

“Filled To the Full”

September 8, 2019

Psalm 62:1-8

Thank you for an opportunity to preach God’s Word again today. Please find with me the fifteenth chapter of Romans.

There are plenty of reasons why we get discouraged. Do you remember the last time you lost heart? We’ve all been tried by the spirit of discouragement. Discouragement is often a tool of the devil. Or, because we’re emotional beings, it might just be your normal reaction to some bad news. Or, it might be a result of a wrong view of God. Losing heart, even to the point of depression, can sometimes be the *effect* of choosing to not walk by faith.

In Psalm 27:13 you’ll find King David making a very practical observation about himself. Here’s what he once wrote. Psalm 27:13 *“I had fainted [lost heart and become discouraged], unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.”*

Do you know what it’s like to be falsely accused? Some people had falsely accused David. They’d said something he knew wasn’t true. And, just like you and me, David says this about himself “I would have lost heart and become discouraged except for what I saw.”

He says Psalm 27:13 *“I had fainted [lost heart and become discouraged], unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.”*

Faith has a lot of extra benefits. Faith is believing. What did David do in the face of those who falsely accused him? He believed to see the goodness of the LORD. That’s not natural, as we all know. It’s not natural to see His goodness when we’ve been falsely accused. And, if he hadn’t chosen to

believe to see God’s goodness, he would have lost heart. It’s one of the most wonderful, practical ways that confidence in God works. It enables you to stave off the negative experience of discouragement.

Today’s topic isn’t discouragement, though. It’s hope. So, I’ve titled today’s message “Filled to the Full.” Shall we pray?

Would you agree with me on this? How you choose to see things determines what you think about them. I call the following “Carving out our own universe.” See if this doesn’t describe you are some time.

“Out of the infinite mass of reality that lies around us and sends complex streams of sensations surging in and through all our senses, we select and combine and build our own world, we carve out our own universe.

Four men stand and look out over a landscape. The first is a farmer, and his eye takes in the lay of the land and the qualities of the soil, and he puts it down as worth so much per acre. The second is a lumberman, and his eye lights on the forest and he picks out the different kinds of lumber and estimates their quantity; their quality, and he puts it down as worth so much per thousand feet. The third is an engineer, and unconsciously he begins to trace lines of elevation and to make cuts and drive [create] tunnels, and presently [soon] he sees a train rushing across the scene. The fourth is an artist, and he sees fore ground and background, a very picturesque combination of forest and field and stream, and over it all a flood of many-colored splendor, and he reaches for a brush to catch the scene on canvas.

Looking at the same landscape these four men see four different worlds.” [From The Presbyterian Banner November 27, 1902 in an article titled “We Make the World We See: A Thanksgiving Meditation” page 747].

Now, listen again to King David. Psalm 27:13 *“I had fainted [I would have lost heart and become discouraged], unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.”*

False accusers might have limited him, but David’s choice to exercise faith enabled him to see the LORD’s goodness around him instead of the evils of society. How you see God will often be the greatest determiner of the difference between discouragement and hope because it’s not *what* we see that determines our outlook on life, it’s *how* we see it.

Please find with me the thirteenth verse of Romans fifteen and follow it with me in your Bible.

Now, just one word before we read this verse. Paul ends every one of his epistles with a benediction, a good word. It’s exactly the same thing we do every Sunday at the close of our Worship Hour. We quote a benediction from II Corinthians. Here’s the benediction from the end of the Book of Romans; verse thirteen.

Romans 15:13 *“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. (14) And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.”*

If you’ve been a reader of the Book of Romans over this past year, you know that Romans is more than a mere epistle. It’s an explanation of a particular subject. The literary term is “treatise.” And, in this case, the subject is “The Christian Life start to finish.” If you were to sit down today and to thoughtfully read Romans from beginning to end, it should take you about an hour.

Now, I’ve said it before and I’ll repeat again and again, I’m sure. Romans is, likely, the greatest book ever written. It was written to Christians in the first century city of Rome. And we’re at the end. And how would you expect this great

book to end? As in all of the other epistles of Paul, it ends with a benediction.

