

Grounded in Grace

Pictures of Hope and Redemption Pt 6

Picture #5 The Blue Rays of Hope



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 disappoint us, because God's has poured out his love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. Romans 5:3-:5

Several years ago, I went to New York and visited "Ground Zero." It was an incredible sight as I was able to watch a couple of the main pillars laid in place to start building the new tower. I also went rummaging around New York looking for two identical pictures: one with the world trade center and the other was with the tribute in lights (pictured above). The "Tribute in Lights" showed two blue lights representing the twin towers as a tribute and memorial. I call them "the blue rays of hope." I have both of them framed and hanging on my wall. This is a constant reminder that all of us need to see and find hope no matter our circumstances.

Paul continues on this theme of suffering and the way that suffering not only builds our character but points us to hope. I desire to look at three aspects of hope that we, as his beloved, can hold onto during our time of struggle.

First, let's define hope. I define hope in the following way:

Hope is a belief or state of being that no matter the circumstances, no matter the struggle or difficulty, God will use all events to not only transform our character into holiness but also to help us gain assurance that He will continue to lead and protect us into the unknown future.

The Power of Hope *"And hope does not disappoint us. . ."*

Paul uses the word hope three times in the passage. Paul writes that he has hope in "the glory of God" (verse 2), that God produces hope in our character (verse 3), and that hope is something that will not disappoint us (verse 5). In each context, hope is described in terms of not only a character trait but even more so an intangible place of being that allows us to have confidence in the providence of God. As we look at hope, we are able to see a progression. Our hope begins with the constant reminder that God's glory will shine through our circumstances even when all we see is darkness. God is and will always be in the details of our stories. Furthermore, God produces the character of hope in our hearts.

The character of hope is a sustained assurance that as we move through this life we will continually experience the way he works in our lives in the present moment. As we experience this hope it does not disappoint us or leave us in vain. We grow in confidence that all things will work out for our good and to his glory (Romans 8:28).

The Pouring Out of Love “...because God has poured out his love into our hearts...”

Paul gives us the reason that hope does not disappoint- God loves our souls. The foundation of any hope is in the fact that our relationships with the living God are built on His love for us. Notice the description of the way his love is dispensed - it is *poured out* on us. God continually pours his love out over and over. He lavishly gives his love to us everyday. We constantly need to bask in the reality that we are loved as his children. We are his beloved and he won't let us go. We are loved for who we are and not what we have to be. We are loved not for what we do but for what he has done on our behalves. This reality changes the way we relate to others, changes our motivations, and give us confidence to face this world with power *and hope*.

The Presence of Comfort “...through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.” Romans 5:3-:5

In John 16, Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit will come as our counselor to lead us and give us comfort. Paul continues this theme by reminding us that the Holy Spirit is given to us. The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, has been given to you and to me. We are not alone. God continually pours out his love to us by constantly being with us. This gives us the comfort of his presence.

Wherever we go in this life, he is there with us.

Whatever happens in this life, he is there comforting us.

Whatever happens- joys or trials- he is constantly whispering the Fathers love to us.

This gives us hope, this gives us comfort, and this gives us peace. Just like “The Tribute Lights” in New York pointed to a reconstruction of a new tower one day, the Holy Spirit points us to the hope that one day God will redeem all things. He is redeeming all things even now. There is power in hope!

