

SERMON NOTES

By Pastor John Paul Miller

In The Grip of God's Grace

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans

Romans 15:13 - "A Benediction for a Blessed Life"

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."*

Introduction illustration from a 'Peanuts' cartoon - Lucy and Linus were sitting in front of the television set, Lucy said to Linus, "go get me a glass of water". Linus, looking surprised said, "why should I do anything for you, you never do anything for me."

"On your seventy-fifth birthday", Lucy promised, "I'll bake you a cake". Linus got up, headed for the kitchen and said, "life is more pleasant when you have something to look forward to."

Linus was right, life is more pleasant when you have something to look forward to.

That's why the Christian life is a blessed life – it's a life of overflowing hope.

Before salvation, the Bible described us as 'without God and without hope.' (Eph. 2:12)

But now, we 'rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' (Rom. 5:2)

In Romans 5:13, Paul lifts up his heart for the believers in a beautiful prayer of benediction for a blessed life.

We all should want this blessed life for ourselves and others.

I. The Source of the Blessed Life - *the God of hope*

The Christian is a person that lives in direct fellowship with God.

God can only be known by His own self-revelation

What kind of God does the Bible reveal?

- a) A Personal God
- b) An Eternal God

- c) A Sovereign God
- d) A God that is All Powerful, Everywhere Present & Knows Everything
- e) A God of Goodness, Mercy & Love
- f) A God that is Holy, Righteous & Just

The God of Hope!

Paul links hope to God, for God is:

1st - the source of hope because He is the source of every good thing.

2nd – God is the object of hope

Jeremiah 17:7, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD (not the weak objects of our secular sinful world), and whose hope the LORD is."

James Boice – If you put your hope in other people, they will let you down. If you trust your stocks or bonds or bank accounts, you will find that they can disappear overnight. In any case, they are not ultimately satisfying. Health will fail. Houses can burn. Jobs can be lost. Even great nations enter periods of economic and moral decline. But the one who has his or her hope from God and trusts God as he has revealed himself in Jesus Christ can stand firm in anything.

Edward Mote expressed it in one of our best-known hymns:

"My Hope is Built on Nothing Less"
by Edward Mote, 1797-1874

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil.
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

His oath, His covenant, and blood
Support me in the whelming flood;
When every earthly prop gives way,
He then is all my Hope and Stay.
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

When He shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh, may I then in Him be found,
Clothed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne!
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

II. The Quality of the Blessed Life - *fill you with all joy and peace*

A. Joy – God is the source of true joy

- it's the fruit of the Spirit
- it's not a matter of natural dispassion
- joy is not the absence of trouble but the presence of Christ.

Billy Sunday - If joy is gone out of your life there is a leak somewhere."

B. Peace – Two kinds of peace in the Bible

1. Peace with God – Romans 5:1, *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:"*

No peace to the wicked

2. The Peace of God – Philippians 4:7, *"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*

A peace that passes all understanding.

III. The Condition of the Blessed Life - *in believing*

The New International Version has it, *"as you trust in Him"*

Faith is the indispensable channel for blessings, as they come from God but only become ours as we trust in Him.

Hebrews 11:6, *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."*

This is the key!

The most important of all differences between people is precisely at this pointnot

Do they trust God?

Christians are called 'believers', but not all truly believe or trust God.

What is it we are to believe?

The Bible and its promises - *that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

1 John 5:9, *"If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son."*

Try to imagine going through a day without faith!

Be a believing believer

Bring joy and peace!

IV The Consequence of the Blessed Life - *that ye may abound in hope,*

We live in a world where people have lost hope in nearly everything and yet the Christian can have a n overflowing hope.

This is the fourth time Paul has mentioned hope in this chapter – vs. 4, 12, 13 (twice)

What is our hope?

Romans 8:18-25, *"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. 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? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."*

Titus 2:13, *"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;"*

It's the Hope of Heaven!

1 Corinthians 15:19, *"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."*

In John 14:2-3, *"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."*

Remember you are a stranger and a pilgrim.

V. The Power of the Blessed Life - *through the power of the Holy Ghost.*

In one verse you have the words. Joy, peace, faith hope & power – all are essential Christian qualities.

Power is the Greek word ‘dunamis’ – strength, power, ability

It’s key – it reminds us that nothing of any spiritual value is possible in and of ourselves.

Jesus said, ‘apart from me you can do nothing’

We can’t believe, find peace, find joy, nor find hope – it all comes from the work of God the Holy Spirit in our lives.

It’s so important to understand the person and work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Believer.

We can’t live the blessed life of the believer on our own strength.

The Holy Spirit makes effective all that the Father planned and the Son purchased.

Faith is the means to joy and peace, overflowing hope is their consequence, and all four are due to the power of the Holy Spirit within us.

Years ago the S-4 submarine was rammed by another ship and quickly sank. The entire crew was trapped in its prison house of death. Ships rushed to the scene of disaster off the coast of Massachusetts. We don’t know what took place down in the sunken submarine, but we can be sure that the men clung bravely to life as the oxygen slowly gave out.

A diver placed his helmeted ear to the side of the vessel and listened. He heard a tapping noise. Someone, he learned, was tapping out a question in the dots and dashes of the Morse Code. The question came slowly: “Is ... there ... any ... hole?”

That is the question man asks today.

Yes, it’s found in Jesus Christ!