

Romans 5:5 NIV

Help for one of our greatest fears

**“And hope does not disappoint us,
because God has poured his love into our hearts
by the Holy Spirit whom he has given us.”**

**Those who understand God’s love and respond
to it won’t be disappointed in the end.**

**Do you worry about being
shamed-disappointed?**

**Suppose you plan to take your family to
Disneyworld.**

You and your family talk about it for weeks.

The entire family excitedly anticipates the trip.

You arrange transportation and lodging.

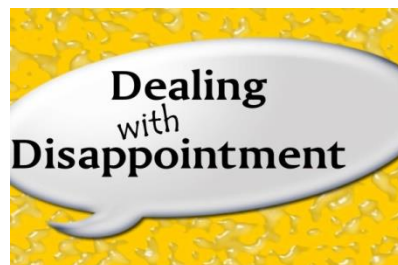
The day finally comes.

You board your flight.

**Get to Orlando, check in your hotel, and
head for the Magic Kingdom.**

You present your tickets at the entrance.

But they’re no good—they’re fake.



**Since you tried to enter using bogus tickets, you
can’t take your family to Disneyworld that day.**

**Furthermore, because you presented fraudulent
tickets, officials say you can never be admitted
to Disneyworld again.**

**Your phony tickets permanently disqualified
you for the Magic Kingdom.**

Think of your disappointment.

Most of us live in hope of entering heaven.

- But when the day comes, if the Lord
denies our request—there’s no appeal.**
- We’ll watch friends and loved ones
happily enter heaven.**

We shall feel awful shame and disappointment.

Do you strongly hope for heaven?

To believers, our text promises:

**“(Our) hope does not disappoint us,
because God has poured his love into our hearts
by the Holy Spirit whom he has given us.”**

We can avoid Last Day shame, but how?

The Bible clearly tells us three necessities.

1. We love and appreciate God.

Most people I know feel conflicting emotions about God.

They believe in him.

They know of His love.

But at times they wonder about God, especially when things seem to go wrong.

After a series of missed putts, golfer Tommy Bolt shook his fist in the air and shouted, "Why don't you come down and fight like a man?"

Do you recall Joseph Heller's *Catch 22* words?

"Good God, how much reverence can you have for a Supreme Being who finds it necessary to include such phenomena as phlegm and tooth decay in his divine system of creation?"

Philip Yancey Wrote of being flown to a Shipibo Indian Village in Peru.

The missionary pilot landed the float plane, taxied to the riverbank, and guided him along a jungle trail to a village.

"'Main Street' was a dirt path surrounded by a dozen huts built on stilts and covered with palm fronds. He had brought me there to show me a thriving, forty-year-old church," Yancey continued.

"But he also showed me a granite marker just off the main path and told me the story of the young missionary who helped found that church.

When his six-month-old son died from a sudden onset of vomiting and diarrhea, the young missionary seemed to crack. He hewed a marker by hand from local stone—the marker we were looking at—buried the baby's body, and planted a tree beside the grave. At the hottest part of each day, when everyone else sought shade, the missionary walked to the river and hauled back a jug of water for the tree. Then he stood beside the grave, his shadow falling across it, as if to shield it from the blazing equatorial sun. Sometimes he would weep, sometimes pray, and sometimes just stand there with a vacant gaze.



“His wife, the Indian church members, and other missionaries all tried to comfort him, but to no avail.

“Eventually, the missionary himself got sick. His mind wandered; he had constant diarrhea. He was flown to Lima, where doctors probed him for any sign of amoeba or other tropical organisms, but found nothing. None of the drugs they tried were effective. They diagnosed his problem as ‘hysterical diarrhea’ and sent him and his wife back to the United States.

“As I stood beside the crumbling granite marker, which the Indian women now used as a place to rest their water pots, I tried to put myself in that young missionary's place. I wondered what he had prayed as he stood there in the noonday sun . . . My guide had said the man was tormented by the question of (God's) unfairness.”¹

In his “Acis and Galatea,” John Gay emoted:

¹ *Disappointment with God*, pp. 30, 31

**“I rage, I melt, I burn,
The feeble God has stabbed me to the heart.”**

At some time or other, most of us feel as if God has stabbed us through the heart.

During those stressful times, we don't feel as Paul did, that, “God has poured his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom he has given us.”

I question whether I could have offered much consolation to the young missionary in Peru.

At times I've wondered about God's fairness.

A personal experience helped me overcome some of my doubt.

It relates to my interaction with a manager years ago when I worked in a major oil company bulk plant.

- I was a college graduate in my early 20s and taking a post-graduate course in English.
- Norma and I had two young sons then.
- My boss was probably in his early sixties.
- We were never very close.



