

HOW TO GET HOPE

Romans 15:13

By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Hope. The Bible says the three most important Christian virtues are faith, hope, and love. I think most of us understand why faith and love would be at the top of the list. Faith – the condition for salvation. Love – Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God and others. But hope? What's so important about hope?
2. This morning we're going to learn why hope is so important; why you desperately need it; as in, why this may be the missing ingredient in your Christian life, and why it's not working.
3. And then we're going to learn how to get it.

II. TEXT

1. **Romans 15:13** Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

III. A PRAYER FOR HOPE

1. This is a prayer. Remember that this is an epistle from Paul to the church in Rome, and in this verse he is praying for them.
2. As you read Paul's epistles you will find many of his prayers – "Pauline Prayers". Don't rush past these. They are very important.
3. Examples of Paul's Prayers: This is one of three prayers that we find in this chapter alone. Let me read you some examples of Paul's prayers.
 - i. Romans 15:5-6 5 Now may the God who gives endurance and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, according to Christ Jesus, 6 so that you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ with one mind and one voice.
 - ii. Romans 15:33 May the God of peace be with all of you. Amen.
 - iii. Romans 16:20 The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.
 - iv. 2 Corinthians 13:9 We also pray that you become mature.

4. What can you learn from Paul's prayers?

i. The importance of prayer.

1. The Bible says that prayer is essential.
2. James 4:2 You do not have because you do not ask.

3. Matthew 7:7 Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you.
4. This is why Paul said...
 - a. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 “Pray constantly.”
 - i. ESV: “Pray without ceasing.”
 - b. Romans 12:12 “Be persistent in prayer.”
 - i. ESV: “Be constant in prayer.”
 - ii. NCV: “Pray at all times.”
5. Paul’s prayers remind us of the importance prayer because he prays often for himself and others.

ii. How to pray effectively.

1. To pray effectively, you must pray according to God’s will.
2. 1 John 5:14 This is the confidence we have before him: If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.
3. Since Paul’s prayers are written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we can be confident that His prayer requests are according to God’s will. Therefore, whatever He prayed for, we can pray for and confidently expect God to answer.

iii. What to pray for.

1. When most people pray, they tend to focus mostly, if not solely, on material things. “God, fix this problem; God, heal this hurt; God, restore this relationship; God, give us this victory; God, provide for this need.”
2. That’s not what Paul does. Paul prays almost exclusively for spiritual things: unity; to glorify God more; joy, peace, hope, grace; spiritual growth; spiritual knowledge and wisdom; and on and on. And if that’s what Paul prays for, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, then that’s what should be praying for too.
3. Don’t stop praying for your material needs. “Cast all your cares on him (1 Pt 5:7).” But don’t forget to pray for your spiritual needs. In fact, prioritize your spiritual needs.

iv. How to advance spiritually.

1. One of the best things about Paul’s prayers is that they filled with principles about how to advance and progress and grow spiritually. I’m explain this as we continue looking at our text today.

5. Don't overlook Paul's prayers. They are rich. They are filled with information, as we'll see this morning.
6. What is Paul praying for in our text today? If you look closely, he is praying for the Roman church to overflow with hope. Not just that you get hope, or even that you are filled with hope, but that you overflow with hope. What does that tell you about the importance of hope? You desperately and urgently need hope.
 - i. It is one of the three most important Christian virtues (1 Cor 13:13).
 - ii. Christianity is a religion of hope.
 1. Theologian **J. I. Packer** (Knowing God, 196) wrote, "NT Christianity is a religion of hope, a faith that looks forward."
 - iii. The gospel is all about hope.
 1. In Col 1:23 Paul wrote about "the hope of the gospel."
 - iv. Christian preaching should be hope-filled preaching.
 1. Pastor **Bryan Chappell** said, "The common denominator of all great preaching is that it gives hope."
7. So, if it is so important, what is it?

IV. WHAT IS HOPE?

1. Christian hope is different from the way the word is ordinarily used. Usually the word hope refers to optimistic desire. If I say, "I hope the Saints win this week," I mean that I want them to win, and I think there's a chance, maybe even a good chance that they can win. Christian hope is different. The Greek word is *elpis*. In contrast to optimistic desire, it is confident expectation. **It is the confident expectation that God will bring about the good that He has promised.** Christian hope is not mere glass-half-full optimism; it is not merely wishful thinking.
2. **Leon Morris** "In the New Testament there is more of a note of certainty in hope than there is in the way we generally use the term. It is a looking forward to things not present indeed, but whose coming is certain." (Pillar NT Commentary, Rm 4:18.)
3. The **MacArthur Study Bible** (Rm 5:2) says, "The word hope in the NT contains no uncertainty; it speaks of something that is certain, but not yet realized."
4. The **Lexham Bible Dictionary** defines *elpis* as "the expectation of what is sure to come."
5. What are Christians confidently expecting?

