

Romans 15:13

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Date: 15 September 2013

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[0 : 00] I want to give you some encouragement from a verse from Romans chapter 15 and verse 13. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe in him, so that you may abound with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

And the premise of this verse is that men and women without God are men and women without hope. And that all of us then need to be filled by an act of Almighty God. Not by any resources within ourselves, but by a rich, loving grace. By a perforation of our lives, by an intrusion into our hearts of the God of hope.

And so we are presented here with this God, and he's not a frustrated God. He's not wringing his hands in horror as he looks at the situation in Syria, or in the Middle East, or in North Korea. But he's a God of hope, and a God who is completely in control of this world and of our lives. And the proof of that is that he has brought you here this morning to this congregation.

[1 : 23] Some for the first time, some with a restlessness in their hearts. But you made contact with someone, there was a girl in your office, and you always liked her.

And one day, some months ago, you said to her, do you have a good weekend? And she said to you, oh yes, we had such a wonderful time in church on Sunday morning.

And she described something of what she heard. And there was awakened in your heart a longing that that experience that had been heard might also be yours.

And you often talked to her about her weekends. And one day she said to her, would you like to come with me to church? We've got a special service this weekend. And you gladly came.

And when you arrived here, you felt you were coming home. The God of hope had involved himself in your life.

[2 : 29] And this God of hope then gives encouragement to men and women whose lives have been put in such muddles by their own unbelief.

And their deadness of heart. And God of hope then has touched you. Touched you when you were in the gutter. Touched you after a broken marriage.

Touched you in prison. And you were transformed by a new resource.

A new energy that he could supply to you. Now we tell men and women that God is light. And in him is no darkness at all. We tell men and women that our God is a consuming fire.

That God is just. That after death there is the judgment and the great separation. And these things are true. But the great foundational truth of the Bible is that God is a God of hope.

[3 : 32] He's a God of grace and a God of love. And God has told us not that we are the traffic wardens of Ealing. Or that we are the headmaster or principal of Ealing.

But that we are the light. And the light is the great message that God is love. And God is mercy. And God is joy.

And God is peace. And God is forgiveness. And all this is found in him. And that the God of hope can fill despairing people with joy and peace.

It's possible for the burdens that you have. That you brought to the congregation even this morning.

It's possible for them to be dealt with wisely.

And therapeutically. And deeply. And replacing trust and confidence. That God is in control. And knows what he's doing in your life. That that can be given to you.

[4 : 32] It is possible for you. To be filled to the brim. With joy and peace. As you trust in God. Now this is a tremendous message.

And it's absolutely free. It's not that we're in the London Hilton this weekend. And I've come from a distant country. And you're all paying a thousand pounds. To discover the secret of joy and peace.

But here. Freely I have received. And freely. All of us Christians. Would give to you this. This wonderful message.

Of the possibility. Of the fullness. Of joy and peace. Where before you. Just got by. In life. Paul is writing to the whole congregation.

In Rome. There are illiterates. Many illiterates. There are many slaves there. And old people. And beggars. And blind. And they've gathered there.

[5 : 27] With people from. The Roman guard. And from. Caesar's palace. And they're there together. And Paul's longing. For all of them. Without exception. Is that.

The God they've come to know. Or are getting to know. Might fill. Every one of them. With joy. And peace. You say.

What's. What's in this Christianity. For me. What if I. Get involved. In this congregation. What if I go to. A Christianity. Explored course.

And listen. What will I get from it. Well this is what you will get from it. To be filled. With all joy. And peace. As you.

Believe. In Jesus Christ. This message then. Is. Is a message of.

[6 : 21] Of. Assurance. It's an in your face. Message. Message. It's a very affirmative. Message. And. You say to me. Well.

You Christians. Whenever I've come across you. You're always talking about. Love. And joy. And peace. And faith. How. How can I know. These things. Are true.

How can I know. That. God will fill me. With all joy. And peace. If I trust in him. Well. You can do so. For two reasons. Firstly.

Because of the resurrection. Of Jesus Christ. From the dead. There was a young man. Called Peter. And Peter. Had enormous self-confidence. And he didn't need. A dying.

