

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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The Holy Spirit and God's Love

(Jerry Fite)

The love of God is the catalyst for the suffering Christian's faithful persistence, and the foundation for the child of God's unwavering hope. Paul writes, “...and hope putting not to shame; because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given to us” (Romans 5:5).

Is this love something we merely feel? Some commentators view this verse as the Holy Spirit drenching the Christian with powerful sensations: *“It is as if the apostle had said, “And how can this hope of glory, which as believers we cherish, put us to shame, when we feel God Himself, by His Spirit given to us, drenching our hearts in sweet, all-subduing sensations of His wondrous love to us in Christ Jesus?”* (Jamieson- Faussett and Brown Bible Commentary).

When considering the work of the Holy Spirit, many are drawn automatically to “feelings” produced by the Spirit, instead of “an understanding” produced through the Spirit's revealed Word. Does the Christian persevere against powerful persecution because of “sweet sensations”

poured out through the Holy Spirit? Does a good “drenching” from the Holy Spirit of “sweet sensations” “subdue” the mind of the persecuted Christian?

Paul explains how the Holy Spirit has poured forth the love of God into the Christian's heart. The Holy Spirit has revealed the character of this love that in turn sustains us. Paul writes, *“for while we were weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly...But God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:6, 8). God loved us when we did not love Him (I John 4:10). When we were sinners, and therefore at enmity with God; when we were weak, therefore helpless to stand justified on our own before a holy and righteous God, Christ redeemed us with his justifying blood (Romans 3:24-26; I Peter 1:18-19).

But God's love offers even more: *“Much more then, being now justified by His blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through Him...much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life”* (Romans 5:9, 10). Saved from the wrath of God, which culminates in the eternal fires of Hell; and saved

from not only our sins, but from the grave through the resurrection of Christ, we have a living hope (I Peter 1:3-4; 3:21). Our hope does not put us to shame because it is founded on Christ's death and resurrection.

What makes the love of God “sweet” is not a “feeling” from the Holy Spirit, but an understanding through His revealed word that Christ died for you and me when we were helpless and at enmity with God. We can go through the fires of persecution and the corruption of the grave not because we have been drenched with an overpowering sensation, but because the Holy Spirit has revealed the blessings enjoyed through a resurrected Lord.

If the love of God has come to us through the Holy Spirit drenching us with subduing sensations, why tell us of God's love? What “feeling” do you have of God's love apart from the revelation of God's love through the Word? Knowing there is nothing, not even persecution and death that can separate us from God's love in Christ, we are strengthened to persevere unto the crown of life (Rom. 8:31-39, Rev. 2:10).