

July 24,2016
Romans 5:1-11 (NIV)
A Renewed Hope

⁵ Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.

³ **Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;**

⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope.

⁵ **And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.**

⁶ You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

⁷ **Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die.**

⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹ **Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!**

¹⁰ For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

¹¹ **Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.**

Good Morning First Baptist Members and Friends. I greet you this morning with Good News. I know that God is:

*God is the joy and
the strength of my life,
He moves all pain, misery, and strife.*

*He promised to keep me,
never to leave me.
He's never ever come short of His word.¹*

Sometimes I think it is important to stop and ask yourself just what God is in your life. I pray that God is the joy and the strength of your life.

On the first Sunday of this month I told you that there would be five sermons from Paul's letter to the church at Rome. I told you the overall theme of the five sermons would be the **Waywardness of Humanity**. Well, this series will only have four sermons because next Sunday is the Kingdom Seekers Anniversary celebration and they are planning a special service. So today I am going to review where we have been and wrap this series.

1st Sunday: FIREWORKS, FOOD AND FELLOWSHIP
Romans 2: 17-19
Focus vv. 25-29

I challenged you when watching the fireworks to ask yourself is God pleased with how your fireworks?

I challenged you as you shop, prep and eat the food of this season to pause and consider could I make do with less so someone else can have some?

I challenged you to broaden your fellowship circle for your final exam, your final judgement, from God will not be based on how others see you, but rather on how God knows you to be.

I challenged you to look at your Waywardness in terms of the fire you have and share for God.

¹ Lyrics found here

To look at your Waywardness in terms of your generosity, particularly around the issues of food.

To look at your Waywardness in terms of how you treat others.

2nd Sunday; What Do You See When You Look In The Mirror?

On 2nd Sunday we came to church having been stunned by the events of the previous week. We were in need of a word that would address the waywardness of those who kill innocence people in an attempt to even the score. We were also in need of an explanation of how God's people were to respond to such heinous, horrific, horrible crimes. I suggested that we respond by looking in the mirror and asking God to show us what we need to change about ourselves. I ended that sermon with the lyrics of Michael Jackson

I'm starting with **the man** in the mirror
 I'm asking **him** to change **his** ways
 And no message could have been any clearer
 If you want to make the world a better place
 Take a look at yourself, and then make a change

3rd Sunday: COMMISSION, OMISSION, DISPOSITION

Last week, I focused on v23 of Romans 3

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

I used three words to describe our sins – COMMISSION, OMISSION AND DISPOSITION. After defining those terms, I provided what I pray were real examples of how those sins are exhibited **within this** church. Thanks again, to those of you who allowed me to use you as examples. I concluded that sermon by reminding us that

First we think it - DISPOSITION

Second we do it - COMMISSION

Third we ignore it - OMISSION²

² http://www.sermoncentral.com/print_friendly.asp?SermonID=72658

We treat sin as though it is of no consequence, but hear the Word of the Lord:

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

**6:23 For the wages of sin is death,
but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans NIV)**

The challenge for us this coming week is to hold these words in our hearts

13:4 Love is patient, love is kind, it is not envious. Love does not brag, it is not puffed up.

13:5 It is not rude, it is not self-serving, it is not easily angered or resentful.

13:6 It is not glad about injustice, but rejoices in the truth.

13:7 It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

13:8 Love never fails.

13:13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

And that summary brings us to this morning where we consider one word: HOPE.

SHALL WE PRAY

God of heaven and earth we come once again before your throne of grace asking that you will grant us your mercy. We do not ask because we believe we have earned it or deserve it, we ask because we have NOT. As you grant us mercy would you also open our hearts and our ears and our minds to you and your Word? Abba, you know my failures and my shortcomings, do not hold them against your people this morning. Rather I ask that you use my feeble attempts at sharing your Word and make them into something that has the power to sustain, enable and transform your people. In the name of your Son, who gave His life for us we pray. Amen and Amen.

HOPE

What do you mean when you say hope?

I hope he/she calls me
I hope mom/dad don't notice the dent in the car
I hope I get accepted to grad school

Do each of those have the same meaning?

I **hope** he/she calls me
enjoyed the time we spent together,
likes me, wants to see me again,
remembers me

I **hope** mom/dad don't notice the dent in the car
ignore my mistake
think it happened when they had the car not me

I **hope** I get accepted to grad school
see something special in me
consider my application with favor

Although each use of hope has a slightly different meaning they each require a human action to occur.

I have to in some way been appealing, interesting, fun enough to warrant another conversation – a call

Mom/dad have to be unobservant and not see or ignore or think they did the damage to the car

The admissions team must have an application from me to consider, test scores, transcripts and maybe even recommendations received by the deadline in order for them to consider me.

Human actions that **we hope** will result in a favorable response. Human actions over which we have no control, except for our own. Human actions where we cannot be assured of the outcome.

Paul writes to tell the church at Rome and the church in Park Forest and the church of God where ever it may be found that our hope for eternal life is not based on human actions, not even our own.

We cannot wish for heaven
We cannot work and earn heaven
We cannot ignore the right thing and expect heaven

No! Access to heaven is a gift from God. It is a gift already paid for by the blood of Jesus on an old rugged cross at Calvary. It is a gift that wiped out the need for any other gift, sacrifice or atonement.

Yet, Paul wanted the church at Rome to understand that just because they believed Jesus was the Son of the Living God and just because they had accepted him as Savior and buried their old self in the waters of baptism and put on their new self, everything was going to be easy.

No, there were still going to be mountains to climb, crosses to bear, stupid people to endure, wars and rumors of wars.

Allow me to drive my point home with a personal illustration. In my early 30's we, Jesse, Jasmyne and I returned to the Westside to live in property I had inherited from my dad. The four-bedroom brick bungalow was foundationally sound but the tenants we had living there for over ten years were not familiar with the basics of soap, water, taking out trash and repairing things which were broken. They also did not feel a need to tell anyone, namely me or my mother of the problems. Well, two years later and a second mortgage we were able to move in. It was all we had hoped for. New walls in most of the rooms, wall to wall carpet on both levels, walk in closets, wash and dryer on the first floor. It was perfect!

But then came the suffering. The kids in the neighborhood broke in and stole all they could carry, stacked things by the front door for the return trip, and made us afraid to live in our own home. But we preserved. Insurance helped to replace somethings, others we learned to live without and we moved on.

Several years later my brother's son, my nephew and his crew broke in again, 3 times in 6 weeks. During that last break in a friend commented:

Every time I turn around something is happening to y'all,
But you go to church and you live like good people
I don't get it.

My response was that "bad things still happen to good people".

If I thought about it a bit more...

- My trials only come to make me strong
- My road may not be easy, He did not say it would be
- I am climbing up the rough side of the mountain

How I wish I had had more scripture under my belt 30 years ago. If I had I might have been able to do a roll call.

Ask Abraham and he will point to Mt. Moriah.

Ask Sarah and she will point to Hagar

Ask Jacob and he will point to a pillow of stone.

Ask Joseph and he will point to a Egyptian prison.

Ask Hannah and she will tell you about praying and being called a drunk

Ask Moses and he will point to the backside of the desert.

Ask the three Hebrew children and they will point to a fiery furnace.

Ask Daniel and he will point to a den of lions.

Ask Naomi and Ruth and they will tell you about the death of their husband

Ask Peter and he will point to a Roman fire and his three denials.

Ask John and he will point to Patmos.

Ask any believer who has traveled far with Jesus and he will tell you that

"God's blessings are poured from a bitter cup!"³

⁵ And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. Amen and Amen.

³ http://www.sermonnotebook.org/romans/Romans%205_1-5.htm