Saviour. He didn't need. The cross of Jesus Christ. To. Make him any better. Than he was already. Or make him more. Acceptable. And presentable.

[7 : 16] To God. But he had to witness. The man he. Grew. To love. With all his heart. Determined.

To go. To the cross. Of Calvary. And to say. That he was giving his life. As a ransom. For a man like Peter. But that was the only way. He could. Go to God.

So. Peter was in such. A contradiction. Feeling so confident. And yet. Jesus. Giving his life. And dying for him.

He was in despair. At the death. Of. Of Christ. What could life mean.

For him. Any longer. And then on the third day. The Lord Jesus. Rose from the dead. Women saw him. He met him. The lamb. In the upper room. They were fishing.

[8 : 12] Up the sea of Galilee. And this Jesus. Had cooked fish. And bread. And ate it. With them. And he asked them. To handle him. And touch him. He met with two. Walking on the road.

To Emmaus. And five hundred. Were like a garden party. At Buckingham Palace. They were there. On a mountainside. In Galilee. And Jesus came. And walked amongst them. Sped hours with them.

Talking with them. A Roman centurion. A leper. That had been healed. A Syrophenician woman. With a badly damaged. Daughter. That Jesus had helped. And Jesus met with them.

And they lived for many years. And they would give their lives. For that fact. That he lived. He came back to life. He was resurrected.

Peter said. He begat us again. To a living hope. By the resurrection. Of Jesus Christ. From the dead. That's what he did.

[9 : 08] That the hope. Then that. Peter had. Wasn't just wishful. Thinking. That the hope. That the hope. Was grounded. And rooted. In the triumphant.

Resurrection. Of Jesus. Over the grave. So you have to ask. What is the. What is absolute reality? What.

Is the most powerful. Reality of all. Is it death? Or is it the preacher. Of the sermon on the mount? Death. And the mother tells us. That Jesus Christ.

The son of God. Is more powerful. Than death. That on the third day. He rose. From the dead. This Jesus. And this Jesus.

Is the one then. Who gives us hope. And so. The doctrine of the resurrection. Is one of the reasons. Why we have this hope. Because.

[10 : 08] It didn't occur. The resurrection. In. In Narnia. And. It didn't occur. In an episode. Of the Lord of the Rings. And it didn't occur.

Then. In. The realm of theology. Or philosophy. But it. Occurred. In. History. In space. And time. Where a degree of latitude.

Crosses a degree of longitude. On this planet. A tomb. Outside the city wall. Where he. Then. Who. Was officially dead. Rose. On the third day. And transformed. Cowards. And turned the world. Upside down. And still.

Today. In millions of congregations. All over the world. There. Are people. Who are testifying. To the hope. They have. Through Jesus Christ. And that's the first reason.

[11:02] We have hope. And the second reason. We have hope. Is. Because of the experience. Of. The grace. And the love of God. That we've had. Through our lives.

Many. Many years. And. Every morning. We've. Woken up. And we've. Appropriated. This. This Jesus. To help us.

Through each day. And through dark times. And through bereavement. And loss. And suffering. And ill health. And. Marriage breakups.

Ah. We've had. This savior. And we've experienced. His goodness. And his kindness. I can doubt many things. I can doubt. Global warming.

But I can't doubt. The. Love of God. For me. In Jesus Christ. My Lord. Which. Has been my daily experience.

[11:57] For many years. And what I'm saying. I'm saying on behalf of. Many. Many. Of the men and women. That are. Around us here. This is how. The God of hope.

Has met us. And what he. Has done. For us. Is. He has told us. How this. Hope. Can be ours. It is. The ESV says. As you believe in him. As the NIV says. As you trust in him. Trust is. I suppose. An anglo-saxon word.

Isn't it? And. And believe. Is a. A. A. A Latin based. Word. A French. Norman word. Faith. Let's. Let's look at.

Trust. Trust is something. You know you have. Or you don't have. You've got your digital clock. At the side of your bed. And. You wake up in the night.

