

Abounding in Hope

BY PASTOR AL PITTMAN



Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy ... "In Him the Gentiles shall hope." Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:8-9a, 12b-13

Sometimes when we as Christians have troubles, we don't see any glory in them and may lose hope. If that's your experience, don't give up. In the passage above, Paul shows us how we can abound in hope no matter what our circumstances.

The believers in Rome had issues: They faced social, economic, and political challenges from outside the church and division from within. Some Jews didn't accept the Gentiles, and vice versa. Yet, Paul asked God to fill His church with joy, peace, and hope.

Sometimes we forget that God wants us to have peace and joy. It's easy to be filled with angst and anxiety. How can we experience the hope spoken of in verse 13? Paul gives us three ways: by having a relationship with Christ, by having faith in God, and by yielding to the power of the Holy Spirit.

Joy and Peace through Christ

True joy and peace are not found in anything on this earth. Jesus said in Luke 12:15b, **"Beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."**

In order to have lasting joy and peace, we need a right relationship with God. This happens not by acting like a religious person or going to church, but by having faith in Jesus Christ. Paul wrote earlier, **"Therefore, having been justified by faith,**

we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).

Christ came in both truth and mercy. Verse 8 says, **"Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God."** The circumcision refers to the Jews who had grown up under the Old Testament laws. Christ fulfilled the righteousness required by the law: **"The righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed ... through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe"** (Romans 3:21a, 22b).

Christ came to offer mercy to the Gentiles, those who did not know the Old Testament law. Paul writes that Christ became a servant so that **"the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy"** (verse 9) and **"in Him the Gentiles shall hope"** (verse 12).

Christ's coming in both truth and mercy is significant. Truth alone offers no mercy for our sins. Man's mercy without God's truth offers no eternal hope. But being offered truth and mercy through Christ allows us to have a right relationship with God. Believe His truth; accept His mercy by accepting His Son.

Walk in Faith

Second, we must walk in faith. Paul wrote that God would fill them with joy and peace **"in believing."** It's not enough to know that we can have joy and peace; we must have faith in God. Unbelief is the greatest enemy to hope. We must say, no matter what our circumstances, **"I will trust You, Lord Jesus."**

Maybe you are a believer who has lost hope, who has fallen, or who feels that God is done with you. The prophet Micah wrote, **"When I fall, I will arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD will be a light to me"** (Micah 7:8b). Even if you've fallen, God is still for you. Some days we don't feel like He's with us, but our relationship with God is not based on feelings. It's based on faith—faith in what He has done for us by dying on the cross.

In order to have lasting joy and peace, we need a right relationship with God.

This happens not by acting like a religious person or going to church, but by having faith in Jesus Christ.

Yield to His Power

Finally, we cannot walk spiritually by our own power. Paul wrote that we may **"abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit"** (verse 13). It's not by our own philosophy or willpower. Rather, as we yield to the power of His Holy Spirit, He gives us His power. The word **"power"** in the Greek, *dynamis*, implies energy to perform what we cannot do ourselves.

Only by the power of God can we accomplish anything of value to God: **"For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure"** (Philippians 2:13). There have been times when I did not feel like serving the Lord in a particular situation. But when I was obedient and rested in God for His strength, He worked through me to accomplish His will. We don't have to do it all ourselves; we must simply yield to His power.

How can we abound in hope no matter what we're facing? By having a right relationship with God through Christ, by having faith in Him, and by yielding to the power of the Holy Spirit. Yield your life to God. Ask Him today to give you the joy, peace, and hope that are found in Him. ☺

Al Pittman has been senior pastor of Calvary Worship Center in Colorado Springs, CO, since 1997.