Can you remember the last time you were on a guided tour? Now, imagine, if you can, taking that tour and the tour guide has no idea where he or she should begin or where he should end? There’d be little or no value in that.

In Romans, Paul takes your heart for an interior tour from the very first verse through to these last two chapters. And it’s a tour that begins with your sinfulness and ends with your daily righteousness.

Here’s what I mean. He’s explains. He describes. He lays out salvation; salvation from inception to culmination. Salvation begins with God and it ends with God.

Salvation is the work of God whereby He brings a sinner out of his sin and into of a personal relationship with Himself by faith in the work of His Son, Jesus Christ. If you’re saved by faith in Christ, you’ve moved from condemnation to no condemnation to *more* than no condemnation. You’ve moved into a personal relationship with God through Christ and you’ve become personally and practically righteous.

Here’s a simple outline of the Book [See Romans visualized below]

Simple Outline of Romans:

- Chapt. 1-3 All men sin
- Chap. 4-11 Salvation by faith in Christ, not by the works of the Law of Moses
- Chapt. 12-16 Practical applications of the gospel in daily life

So, if you were going to re-read this epistle, mentally divide it in thirds and see if that’s not exactly the way the Holy Spirit had Paul put it together.

He begins with your most neglected concern; sin. Your sin always keeps you away from God. He then presents the

simple Gospel – that salvation comes only through one Person and one Person’s work; the Person and the work of Jesus Christ. Good works will never do. Baptism can’t wash away sins. Keeping the Law is impossible on any level. And, only when you trust in Christ alone can you find forgiveness and righteousness and a daily walk with your LORD.

And the last third of the book is a picture of the normal Christian life.

So, the purpose of the Book of Romans is to show you the power of sin. Then, the LORD’s answer to your sin, and last, the way to overcome sin in your personal life; all of which we’ve considered Sunday by Sunday over the past year.

Now, we’re about to close the book. The final two chapters of the book are Paul’s closing words. It’s a conclusion of sorts. And Paul always ends his epistles on an extremely high note. Here’s what it is. And Paul ends his epistle on a wonderfully optimistic note. And, as I said at the outset, how you see God determines whether you live in optimism or in pessimism.

By the way, verse thirteen is one of four benedictions. Yes, you heard that right. Paul writes four benedictions to close of the Book of Romans. Here’s just one of them.

Romans 15:13 *“Now the God of **hope** fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in **hope**, through the power of the Holy Ghost.”*

Paul’s prayer and his desire is that you and I be filled to the full so that we abound in hope through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

There isn’t a person here who dislikes hope. It’s important. We all want it and we all need hope. Yet, doesn’t it seem to you that there’s a lot of despondency and misery these days; a lot of hopelessness today. We’ve even got news

reports saying that we’ve only got eleven more years to go before the end of the world arrives.

Maybe you’ve even said this. “The sky is black. All hope looks lost. My dreams have died. It seems that nothing good will ever come from this.” Or maybe, “There’s no way out. I’m stuck.”

That’s a description of something called hopelessness. Let’s say you’ve encountered a problem at home. Your riding lawn mower simply won’t run. You try this. You try that. You check the gas. You check the oil. You test the spark plug. By the way, when you test the spark plug, you might get a jolt of electricity into your hand. And when you’ve checked all you know how to check, you conclude what? That it’s hopeless. It won’t start. And since you’ve only got an hour or so to mow, you go in a different direction. Get the push mower going or call the mower shop to pick up your mower.

That’s not really “hopelessness.” That’s a problem that can be dealt with. Hopelessness is a condition in which you allow yourself not only to feel bad about yourself and your situation, you’ve stopped looking for a solution.

I Corinthians 9:10 says this “...*this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in **hope**; and that he that thresheth in **hope** should be partaker of his **hope**.*”

When you plow your field, when you spend your life at work, when you do almost anything, you do it because you expect something. To hope means to expect.

