

Hope for the World in Jesus

Thomas Robinson, *Advent 1*, November 30, 2014

Romans 3:21-26

²¹ But **now apart from the law** (Torah) **God's faithful righteousness** has been manifested, although the **Law** (Torah) and the **Prophets** bear witness to it – ²² **God's righteousness** seen through **Jesus Messiah's faithfulness** for all who **have faith**.

For there is **no distinction**: ²³ for **all have sinned** and have lost the **glory of God**, ²⁴ and are **declared right** by **his grace** as a gift through the **redemption** that is in **Messiah Jesus**, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a **mercy-seat** through the **faithfulness** shown in **his blood**.

God's purpose was to demonstrate **his faithful righteousness**, because of his passing over former sins in the forbearance of God ²⁶ leading up to demonstrating **his faithful righteousness in the present time**, in order that he himself might **be righteous** and may **declare right** the one who lives by trusting the **faithfulness of Jesus**.

Romans 5:1-9

¹ Therefore, since we have been **declared right** from **faith(fullness)**, we have **peace** with God through our **Lord Jesus Messiah**. ² Through him we have also obtained access by **faith** into **this grace** in which we stand, and we **rejoice** in **hope** of the **glory of God**. ³ Not only that, but we rejoice in our **sufferings**, knowing that suffering produces **endurance**, ⁴ and endurance produces **character**, and character produces **hope**, ⁵ and **hope** does not put us to shame, because **the love of God** has been poured into **our hearts** through the **Holy Spirit** who has been **given to us**.

Romans 8:19-26

¹⁹ For **the creation waits with eager longing** for the revealing of the **children of God**.

²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, **in hope** ²¹ that the creation itself will be **set free from its bondage to corruption** and obtain the **freedom of the glory of the children of God**.

²² For we know that the **whole creation** has been **groaning together** in the pains of **childbirth** until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but **we ourselves**, who have the **firstfruits of the Spirit**, groan inwardly as we **wait eagerly** for adoption as sons, the **redemption of our bodies**.

²⁴ For **in this hope we were saved**. Now **hope** that is seen is not **hope**. For who **hopes** for what he sees? ²⁵ But if **we hope for what we do not see**, we **wait** for it with **patience**.

²⁶ Likewise **the Spirit helps us** in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but **the Spirit himself** intercedes for us with **groanings too deep for words**.

Romans 15:7-9, 12-13

⁷ Therefore **welcome one another** just as the **Messiah welcomed you** into the **glory of God**. ⁸ For I tell you that **Messiah** became a **servant** to the circumcised people (the Jews) to show **God's truth** by bringing to reality **his promises** given to the patriarchs, ⁹ but so that the Gentiles (all nations) **may glorify God because of his mercy**. As it is written ...

¹² And again **Isaiah** says,

*"The **root of Jesse** will come, even he who **risers to rule the Gentiles** (nations);
in him will the **Gentiles** (nations) **hope**."* [Isa 11:10 Gk]

¹³ May the **God of hope** fill you with all **joy** and **peace** as you have **faith**, so that by the **power of the Holy Spirit** you may **abound in hope**.

Luke 2:25-32

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was **Simeon**, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

²⁷ And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, ²⁸ he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

²⁹ *"Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word;*

³⁰ *for my eyes have seen your **salvation***

³¹ *that **you have prepared** in the presence of **all peoples**,*

³² *a **light for revelation to the Gentiles**, and for **glory to your people Israel**."*

Abounding in Hope! (Rom 15)

Advent speaks to a way of living, marked by the coming of Jesus, past, present, future. We live in the flow of history in a world engaged with God, who is both creator (physicist and father) and sustainer (lover, life-giver, judge). A God engaged on all levels, in relationship.

We live in a brief moment of that vast story. We see much that's beautiful but also know our own brokenness and failure and the suffering of the world. We could see life with despair as meaningless. The Biblical message including the Gospel says that both the beauty and the awfulness are real and important. But God is involved with us, focused in Jesus, to bring blessing to his whole creation, to all people, by, astonishingly, becoming one of us. Jesus' birth, brought to fulfillment Israel's long time of waiting, for those who could see.

Hope is the result, not as a faint glimmer, but a powerful confidence. Paul in Romans, explores the story and brings his message to a climax praying for us to "abound in hope" (15:13).

The reason is God's faithfulness in Messiah Jesus, fulfilling his promises for all the world, (reaching back across history to Abraham and to Isaiah's anticipation of fulfillment) welcoming us into God's glory, calling us to faith, and the working in us by the Holy Spirit. All through Romans Paul develops the story/life of this open, powerful, purposeful hope.

Living in a Groaning, Waiting World (Rom 8)

Part of hope is realizing that we live in a broken world. Jesus was born into poverty and died on a cross. Each of us has our own story of pain, problems, suffering, and sin.

We see and experience the suffering in our world on all levels: Ferguson Mo. (racial conflict), Syria, Iraq (war, religious conflict), Liberia (disease), many places poverty, growing wealth disparity, oppression, conflicts over immigration in US and Europe, destruction of our ecosystem, climate change, etc. Paul describes the whole creation groaning in bondage.

The depth of the suffering, alienation, sin sets the character of God's intervention and our hope. We wait, but we also already experience God's renewed promise and his powerful presence in the Holy Spirit. We're called now to foster life marked by the values of God's justice and peace, and also to join with God's spirit in prayer for the fulfillment of hope.

The Faithfulness that Creates Faith and Hope (Rom 3, 5)

That might seem whistling in the dark, but that in Jesus God has come into our suffering world. That is the Gospel. God has been pointing forward in promise throughout history. Now in Jesus his faithfulness reaches an astonishing intervention to touch life at its depth. He doesn't just change systems (which always get re-broken), but brings us into direct relationship with him to trust in his faithfulness and experience his deep love.

We are changed: Trust/Faith, Peace with God, Grace, hope of God's glory. We can even grow through sufferings, be tested, strengthen hope. Experience the Love that is the heart of God. Because in Jesus, God has come among us, and in the Holy Spirit lives with us.