

Glad Tidings

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

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Anatomy of Abounding Hope

(Jerry Fite)

Paul writes, “*Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Spirit*” (Romans 15:13).

While God does not focus on numbers as essential for growth, he does point to three areas in the heart of the Christian which should experience growth: faith, hope and love. Paul continued to give thanks for the saints in Thessalonica. He writes to them, giving the reason: “*for that your faith growth exceedingly, and the love of each one of you all toward one another aboundeth;*” (2 Thessalonians 1:3). Their faith was not just growing, it was growing exceedingly. Their love was not manifested in just a few, but in each one of them. This abounding love was not reserved for just a select few, but manifested to all. In Romans, Paul reveals the third area of spiritual growth: an abounding hope.

Without God and Jesus Christ, we would have no hope, much less an abounding hope. God is “*the God of hope*” because He, in His mercy, has given us salvation in Jesus Christ. This mercy is extended to all men, both Jew and Gentile. Fulfilling Isaiah 40:10, Jesus came from the root of Jesse, ruling His spiritual people, and instilling in

them hope (Romans 15:12). Separate from Christ, man is without God and has no hope (Ephesians 2:12). Reconciled to God through Christ, the Christian has a living hope as he or she looks to Jesus as their hope (1 Peter 1:3-4; 1 Timothy 1:1).

With the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit makes an abounding hope possible. Such growing hope is possible “*in the power of Holy Spirit*”. The Holy Spirit guided all the writers of the New Testament in producing the saving Gospel of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:10-13; John 16:13). The Gospel, produced by the empowering Holy Spirit, is not only the power of God unto Salvation (Romans 1:16), but is the power of God unto an abounding hope.

The hope of heaven is secure in our hearts through reading the truth of the Gospel (Colossians 1:5). The closer we come to the grave; we grow in the anticipatory hope of eternal life beyond the grave. God cannot lie; He promises eternal life; and He promises victory over death through a resurrected Christ. These truths empower an abounding hope.

A hope that is abounding is growing in a joyous heart. The God of hope fills us with “all joy” as we abound in hope. This joy comes

from being in the right relationship with God. Jesus Christ is “*our peace*” (Ephesians 2:14), for he made it possible to have peace with God. Therefore, this joy is coupled with the “*peace in believing*”. Through the “*gospel of peace*” (Ephesians 6:15), we learn how we can have peace with God, and therefore have peace with other likeminded people (Ephesians 2:15).

Dissecting the anatomy of abounding hope, we find God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. We also discover joy and peace through believing in Christ through the Spirit-inspired Gospel message. But these components of abounding hope interact in practical living. Knowing the rule of God is “*righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit*”, the strong Christian will protect the conscience of the weak brother, so all can continue to have joy and peace in believing (Romans 14:17-20). An abounding hope allows us to take “*joyfully the spoiling of your possessions, knowing that ye have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one*” (Hebrews 10:34).

Do you have this kind of joy? An abounding hope will produce it through the peace in believing and trusting in Christ.