Folks, Unbelievers don’t expect God to work on their behalf. Or, they don’t believe in God’s existence; both of which might give you a feeling of hopelessness.

The old Scottish preacher said it this way. “The real profanity of men isn’t the swear words they use. Instead, the most profane word a man can use is hopeless because when we say someone or something is hopeless we are slamming the door in God’s face” [Found on <https://www.guide->

lines.org “The God of Hope” by Dr. Harold J. Sala
December 27, 2016].

Someone has wisely said “Hopelessness is the curse of trusting in man” (D. Wilkerson). Well, thankfully, God has all our answers. So, I believe with all my heart that a message on hope from the Bible is very apropos.

Well, then, what is it? Here’s some idea as to what it is.

Jeremiah 29:11 “*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end [hope].*”

There’s so much to say about hope. There’s so much recorded in the Bible about hope that I had a difficult time narrowing it down this week.

So, let me begin here. First, according to your Bible, hope is closely tied to faith. Faith and hope are like conjoined twins. Going back to 2008, you might remember two babies in Australia; conjoined twins named Faith and Hope Williams. They were separated soon after they were born.

But, spiritually speaking, faith and hope are hard to separate. Here’s Hebrews 11:1 “*Faith is the substance [assurance] of things hoped for ...*”

“Hope is, by its very nature, always concerned with the future, whereas faith is more concerned with the right now.” Hope means you expect that something will occur; usually something good. But, it’s more than that. Hope is like faith because it’s confidence that God will do exactly as He says He will.

Some of you have difficulty letting go of the past. But consider this. “Our yesterdays present irreparable things to us; it is true that we have lost opportunities which will never return, but God can transform this destructive anxiety into a constructive thoughtfulness for the future. Let the past sleep, but let it sleep on the bosom of Christ. Leave the irreparable

past in His hands, and step out into the irresistible future with Him.” (O. Chambers).

So, first, hope is closely tied to faith.

Second, your hope, if it’s true hope; it must be in a person. Our everyday use the word hope isn’t necessarily a Biblical usage. Folks, your hope needs to be in a Person, not in a thing and not *for* a thing or *for* something to happen.

Listen again to the Bible.

Psalm 31:24 “*Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that **hope in the Lord.***”

Psalm 39:7 “*And now, Lord, what wait I for? **My hope is in thee.***”

Psalm 42:11 “*...**hope** thou in God: ...*”

Psalm 71:5 “*For thou art **my hope**, O Lord God...*”

Psalm 130:7 “*Let Israel **hope in the Lord:** ...*”

Psalm 131:3 “*Let Israel **hope in the Lord** from henceforth and forever.*”

Psalm 146:5 “*Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose **hope is in the Lord** his God: ...*

Jeremiah 17:7 “Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and **whose hope the Lord is.**”

Hope is a whole lot bigger than “I sure it hope it doesn’t rain today.” The one Person that is worthy of you placing your hope in is the LORD. Misplaced hope means you’ve got your confidence in a thing or a person who cannot provide what you need.

First, according to your Bible, hope is closely tied to faith.

Second, your hope, in order to be a true hope, must be in a person.

Third, hope is a favorite theme for Paul; especially in Romans. He writes about it ten times in the Epistle to the Romans. And this thirteenth verse is the last time it’s used in the Book. But, look back just a few verses to verse four.

Romans 15:4 “*For whatsoever things were written aforetime were*

*written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have **hope**.*”

When you read your Bible each day, do you look for the things that matter? Do you look for life lessons in the people you read about?

Do you remember anyone in the Bible who lost hope? It was the Apostles of Christ on the day Jesus died. They’d heard Him say He would be delivered up to the authorities and that He would be crucified. They even heard Him say He’d rise from the dead. But, on the day Jesus died, what happened in the hearts of all the Apostles? They lost hope. And how about Mary as she and her other friends arrived at the LORD’s grave on that first Sunday morning after the crucifixion. Didn’t Mary lose hope? And how about Mary the mother of Jesus as she stood at the foot of the Cross? Didn’t she lose hope? And do you remember the Apostle Thomas on that first Easter Sunday evening? “Except I see in His hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the print of the nails, I won’t believe” (John 20:25).