[12:52] And you glance over. At those red digits. And they say. Zero three. Zero. Thirty six. And you know what the time is. You know how accurate. Those things are. Only if there's a.

A power shortage. Then. Does that tell us. A wrong time. Or it flashes. So you know the time. You trust it. You can trust everything. About the Lord Jesus Christ. Every single thing about him. You can trust. You can trust.

That he was born of a virgin. You can trust. That he lived. A most marvelous. Loving. Caring. Sinless life. That this world.

Has seen someone. As holy as God himself. You can trust him. When he said. At the end of his life. It is finished. That all the work.

[13:46] Of redeeming us. Of making atonement. For our sins. Of propitiating. Of the wrath. Of a sin hating God. For. The miserable.

Inconsistent way. That we. Live and think. And. Speak. That there's. Complete. Forgiveness. Taught upon. All our past sins. All our present sins. All our future sins. All have been dealt with. Once and for all. By Jesus Christ. When he said. It is finished. It is finished. It was a man who. It was his turn.

On the. School run. To pick up. His. His. Daughter. Aspern. Her name was. She was six. And it was. Pouring down.

[14:43] With rain. Really. Worse rain. Was pouring down. And. He had the. Windscreen wipers. At double speed. And there were other cars. About. And he was very careful.

She was in the car. With him. And suddenly. She spoke. And she said to him. Do you know. Daddy. That. The rain.

Is like our sin. And the windscreen wipers. Are God. Wiping away. Our sin. And he. Had a lump in his throat.

She. She was a funny little girl. Um. But she. Never said anything. As. As perceptive. As that before. And so. He swallowed the lump. And.

He wanted to see. How far. He could go with her. How much. She thought about this. And. He said to her. Yes. And. Haven't you noticed.

[15:38] Asper. That. It keeps. Raining. All the time. What does that tell us? Oh. She said. We keep. Sinning. But God. Keeps.

Forgiving us. Our sins. Now. God must keep. Forgiving us. Our sins. Because. Well.
 I've never. Prayed. A sinless prayer. I've never. Preached. A sinless. Sermon. That there is. In me.
 And.
 In many. Worse things. A bias. Against God. I love him. And yet. I don't love him. With all my heart.
 And soul. And mind. And strength. I would.
 But I fail. I love. To meet. Fellow believers. I love the people. On my street. That I greet. In the day.
 But I don't love them. As I love myself.
 [16:33] There's a selfishness. That I hang on to. And for. The best things. I do. I need.
 Forgiveness. And mercy. And that.
 Forgiveness. Comes to me. Not through. Anything. That I have done. But it comes through. What
 Jesus Christ. The Son of God. Has done. And salvation.
 Comes. Not in. My works. But. His great work. For me. His love for me. Not my love for him. That
 he. Provided his son.
 And gave his son. That. Whoever believes. Whoever trusts. In him. Does not perish. But has the
 gift.
 Of everlasting life. His great love for us. So. When we ask you. About membership. When you want
 to join. Churches like our own. And. We say to you. A question.
 [17:29] Well. Why should God. Let you into heaven. Why should God. Share his eternity. And his
 holy presence. With you. And the answer.
 We are expecting. From you. Is this. Well. Because of Jesus. Because Jesus. Loved me. And he
 lived for me.
 And he achieved. A righteousness. For me. And he died for me. And he's. My hope. Nothing in
 myself. I have to run away.
 From my best works. And my prayers. And my good deeds. And I. Wholly. Lean. On the name. Of
 the Lord. Jesus Christ. And that's. The answer.
 And then when you say. Something like that. Because of Jesus. You say. My brother. My sister.
 And we give you. The right hand of fellowship. And on that foundation.
 [18:25] Then the New Testament church. Baptized people. Who came to that confession.
 Themselves. Now the result. Of trusting in Jesus Christ. Like this.
 Is that. You are. Filled. With all joy. And peace. As you trust him. Not. Not before. But while.
 You are. Trusting in him. You are filled. With all joy. And peace. The joy. Of knowing. The truth. The
 joy.
 Of knowing. Why you're. In the world. What is the purpose. Of life. What is man's. Chief end. The
 joy. Of knowing that. The joy.
 Of the Lord's day. And now. Not just. Cleaning the car. And working. In the garden. And reading.
 Sunday papers. And ending. By seeing. Repeats. Of movies.
 [19:19] That you know. Already. And going to bed. Disillusion. But the joy. Of a structure. To a
 day. When you gather. To hear. The message. Of God's word. And you sing his praise.
 The joy. Of knowing. The difference. Between right and wrong. The joy. Of Christian fellowship. To
 a day. To a day. And delivers us from the darkness of stress and depression.
 The peace of God passes all understanding. And it keeps our hearts and minds. It's like a guard
 that sees enemies coming.
 That sees those threatening thoughts that would discourage us. And it says halt who goes there.
 Joy and peace.
 And you find examples of it in the Bible don't you? Paul and Silas terribly treat it like some of you
 have in your work. And some of the pain you've had to endure because of misunderstanding in your
 family.
 [20:51] Because you're a believer in the Lord Jesus. And somehow God has come and filled you
 with joy and peace. Paul and Silas singing praise to God in prison after their backs quipped raw and
 bleeding and so painful.
 And their feet in the stocks. Let's sing Psalm 103. Paul says. And they sing it together. That psalm.
 That lovely psalm that was read to us today.
 And the prisoners are silent. And the echoing of that grim place. Is filled with Jehovah's great and
 holy name. Philip went to Samaria.