- i. The primary object of the Christian's hope is eternal life.
 - 1. Titus 1:2 in the hope of eternal life that God, who cannot lie, promised before time began.
 - 2. Titus 3:7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we may become heirs with the hope of eternal life.
 - ii. The Christian already possesses eternal life. But we are not yet enjoying the fullness of eternal life. The Christian's hope is the full inheritance of eternal life and all the blessings that go with it – the blessedness of heaven where there will battle with suffering, sorrow, and Satan will be over (Col 1:5); the resurrection of the body and the end of sin and death (Acts 23:6; Gal 5:5). This is why the Second Coming of Christ is referred to as “the blessed hope (Titus 2:13)”, because when He comes back we will begin the full enjoyment of eternal life.
6. The Christian's hope can be described like this:
- i. In this life you will suffer, but in heaven it will be only bliss.
 - ii. In this life you will face hardship, but in heaven it will be only peace..
 - iii. In this life you may face poverty, but in heaven even the streets are made of gold.
 - iv. In this life you may experience worry and sadness, but in heaven it will be only joy.
 - v. In this life you will wrestle with sin, but in heaven it will be only righteousness.
 - vi. In this life you will be attacked by Satan, but in heaven Satan cannot touch you.
 - vii. In this life you may face rejected, but in heaven you will fully loved and accepted.
 - viii. In this life you may be lonely, but in heaven you will be in the company of Jesus, and the angels, and all the saints that have gone before you.
 - ix. In this life you may be last, but in heaven you will be first.
 - x. In this life you may weep, but in heaven you will be comforted.
 - xi. In this life you may be miserable, but life is short, and soon you will be in paradise.
7. So, the Christian's hope is the fullness of eternal life; it our future inheritance in heaven.

8. If Paul is praying for the Romans to overflow with hope, then this means hope is something that Christians really need. Hope is something that you really need. Why?

V. REASONS YOU NEED HOPE

1. It energizes your endurance.

- i. 1 Thessalonians 1:3 "your endurance inspired by hope."
- ii. Endurance is an essential Christian virtue. It is the ability to remain Christlike in the midst of trials. It is the ability to remain joyful, and peaceful, and content, and Christlike, no matter how hard life gets.
- iii. Where does this endurance come from? Hope.
 - 1. I have joy and peace no matter what happens because I know the best is yet to come. This won't last forever, and soon I'll be in heaven.
 - 2. I am going to stay obedient no matter what happens because I know God will reward me.
- iv. An example of this is Jesus.
- v. Hebrews 12:2 (NLT) "Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross...."
- vi. How did Christ find the strength to go through with the crucifixion? Because of the joy awaiting him. That's hope. He knew:
 - 1. The pain is only temporary.
 - 2. Soon I'll be in heaven.
 - 3. The reward will be worth it.
- vii. How are you doing with endurance? It's one thing to be joyful and peaceful and obedient and kind when life is good, but how do you respond to life's difficulties? If trials toss you around, then you need hope.

2. It encourages your holiness

- i. 1 John 3:3 And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself just as he is pure.
- ii. The hope in this verse is specifically the confident expectation of the second coming.
- iii. What will happen when Jesus comes back?
 - 1. We will be judged. All of our deeds will be exposed.

- 2. We will be rewarded. God will reward me for every good thing.
- iv. That's a big motivation for holiness!
- v. How are you doing with holiness? Have you been living in sin? Have you been compromising? Have you become worldly? Are you struggling to find the motivation and strength for consistent holy living; to make progress in holiness? If so, then you need hope.

3. It enhances your witness.

- i. 1 Peter 3:15 but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.
- ii. When you have hope, unbelievers notice it, because they don't have it (Eph 2:12). And they will want to know where you got it.
 - 1. How are you able to maintain joy and peace and contentment and kindness in the midst of adversity?
 - 2. Why are you so virtuous?
- iii. But if you are living with hope, then unbelievers won't see any difference in you, and therefore they won't be interested in your Jesus.
- iv. So, let's get back to our Pauline prayer in Rm 15:13. The main idea of the prayer is this: You need hope, and God wants to give you more than enough. How do you know that you need it? Because Paul is praying for it. The verse also explains how to grow in hope. It gives us four steps.