- It seemed as if Mr. T singled me out for the loneliest, most miserable jobs in the plant.
- I did most of the non-supervisory assignments that it was possible to do at the plant.
- I felt insulted by many of his projects.

“Doesn’t Mr. T know that I’m a college graduate? Why does he have me doing this stuff?”

- Over a six-month period I performed a dozen or more different jobs, some of them at odd hours, a few hazardous, and many, very tedious.
- **I enjoyed none of them.**

My resentment increased because most of the guys got to work alongside others.

Most of the time, I worked by myself.

- I questioned Mr. T’s fairness.
- One day he called me into his office at the 28th & Santa Fe, Los Angeles plant.

“Bob, I’ve been giving you these assignments,” Mr. T said, “so that you would know more about plant operations and the oil business. I’m endorsing you for advancement.”

The promotion did not involve a job at the plant.

In fact, Mr. T recommended me for a responsible position in a beautiful area of Northern California.

- He looked beyond everyday events.
- He planned for my future with the company.



Nearby Lake Shasta

Without question, God has been fair to me.

- He’s given me infinitely more than I deserve.
- He may seem distant at times, but he never stops caring for us.
- Most of that “distance” comes from our neglect and doubt, not His absence.

God always thinks about our future.

He wants us to grow and mature and live with Him in eternity.

How do we avoid shame on the Last day?

We love, honor, and appreciate God and His ways.

2. **We also think gratefully of what He did for us in Christ.**

Consider this story from the time of Cyrus the Great, king of Persia. One of his generals came home from a campaign and was shocked to find that in his absence, his wife had been arrested and languished in prison, charged with treachery against her country. The trial was set for that very day. The general hastened to Cyrus's court, and the guards brought in his own beloved wife.

Pale and anxious, she tried to answer the charges brought against her, but to no avail. Her husband, standing near, heard the stern voice of the Persian ruler pronounce the death sentence. As they were about to drag her away to behead her, he ran forward and threw himself down at the feet of the Emperor. "Oh, sire," he cried, "not she, but me. Let me give my life for hers. Put me to death, but spare my wife."

As Cyrus looked upon him, he was so touched by



the general's deep devotion and love for his wife that his heart softened. He remembered, too, this general's faithfulness, and he gave the command that the wife should go free. Cyrus fully pardoned her.

As her husband led her out of the room, he said to her, "Did you notice the kind look in the eyes of the Emperor as he pronounced the word of pardon?"

She said, "I didn't see the face of the Emperor. The only face I saw was of the man who was willing to die for me."²

Have you recently spent time considering Jesus, who endured humiliation, rejection, and death for us?³

Appreciation grows when we read about how much suffering Jesus underwent to help us.

He was totally innocent.

Thinking about Jesus' loving actions causes our hope to surge and multiply.

² The Christian Herald

³ See Matthew 26, 27 ; Mark 14, 15; Luke 22,23; & John 8-19

When Stephen pointed out his contemporaries' lack of appreciation, they became upset:

"When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.⁴ 'Look,' he said, 'I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.'"

At the time, Paul was an unbeliever, standing there watching and cheering as Stephen died.

Paul later said,



Rembrandt's depiction of Stephen's stoning.

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."⁵

- God cares for us even when we think He doesn't.
 - Jesus' sacrificial death shows us the magnitude and depth of his great love.
3. Once we respond to Christ's love, and are baptized into him for the remission of our sins, God sends His refreshing Holy Spirit into our hearts.

One of the older Bible versions translates, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts."

In our text, Paul seems to use language from Isaiah the prophet.

"This is what the LORD says—he who made you, who formed you in the womb, and who will help you:

"Do not be afraid, O Jacob, my servant, *Jeshurun (honey, my love)*, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.

⁴ Acts 7:54 NIV

⁵ Galatians 2:20 NIV

“They will spring up like grass in a meadow, like poplar trees by flowing streams.”⁶

Remember how dry things were in our area last summer and fall?

Many talked about the need for rain, and we prayed for it.

In droughts, long established trees often wither and die.



Apart from God’s love, Jesus’ forgiveness, and the power of the Holy Spirit, we suffer severe, fatal life-drought and hopelessness.

In his old age, the Apostle John pleaded for folks not to give up on Christ:

“And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.”⁷

Do you feel empty, depleted, wasted, dried up, forsaken and without hope?

God helps you overcome.

- **Get acquainted with Him.**
 - **Consider Jesus’ love.**
- **Be baptized into Christ for the remission of your sins.**
 - **Welcome God’s Spirit into your life.**
 - **Continue faithfully in His Word.**

You’ll find new expectation, anticipation, and hope.



“And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom he has given us.”

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⁶ Isaiah 44:2 NIV

⁷ 1 John 2: 28 NIV