And we are told after he preached in that city. There was great joy in the city. He could have said there was great repentance. And there was great restoration and renewal and reconciliation in the city.

He didn't say that. He spoke of an emotion. An affection. Which hadn't been there in that cold, dark, confused place.

[21 : 59] There was joy there. Because of the gospel. And when Philip went later on to speak to one man. A man from Ethiopia. An African who came to believe long before any European believed.

Then we are told. The Ethiopian went on his way rejoicing. God filled him with joy and peace. When Peter explained to him. About the suffering and the death. Of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Savior. Joy and peace. It comes as you know God.

And as you do God's will. But now it is not just a Sunday morning activity. But it is something that you give your life to. You appropriate Jesus Christ at the beginning of the day.

Guide me today Lord. Help me. Open doors for me. Give me words to say. Make me wise. I cast my burdens. I have fears for this day.

[23 : 00] Certain people I am going to see. Help me. Joy and peace comes as you do God's will. As you pick up your cross and follow him.

As you deny yourself. And follow him. John Newton has this illustration. He says. When all the angels appeared before God. One day.

To receive their instructions for the day. God called one angel. And he said to him. I want you to go and become the emperor. Of the greatest empire. In the world.

The angel immediately went. And became the emperor of that. And then the next angel came. And he said. I want you to clean. The public toilets. Of the. Darkest.

Slum. In the biggest city of the world. And the angel immediately went and did it. There was no questioning. There was no envy. That the joy of the angel.

[23 : 59] The joy of the messenger of God. Is to do what God tells him to do. And that's where. Our joy. And our peace.

Come from. Three years ago. Yul and I were in. Grand Rapids. In Michigan. And I was preaching in. Providence Reformed Church.

And after the service. We went to. The home. Of a carpenter. And. There were. Ten children. And there was.

The carpenter. And his wife. And Yul and I. So we were fourteen people. And we had. Chicken soup. And bread. And there was a little. Buzz of conversation.

At the end. He took the Bible out. To read. He said. Oh you preached to us. This morning. On. On contentment. Pastor. I said. Yes. I said. Do you know.

[24 : 59] Our story. And I did know their story. I did know all the details. And I hadn't heard it. From him. Or his wife. Or the children. And so. A hush. Came over.

And the children then. Were frozen. Like satins. You know. How children can be. It was a sort of. Awareness. That they were going to hear. Something that they knew. Sure. So well. And yet. It was so much a part of their lives. So. So sobering.

So holy. He said. My wife. A week before Christmas. My first wife. She was expecting our fourth child.

And she was going along in the car. And the man shot through a red light. And crashed into the car. And killed her. I'm the unborn child. And then.

