

Series: This Grace in which we stand - 4

REJOICING IN HOPE

Romans 5: 1 – 11

Psalm 130: 1 - 8

Review: Chapter 4; Abraham, David, faith in God. – *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

V2; *we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* The Son of God has presented us before His Father and we now enjoy fellowship with Him. We have access granted to us; **Ephesians 2:18**; *for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.* The Old Testament reveals an important truth in maintaining pure/true hope in the continued struggle against false prophets and their make believe hopes. The hope of faith is a concrete personal expectation; for the one who hopes trusts God for His faithfulness centred on His Word. Patient, persevering waiting; **Isaiah 40: 27 - 31**. God's people have the truth, so; V28, relearn what you know; V31, *those who hope in the Lord...*

There was a time when we did not have access to God, but now *we do have access by faith into this grace in which we stand and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* Previously we were lost in sin and evil without any hope and condemned for eternity. But now *we rejoice in hope of the glory of God*, which is based upon justification by faith; not on circumstances or feelings or opinions of human hopes. There is no hope without faith in Christ, His death and resurrection; **1 Peter 1: 3**. Hope in or on anything or anyone else is no hope; false, one-way disastrous quicksand. Faith without hope is futile.

The believer's hope is bolstered by knowing that our Saviour is; *upholding all things – the universe – by the word of His power*; **Hebrews 1: 3**. John Owen: 'Our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, has the weight of the whole creation upon his hand, and disposes of it by his power and wisdom. Such is the nature and condition of the universe, that it could not subsist [remain firm] a moment, nor could anything in it act regularly unto its appointed end, without the continual support, guidance, influence and disposal of the Son of God'.¹ Hope is never ego-centred but always focused on God and Christ. The

¹ John Owen, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, ed. W.H Goold, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1991, 2: 462. (1616-1683, Chaplain to Oliver Cromwell & Dean of Christ Church, University of Oxford)

emphasis is not on the blessing of people but the universal kingly rule of God for He will be *all in all*; **1 Corinthians 15: 28**. Hope does not rest on good works of us trying to keep the law but the work of God in Christ; therefore He is our only hope; relationship; **Colossians 1: 27**, *Christ in you, the hope of glory* and **Romans 12: 12**, *rejoicing in hope*.

Rejoicing in hope of the glory of God is the outworking of Justification, which is the verdict of the Divine Judge who has declared righteous in His sight all who have fled to Jesus for refuge. The verdict of the last Judgment Day has been declared; we don't wait to hear it announced for it has already taken place. So now *we rejoice in hope of the glory of God*. Not just glory for me as the old hymn suggests but hope of the glory of God. Biblical hope is inseparable from faith in Christ; **Romans 4: 18**, *in hope Abraham believed against hope ...* No uncertainty about Christian hope; joyful and confident expectation which rests on the promises of God as we read with Abraham. The object of our hope is the glory of God as revealed in His Son our Lord; essentially in His death and resurrection. However, our hope is not clutching at spiritual straws or some utopian concept, and we all experience the daily ups and downs – the battles of faith. Our progress in hope will have failure but not despair for we trust the God of hope. How wonderful that Paul declares the cross-cultural power of the gospel when he writes that the only hope of Jews and Gentiles is Christ: **Romans 15: 13**. Note that this is no form of escapism, for it is the fulfilment of Christ's divine promise and confirmed by the witness of the Holy Spirit. When He appears with great power and glory we who are believers will be changed, so He will be glorified in His holy people.

Justification by faith is once for ever; the act in which God declares that we are clothed in and by the righteousness of Christ. That is justification and that is why we have access. We have been introduced to the Father by the Son. We have entered into the state of justification and we stand in it by God's grace. In practice, we all experience the struggles and rough places of life. The answer is to realise whose we are and where we are and to see all of these troublesome issues in the light of God's wonderful promises which are made to us who are His children. We are to live as children of the King; as those who belong to the Palace; **Psalms 130**. A Song of Ascents; *Out of the depths – De Profundis*. Augustine wrote **verse 4** on the wall of the room in which he lay dying.