

Meeker Christian Church
January 5, 2025
NEW YEAR, NEW HOPE

Last week I asked to put this verse on the mantle of your heart:
Romans 15:13 - 13 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.

When it comes to the word hope as released and revealed in the Bible a person must believe and obey:

God is the creator, source, and inspiration of hope. Righteous directed hope is revealed for the well-being of the recipients of salvation.

And in that hope inspiration, and from that source you may be filled with all joy and peace in believing - and in so doing you-will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit that you received at baptism.

--- FYI "elpis" is the Greek word from which we get our word "hope."

In the Greco-Roman world, elpis - was often seen as an uncertain expectation, sometimes even a delusion. Much like the cynical world view of the meaning of our word "hope" today. However, the Christian understanding of hope, as expressed in the New Testament, is a different world view rooted in the certainty of God's promises and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This hope of ours is transformative, providing believers with strength and perseverance amid trials - and the ever present council of the Holy Spirit for life and kingdom service..

In the New Testament, "elpis" or HOPE primarily denotes a confident expectation or trust in God's promises. It is not merely wishful thinking but a firm assurance based on the character and faithfulness of God. This hope is often linked with faith and love, forming a triad of Christian virtues described in 1 Corinthians 13:13. 13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. Which I quickly add does minimize or negate the power and promise of faith and hope.

As we embark in anticipation and hope for New Year 2025 may we be filled with this Christian understanding of hope rooted in the certainty of God's promises and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This hope is transformative,

providing believers with strength and perseverance amid trials just as it has since the Bible was written and canonized. The canonization (compilation, or collection) of the 27 Book of the New Testament began shortly after the death and resurrection of Jesus in the first century and continued until the 4th century. Our word "hope" is said to be translated first in Ruth 1:12. Ruth is the 8th book listed in the 66 books of the complete Bible. This hope is what I pray for, for YOU and why I am inspired to be excited and hope the Lord and you come ever closer in personal relationship and I hope that joy and peace be a daily accord in your lives. And I hope for heavenly inspiration through the giftedness of each of you in the church. That is why God brings us together -- to use our gifts, to inspire each other, in reaching and encouraging each other in the christian walk and kingdom service in reaching others with the good news.

We live in one of the few areas of the world with active herds of wild horses. They make a great illustration of this Christian world-view hope. Before the decision to become a Christian or church member we are pretty much like a member of a herd of wild horses. They learn to survive and subsist, but were created to be much greater and useful when captured and trained. When the Holy Spirit initiates the circumstances that bring us into the useful kingdom service for which we were created we start our training and like that veteran trained wild horse becomes the pride of its owner. You Christians are the pride of your Heavenly Father and HE cares for you and with you through this life.

An Old Testament Psalmist expressed the same concept in Psalm 78:5-7
For He established a testimony in Jacob, And appointed a law in Israel,
Which He commanded our fathers, That they should make them known to
their children; 6 That the generation to come might know them, The
children who would be born, That they may arise and declare them to their
children, 7 That they may set their hope in God, And not forget the works
of God, But keep His commandments;

The concept of which I speak is that we are taught and understand that our God brings order out of chaos - in creation and in life, but with a stipulation - the stipulation for us in hope is to understand there are instructions for order as given by Moses on Mt. Sinai, and punishment for disobedience. When Moses and Joshua were gone the nation of Israel started forgetting and for 1500 years God dealt with their insurrection. The nation of Israel started by defaulting on some things, and eventually returning to inevitable

chaos resulting from their ignorant and stupid rebellion. But our GOD - GOD of hope has given mankind yet another hope for order through the gospel message of Jesus Christ - God has given us another hope for spiritual order and hope in our daily living for the world to witness and from which to learn. For nearly 2,000 years we have over and over and over been given hope based on faith, grace, love and mercy.

The Bible does not leave us in doubt as to why the whole world needed hope when HE sent Jesus.. The Apostle Paul in the book of Romans gives us a very clear expression of why hope was declined by Israel then and in like manner is being systematically decimated along with the promised joy, peace and well-being of mankind who collectively are His uniquely gifted caretakers of the earth. The wise and compliant strive in hope to maintain spiritual order in the universe for joy and peace..

But right now look at Paul's hope for righteous order with explanation and warning why those who are failing and where that failure is headed:

Romans 1:16-32. Paul speaks first of those filled with hope like himself:
16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

That faith product is joy and peace . But Paul wants his students to understand that failure of hope historically, was a degenerate fact of their day and unless believers unite and be the witness of their calling --- faith, hope, joy and peace will be lost. And the inevitable will happen. Listen how precisely he describes it for us so you and I cannot miss what is happening around us today!!!

We continue in Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.

///that is another description of our HOPE. ///

verse 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and]Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were

darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible men—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

/// But listen up church family - God is not a feather-weight cuddly teddy bear. GOD with all authority and power in the universe and because of our hope is instructing us what is recognizable all around us so we will not miss our reward of hope and corresponding eternal inheritance.///

we continue - 24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, 25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

I am sorry I cannot read these next two verses - you can read them in private, it is describing the vulgar depravity and disobedience to GOD and HIS righteousness proving the rebellion of depravity.

26 For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their [g]women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. 27 Likewise also the [h]men, leaving the natural use of the [i]woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

I will pick up with verses 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness,]covetousness, [maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, 30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, [unforgiving, unmerciful; 32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

It is okay if you feel a little sick at your stomach or otherwise nauseous! Those sins are the reasons we are teaching the unadulterated revelation of Holy divinely inspired scripture - that reason is the focal point of our HOPE and instruction for righteousness.

And here is a verse for faith formation and hope Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

There is new hope in this New Year 2025!

New hope for those who have become physically and or emotionally exhausted.

New hope for those who are morally and spiritually bankrupt like those we have read about - but even for them is hope.

New hope for those who have never heard about the saving grace through JESUS CHRIST.

And new hope for you who have perhaps become tired in trying to live your Christian convictions in a world that doesn't care and is becoming daily more antagonistic, sarcastic and violent toward us.

But here are words of hope for encouragement to you in Galatians 6:9
9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

Hope is for everyone who will hear, believe, repent and be baptized...if you have never become a Christian, then come forward as we sing, or if you are ready to transfer membership to kingdom serve under the Meeker Christian Umbrella, we will welcome you with open arms...