[26 : 06] My wife here. Her. Her first husband. He was. A. A butcher. In Grand Rapids. And a most godly man.

And he was very kind to. Street people. And he would give them work. If there was anything. In the slaughterhouse. But there was one man he employed. Who just was. A very provocative.

And awkward. And unreliable man. And he fired him. A couple of days later. He came back. To the butchers. With a. A cold 45. And he shot him dead.

I asked. Joel Beeky about him. Joel told me. That. He thought he would have become a preacher. So her parents came to.

Stay with him. During this time. And the next Sunday. They all went to church together. The five children. And her. And her mother and father. And they were driving along. In their big white van.

[27 : 12] Together to church. And suddenly a voice came. From the back. Of the van. We're not singing. We always sin. When we go to church.

And one of the children. Struck up. John Newton's great Sabbath hymn. Safely through. Another week. The father had been shot dead.

But for them. He was safe. In the arms of Jesus Christ. So they came to the church.

Then. And he was there. With his three children. And the. In the course of time. They. Came together. And the eight children. Came together. And they were married.

And they had two more children. Of their own. And the children. Listen to this. What had happened. This. Unthinkable.

[28 : 10] Event. And he read. The Bible then. And he prayed. And they sang. Together. There was joy. And there was peace.

As a gift of God. To two families. That had been so horribly. Treated by the. Godless. Careless. Hatred. That there is.

In the lives of men. Women. In this world. In which. You and I. Have to live. So when I'm talking to you. About. God filling us with joy. And peace. It's not just.

A nice. Sweet phrase. But it's. A deep reality. A reality. That. Just. Affects. The lives.

Of everyone. Can affect. Your life. Shouldn't you be. Listening. Eagerly. To this. That you never. Find another message.

[29 : 07] Like this. Tao Mapps. Doesn't preach a message. Like this. Sigmund Freud. Doesn't. Charles Darwin. You won't get that. From him. At all. You'll only get this. From the Lord Jesus Christ.

And his apostles. The God of hope. Filling us. With all joy. And peace. As we. As we trust. In him. This is a.

A God. Who works all things together. For our good. This is a God. God. From whom. We can never. Be separated. That when we go through. The valley of the shadow of death.

He's there. This is the God. Who supplies. All our needs. According to his riches. In glory. In Jesus Christ. This is the God. Who loves us.

With an everlasting life. This God. This is the reality. Of the Christian faith. And this is. The Christ. Who is being offered to you. For you to begin now.

[30 : 02] To know this God of hope. For yourselves. From this moment on. Don't leave. Without seriously considering. These things. I have a friend.

He was. Dating a girl. In our congregation. And she dumped him. In her last year. At. At university. She told me.

He's boring. He's boring. So unfair. He wasn't boring at all. But. Anyway. It ended.

And he said to me afterwards. I'm called. To celibacy. So. I. Sympathized with him.

Became a pastor. And no romance. In the man's. So. The years went by. Many years went by.

[31 : 06] And there was a girl. In the congregation. Then. That he felt. Strongly. Towards. And he. Waited. Until she.

Had her. Eighteenth birthday. He was. At this time. Forty years of age. And he went to see. Her father and mother. And.

He asked them. For permission. To take her out. Out for a meal. And they talked together. And they said no. They wanted him to make.

No overtures towards her. At all. She was too young. To start a serious relationship. And the age difference. Was. Too big. And so.

He had said. To himself. I will accept their judgment. On this matter. And he did. And then. A couple of weeks later. He noticed a fellow. In the congregation. Sitting next to her. And then sharing a hymn book.

[32 : 01] With her. And. They were obviously. Getting very friendly. And then this boy came to him. He said. Pastor. You see. I just started. A friendship. With so and so. In the congregation. And I want you. To give me some help.

I want some advice. From you. Of how to. Carry on now. My friendship. With her. He said. Me. I'd make her.

A far better husband. Than me ever would. Ah. He was so sympathetic. And. Try to give him some verses. You know. The verses of scripture.

That you would give. The word of God. We'd bring some promises. And we'd try to help people. Wouldn't we. In. In a context like that. He said to me. It's alright.