VI. FOUR STEPS TO GROW IN HOPE

1. Know the source.

- i. To grow in hope, you have to know where to get it; you have to know the source. And Paul's prayer gives it to you.
- ii. **Romans 15:13** Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- iii. The source of hope is "the God of hope."
- iv. The term "God of" is used 290x in the Old Testament, and 40 times in the New. When you see it, stop and study and meditate because it tells you something about God. It tells you about God's character, His attributes. For example, God is called the God of

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the God of our Lord Jesus Christ; the God of all comfort, the God of all grace, the God of endurance and encouragement, the God of justice, the God of love, the God of peace, the God of truth, and in Rm 15:13 He is called the God of hope. What does it mean? It means two things.

- v. First, it means that God is the source of hope. That's how the New Living Translation translates this phrase: "God, the source of hope." In other words, if you want hope, then you have to get it from God. You have to look to Him. You can't get hope from false religion; from education; from professional success; from pleasure; from science; from politics; from another person; and you certainly can't get it from sin. You can only get it from the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. Why? Because God has provided hope for the hopeless by sending Jesus Christ to pay for your sins and rise again. And now through faith in Christ you can be forgiven and receive eternal life. This is why Paul called Jesus, "Christ Jesus our hope (1 Tim 1:1). In other words, if you want hope, then you need to go to God, and you can only go to God through faith in Jesus Christ. You need to be born again. You need to experience salvation.
- vi. Second, it means that God wants to give you hope. When the Bible calls God the "God of comfort," or the "God of grace," or the "God of love," it means that God is inclined and disposed to give comfort, grace and love. He loves to bestow these blessings upon those who seek Him. He is not a reluctant God. He has all the hope you need, and He deeply desires to give it to you.

2. Pray for it.

- i. The second step to grow in hope is to pray for it. Remember, this is the value of the Pauline prayers in the NT. They teach us the importance of prayer, and what to pray for. If you want hope, then you have to pray for it. Ask God for it.
- ii. When is the last time you prayed for hope? When is the last time you prayed for anything spiritual? As I mentioned earlier, most of the time our prayers focus on material, earthly, temporary needs – a promotion, financial assistance, physical healing, etc. That is fine, but remember that Paul's prayers reveal what you need most

– spiritual things like hope. So why aren't we praying more for hope?

- iii. For that matter, when is the last time you prayed? I mean really prayed? One of my priorities as your pastor is to convince and equip you to get in the habit of a daily quiet time. There's nothing more important that you can do for your spiritual health. Make a commitment to wake up early and spend the first thirty minutes of your day with God in prayer and in the word. And tomorrow morning when you get alone with God, don't just pray for your material needs; pray for hope.

3. Cultivate joy and peace.

- i. Remember that one of the values of Paul's prayers is that they not only reveal our deepest needs, but they reveal how to get them met. Let me show you what I mean.
- ii. **Romans 15:13** Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- iii. Paul doesn't start out by praying for God to give them hope. He first prays that God would fill them with joy and peace so that then they might overflow with hope. What does that tell you? Hope is empowered by joy and peace. The more joy and peace you have, the more hope you will have. If you want hope, cultivate joy and peace. Work on growing in joy and peace.
- iv. What is joy? The Greek word is *chara*. It refers to an emotion of great and abiding happiness. Notice that I said "abiding". Christian joy is not the same as regular happiness that even unbelievers feel; that emotion is based on positive circumstances. Christian joy is something that you can and should maintain even during the trials. There's an old song that says, "Happiness happens, but joy abides." Imagine how great it would be if you could maintain great happiness even during the storms of life. God wants you to have that.
- v. How do you cultivate joy? This is not a sermon on joy so I'll limit my comments to one thing: Pursue intimacy with God.
- vi. Psalm 16:11 You reveal the path of life to me; in your presence is abundant joy; at your right hand are eternal pleasures.

- vii. The Puritan **Thomas Watson** "What shall we do to obtain this spiritual joy? Walk consistently and spiritually. God gives joy after long and close walking with him (Watson, Body of Divinity)."
- viii. What is peace? The Greek word is *eirene*, and the NT primarily uses the word in two ways: relational peace with God and people, and inner peace. Let's just talk about inner peace for a moment. It is the absence of fear and anxiety in the storms of life. It is a sense of serenity, tranquility, and contentment no matter what is going on around you. Picture Jesus sleeping in the back of the boat during a great storm, while the disciples are panicking with fear and worry. That's peace. Imagine how wonderful it would be to have this peace – to have inner tranquility and serenity no matter what life throws at you. To not fight with fear and worry and anxiety.
- ix. How do you cultivate peace? Again, this is not a sermon on peace, so I need to be brief. First, like joy and hope, it is a gift from God that can only be received if you are saved. You need peace with God – relational peace – before you can have inner peace. Only when you know and feel that because of Jesus you are forgiven and loved and accepted by God can you have inner peace. Second, trust in God's word.
- x. Isaiah 26:3 You will keep the mind that is dependent on you in perfect peace, for it is trusting in you.
- xi. Inner peace comes from trusting that God in what the Bible says, specifically that God loves you and God is in control. Therefore, nothing can happen to you unless God allows it, and He will use it for your good. Inner peace is the result of believing that – really believing it.
- xii. The point that we can take from Paul's prayer is that if you want to grow in hope, then focus on cultivating joy and peace. It's going to be hard to be hopeful if you lack joy and peace.
- xiii. There's one more step you need to take to grow in hope.