And who else? Do you remember that on the day a man named Lazarus died, his family sent a message to Jesus to come to Bethany? Do you remember what Jesus did? For His own reasons, He intentionally waited until Lazarus had been dead four days before He showed up at the cemetery. You see, Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus had lost hope.

And who else? How about King David?

Psalm 42:5 “*Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God.*”

And what about Elijah? He lost hope and wanted to die. I Kings 19:4 “*But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.*”

Sometimes we give each other the impression that the Bible is filled with heroes and great Believers. Yet, it’s really filled with ordinary people just like you and me; people who got discouraged; people who were on the verge of losing hope. So, when you read and learn the life of the characters in the Bible, when you see how they came to put their hope in the LORD, something happens to your hope. God placed those people in the Bible to increase your hope.

And here’s why? Because a Christian hopes in a Person, and; a Person you can’t see.

First, according to your Bible, hope is closely tied to faith.

Second, your hope, in order to be a true hope, must be in a person.

Third, hope is a favorite theme for Paul.

And fourth, hope originates in God.

Here’s Paul again in this same epistle. Romans 8:24 “*For we are saved by **hope**: but **hope** that is seen is not **hope**: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet **hope** for? (25) But if we **hope** for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*”

We’re saved by hope. Is that not amazingly wonderful?

And true hope never makes you ashamed. Romans 5:1 “*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: (2) By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in **hope** of the glory of God.*

*(3) And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; (4) and patience, experience [character]; and experience [character], **hope**: (5) and hope maketh not ashamed; ...*”

And, along with all that, we also know that hope originates with God; verse thirteen. Romans 15:13 “*Now the God of **hope** fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in **hope**, through the power of the Holy Ghost.*”

Where does hope originate for you? In things? In a person? Or in the LORD?

Let's say you have a huge problem you're facing right now. What are you hoping will happen? What if it doesn't happen as you'd like? If so, maybe it's simply because you are hoping apart from the LORD. He's the Source of your hope.

Here's how one writer puts it.

When I place my hope in things, I get distracted.

When I place my hope in people, I get disappointed.

When I place my hope in myself, I am disheartened.

But when I place my hope in the LORD, I experience deliverance. [Found on <https://rachelwojo.com>].

Have you ever wondered what really makes you rich? You've certainly heard of people with a lot of fame and a lot of fortune and a lot of stuff who have no hope. So, a far better currency than gold, silver, and diamonds and fame is hope. Hope is the golden characteristic of a Christian.

Romans 15:13 is a benediction on hope. Romans 15:13

*"Now the God of **hope** fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in **hope**, through the power of the Holy Ghost."*

Can you see how similar this idea is to what King David says in Psalm 27? Psalm 27:13 *"I had fainted [I would have become discouraged], unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."*

So, what is it that hope does for a person?

Apart from God, we will always have a hard time finding hope.

Why do I say that? Because God is the Origin, the Source of hope.

Everyone likes to be around optimistic people. And, practically speaking, if we'd be honest, we don't like being around pessimists.

A pessimist is a pessimist because he or she can't see anything bright in his or her future. But, folks, only God can see the future. And He's an Optimist. And, if you're an optimist, if you are aware that God is the Source of hope,

then you have confidence that things are going to work out well later; later today or later in life.

But, a Believer sees his situation entirely differently. He or she knows the God is his or her Father. And your Heavenly Father knows that you have need of these things before you even go to Him and ask for His help. He's the Source of your hope. He's the God of hope.

Your natural tendency to handling problems is to try to solve the problem first. If that doesn't work, then you ask someone for help. And if that doesn't work, then you pray.