It's alright. You know. When we pray to God. Either. He gives us. What we ask for.

[33 : 01] Or he gives us. Something better. And so it was. Then. Two years later. I married him. And his. Current wife. And now they have. Numbers of children. And he's still. There in. In that church. And those words. That he said to me. Have been.

A pastoral comfort. To me. And to the congregation. And now to you. When we pray to God. He either.

Gives us. What we. Ask for. Or he gives us. Something better. Now that's the logic. Of the sovereignty of God. That's the logic.

Of. God working all things together. For good. To those who love him. And the consequence. Of this then. Is that.

[33 : 57] You abound. In hope. By the power of the Holy Spirit. That's how the. The verse ends. It starts with. The God of hope. And it ends with. The Holy Spirit's power.

God. Because all this. Can only come. When you know this God. When he's your God. When you have a growing. Relationship with him. And a growing trust.

In him. Then these things. Happen. In your life. So you overflow. The NIV. I like that. Translation. You overflow. With hope. You know we all. Pastors. We all talk about. Israel. You know. Israel.

You've got.

The line going down. At that sort of angle. And there's a little. Bump where. Carmel is. Where. Elijah and the prophets of Baal.

[34 : 51] Met. And then opposite it. There's. You come to the great valley. In the middle. The Jordan Valley. And there. Is. The Sea of Galilee. And the.

Jordan. Flows in at the top. And then it flows out. At the bottom. And it goes on. And then. More rapidly. And it comes to the Dead Sea. The lowest. Place on the planet.

And. There's no. Exit. It just evaporates there. And the sea gets more and more. Salty. And filled with chemicals. And totally sterile. No living thing. Can exist there.

And you know. You float on it. And read a paper. And have your photograph taken. When you go to it. Throw there. And shower off. All the salts. Afterwards. But the Sea of Galilee. Is living.

Because. The water flows into it. And the water flows out. And it teems with. Peter's fish. As they locally call it. Some of you.

[35 : 49] Say to us. That. You admire our faith. And you like me. Because I smiled. When I preached. I said stories to you. That touched you.

And it seems to work for me. You say. But. That. You don't think. It will work for you. You don't need it. Well.

I want to assure you. That. I'm not a Christian. Because it works for me. It does work for me. But I'm a Christian.

Because. It's true. And I can't think of any better reason. Why a person should be a Christian. It's true.

He lived. A sinless life. And it's true. And he died an atoning death. And it's true. He rose the third day.

[36 : 43] And it's true. And he reigns. And has all authority. In heaven and earth. And it's true. And he's. Coming again. And it's true. And that's why I'm a Christian.

But he brings blessing. Into our lives. And those blessings. Are preeminently. The blessings. Of service.

Of mission. Of concern for others. Of a real desire now. To be what. He's made us.

To hold forth the word of life. To shine as lights in the world. To love my neighbor. As myself. It's not enough to me.

To be like the dead sea. To come on Sunday. And receive. And receive. And get. More and more. Chemical.

[37 : 48] In my Christianity. To be vibrant. And living. Like the sea. Of Galilee. By blue Galilee. Where Jesus walked of old.

There. I would be. Also. Receiving from him. From his fullness. Day by day. And giving out. It's by the power.

Of the Holy Spirit. That any of us. Can survive. It's not that. You know. To do the. Mundane tasks. Of a Monday morning. And get the children.

Ready for school. And prepare. For another week. At work. That you can do that. By your own energy. But then for. A great revival. In London. You need the power. Of the Holy Spirit.

It's not like that at all. But. We need the Holy Spirit. In work. And. On the school run. When it's raining. And to.

[38 : 42] Look after our children. When they're sick. In the night. And to love our. Wives. To lay down our lives. For them. We need the power.

Of the Holy Spirit. So. There we are. I'm through with you. Thank you for listening. To me. I've spoken to you on. Paul's letters. In the Romans.

Chapter 15. And 13. May. The God of hope. Fill you. With joy. And peace. As you believe in him. As you trust in him. So that you may. Overflow. With hope. By the power of the Holy Spirit. Let's pray together. Let's pray together.