4. Be filled with the Spirit.

- i. **Romans 15:13** Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- ii. Hope overflows "by the power of the Holy Spirit."

- iii. Notice that all three persons of the Trinity are involved in hope.
 - 1. The Father is the AUTHOR of hope; the God of hope. Hope was His idea. He wants you to have hope. He sent Jesus for your hope.
 - 2. Jesus, the Son, is the ACCOMPLISHER of hope; He is “our hope” because He accomplished everything necessary for our hope giving us eternal life through His death and resurrection.
 - 3. The Holy Spirit is the APPLIER because He is the one He actually gives you the ability to hope. He takes the truth that you know intellectually and He makes it effective in your life. It is possible to be saved and to know the truth that Jesus has saved you and you have the hope of eternal life ahead of you, but still not feel hopeful. It’s possible to possess hope but not be possessed by hope. It’s possible to have hope, but it’s not energizing your endurance, or encouraging your holiness, or enhancing your witness. That’s where the Holy Spirit comes in. He takes the hope that Christ that you have because of Jesus, and He applies it to your heart so that it changes you.
- iv. This is why you need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.
- v. Ephesians 5:18 And don’t get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be filled by the Spirit.
- vi. Every Christian has the Holy Spirit, but not every Christian is filled by the Spirit. To be Spirit-filled is to be fill with His power; it is to be energized by the Spirit. You cannot live an effective Christian life without being Spirit-filled. Hope overflows by the power of the Holy Spirit. Joy and peace are fruits of the Spirit; so is love.
- vii. The command to be filled with the Spirit is literally “be continually being filled with the Holy Spirit.” You don’t get filled one times and then move on. You must seek the filling of the Spirit every day. This is what you are doing in your quiet time; this is what you are doing when you pray for hope, and joy, and peace. “Lord, fill me with the Spirit.”
- viii. How can you be filled with the Holy Spirit? I always go back to the steps given by Lewis Drummond in his book on love:

1. Acknowledge your need. Start with this, “Lord, I need the power of Your Spirit. I am helpless and hopeless and weak without Your power.”
2. Abandon all conscious sins. You must repent. The Spirit is not going to empower to live in rebellion against God.
3. Abdicate the throne of your heart. Totally dedicate and commit and surrender yourself to God – make a commitment to do anything and everything He tells you to do.
4. Ask God to fill you with His Spirit.
5. Accept it by faith. Don’t look for an outward sign like an emotional fuzzy or speaking in tongues or falling down and convulsing on the floor or barking like a dog or holy laughter. There is no promise that the Spirit’s filling will be accompanied by outward manifestations. Accept by faith. This is something God wants you to have, and it is yours if you fulfill the conditions.

VII. CONCLUSION

1. I want to go back to faith, hope, and love for a moment (1 Cor 13:13). The greatest of the Christian virtues. Most people understand the importance of faith and love, but what about hope? Faith is the condition for salvation. Love is the application of salvation. Hope is the anticipation of salvation. It is the confident expectation of the full blessings of salvation. Of the three, then, hope is the benefit of salvation. It is why salvation is salvation. It is what makes salvation so wonderful. It is what makes the gospel good news. It is why salvation leads to joy, and peace, and courage, and endurance, and diligence in good deeds and evangelism.
2. Hope. You desperately need it, and your Heavenly Father desperately wants to give it to you. He wants to give you more than enough.
3. What about you? Do you have hope? Maybe you are a Christian, but you recognize that you have been living without hope. You need it. Don’t go another day without it. Seek it. Call out to God, “Lord, I need your hope!” Don’t rest until you get it.
4. But if you are not saved, then you have no hope. If you die without Christ, then you will go straight to hell and be separated from God for all eternity. Sure, you might have worldly hope. You might be looking

forward to the next vacation, the next football game, the next party, the next experience, but what good is all of that if when you die you go hell for eternity? My friend, don't leave today without the hope that God wants to give you. The God of hope loves you, and He sent Jesus to die on the cross so that you can have the hope you need – so that you can know for sure that when you die you will go to heaven – paradise, bliss, immortality, reunion with God and your loved ones. But you need to give your heart to Jesus. You need to make a decision to believe in Jesus and hand your life over to Him this morning.