Why would you ever put prayer last in the list of answers to your problems? Why neglect the LORD's sovereign control over your life? Why not take your problem to the LORD first instead of last? That's hoping in Him. That's seeing Him as the Source of your hope. You see, your Heavenly Father is the God of Hope.

George MacDonald, one of my favorite writers, used to write a devotional called "Consuming Fire." Here's what he wrote for March 2nd. *"We are and remain such creeping Christians because we look at ourselves and not at Christ."*

Whatever you think of Jesus Christ, this is so huge. It's natural and it's typical for us to look at ourselves or others or something and not to look at Him. But, the moment you begin to learn to look at Him, your hope level moves up a notch.

A young man was homeless. He'd been homeless for three years. His name was Matthew. He met someone who came by and was passing out food. Matthew took some. On that same day, that man began talking to him on the street where this homeless young man had no quote "home."

He told him about Jesus being the Savior and that, if he would put his trust in Jesus, he would be forgiven for his sins and come to a personal relationship with God. Matthew prayed and received Jesus as his personal Savior and LORD.

Then, the man who brought him the food and brought him the Good News asked him this question “If I have an opportunity to tell Christians in this large Church here anything, what would you suggest I tell them?” Matthew said this “Tell them to stop arguing and bring people hope.”

Wise advice, wouldn't you agree?

Who have you brought hope to this past week?

Your Heavenly Father is the God of hope and apart from Him we always have a hard time finding hope. By the way, if God is the God of hope; and He is; then the devil is the god of despair.

First, according to your Bible, hope is closely tied to faith.

Second, your hope, in order to be a true hope, must be in a person.

Third, hope is a favorite theme for Paul.

Fourth, hope originates in God.

Last, the Bible compares hope to an anchor.

The Bible presents an interesting word picture to help us see what hope really is. Here's what He says about it.

Hebrews 6:17 *“Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: (18) That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon **the hope** set before us:*

*(19) which **hope** we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; (20) Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”*

Have you ever thought of hope as an anchor?

According to this Scripture, it's an anchor of the soul.

Simply put, the reason for the anchor is so that, when the storm hits, the anchor is rolled out. And the ship stays steady because it's attached to the anchor.

Here's a great hymn I learned as a young Believer.

It's called “My Anchor Holds”

This is Ben Everson. I think you'll be blessed by it.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZcxovyL9YKM>

Your greatest need is a Person. His name is Jesus Christ.

Now, it might be that you've never been saved. If so, you aren't really able to praise the LORD.

Today, though, you can come to Him for salvation and forgiveness of all your sins. He paid the full penalty for your sins. And He's right now ready to completely forgive you of every sin you've ever committed. Will you pray this prayer?

- **I Admit** – that I am a sinner and in need of a Savior (Romans 6:23)
- **I Abandon** – self-effort and realize I cannot be saved by my works or efforts (Acts 16:31)
- **I Accept** freely Christ's payment for my sins, required of the Father (John 3:16)
- **I Acknowledge** Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Savior (Acts 4:12)

So, what will you do with these precious words from the LORD's heart this week?

Will you be filled to the full?

Shall we pray?

Hymn # 383 “Fill Me Now”

Final thoughts.

Psalm 27:13 *‘I had fainted [I would have become discouraged], unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. (14) Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.’*

I’m sure you like to read books with people whose characters interact with each other. And, as wonderful as it is to watch a great movie with all of its characters and its motivations and the relationships and the events. Nothing can compare to a good, well-written book. But, not every book is about involved characters and a plot and lots of action.

One writer answers it this way. “When we tie our identity to how we perform, connecting our egos to how well we do in life, we will be crushed “for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.” In fact, this self-focus, this esteem building, causes us to take our identity and connect it to our performance in life, rather than take it from our relationship to God as one of his children. It puts the focus and pressure on us to always feel good about who we are, building up our egos, our pride, and undermining our true identity in Christ.” [Found on <http://www.worksof-macdonald.com> “Misery And The Hope Of The Gospel” by Stephen Carney March 2, 2017].