, God can bring good out of it. What was that verse you quoted before?

Scott: Hebrews 6:19, "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure." Then, if you go back a verse, it says in verse 18, "God did this, so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged." That's it. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul.

Steve: Wonderful verse. I've got two more since ultimately our hope is in Jesus. 1 Peter 1:3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

There's our hope in Jesus, Titus 2:13, "Our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ."

Steve: I'm going to close with the verse we started with. This verse was one of the ones we had to memorize a few summers ago at a Joni and Friends Family retreat. and was on our T-shirts.

"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 be truly hope-full and hope-filled, because the God of hope is filling us. Amen."

Father, help us to take in what you're offering here in this verse, that the God of Hope will fill us with all joy and peace in believing and that when we receive this through the power of God's Holy Spirit, we will not just eat by with a little bit of hope, but we will abound in hope.

I pray that You will help us to experience that. Help us to be a measure of who we are, and as God said, yes, there's character and yes, there's training, but there still is an abundance of hope waiting for us today.

Give us a fresh draught of hope so that we can bounce out of bed in our hearts regardless of what is going on around us, regardless of the valleys that we're in, regardless of our circumstances. Help us like Jeremiah to get our eyes up on the God of all hope. In Jesus' name, Amen.