

A REASSURING RECONCILIATION

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Romans 5:1-11 (John 15:9-17)

Heavenly Father, by Your love through the outpouring of Your Holy Spirit on our hearts, may we be reassured in our hope of future glory by the reconciliation we have through King Jesus in Whom we pray. AMEN

John Dickerson, a CBS News anchor and political reporter, interviewed a panel of voters from Florida to evaluate their view of the president's first year in office prior to the State of the Union Address. Dickerson asked a member of the panel, "What gives you hope in America?" The individual responded, "I hope that we can come together." I found this interesting. It appeared that Dickerson was asking something more like, "What gives you assurance or confidence in America?" That is how he was using the word "hope", but the response given, "I hope that we can come together" used the word "hope" more like it was a wish or desire for the future, such as, "I wish that we can come together." There appeared to be a difference in how the word "hope" was used between the two. The hope in the response was really more like wishful thinking for the future. There is no confidence in wishful thinking, and wishful thinking sure will not sustain anyone when suffering, especially when suffering for that future "wish" to come true. Yet, this is probably the most common use the word "hope" today, but that is different from having "hope" in something, or someone, that involves being "confident" and "reassured". It is this understanding of "hope" as a confident reassurance in what God has already accomplished for us in Christ that we will consider this morning

Paul has been writing about our justification by faith in God's revealed righteousness in the Gospel. Now, the apostle discusses how our justification by faith reconciles us to God, and this reconciliation is no wishful thinking of coming together. This reconciliation is genuinely peaceful, and already accomplished. This reconciliation reassures us of

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God's promises for the future; because, we confidently look back to God's promises faithfully fulfilled in the Gospel. We enjoy....**A Reassuring Reconciliation.** In God's grace, we will look at three key aspects of this reality.

1. **Peace** (*Verses 1-2a*)

a. Peace This involves well-being, prosperity, safety, and deliverance from enemies; because, one is declared righteous by faith before the One True God. These are blessings we can only begin to experience within a right relationship with God.

i. This peace means we have been delivered from God's just wrath against our unrighteousness. (*Verse 9*)

1. Notice the "present" justified condition grounding the "future" promise of being saved from God's wrath. We are now in a state of grace. Where there was once separation from God, now there is peace through...

b. ...Reconciliation This is a "coming together" of two hostile enemies. God and humanity are brought together in friendship because of Jesus' death and resurrection. Jesus has repaired the broken relationship between humankind and God that occurred when Adam sinned and that has been compounded over time by our own unrighteousness. (*Verse 10 KEY word "reconciled."*)

i. If we were (past) reconciled to God by the death of His Son when we were His enemies, how much more confident can we be that we will be saved (future) by the life of Jesus now (presently) that we are reconciled!

1. We presently "boast" ("rejoice", "exult" or "trust") in God (not our own efforts) with the sure hope of being saved; because, we are NOW reconciled through Christ. (*Verse 11*)

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- a. Being reconciled to God through Christ by our faith means we have been delivered from the *dominion of sin* into *the dominion of grace*. So, where we once fell short of the glory of God because of our sin (3:23), we have joyful confidence of the glory of God that begins to grow in us now and that will be completed upon Jesus' Return (in the future).
 2. We also presently boast, rejoice or exult in our hope of the glory of God (*Verse 2b*).
2. **Hope** (aka: confidence/assurance) (*Verses 2b*)
- a. Because we boast in the hope of the glory of God, suffering for the Christian is not viewed as punishment for our unrighteousness. Instead, we can glory/boast/rejoice/exult in our sufferings because of what it produces in our lives for our good and God's glory. (*Verses 3-4*)
 - i. Remember Abraham's Encouraging Example for Us as our spiritual father in faith who had Hope against ALL hope?
 - ii. "Character" = developed through the fires of affliction which refines and proves our faith that is grounded on our Hope/Confidence/Assurance of God's promises for the future.
 1. *Romans 8:18-21* as the apostle considers our "Present Suffering in light of our Future Glory"
 - b. This hope will not put us to shame when judged by the world as we're mocked and persecuted for our faith; because, we are already justified by our faith in Jesus who was raised from the dead (*Verse 5a*)
 - i. We have hope (confidence/assurance) in our vindication; because, we have the guarantee of this with us here and now by the love of God the Holy Spirit poured into our hearts.

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3. Love (*Verse 5b*)

- a. Christ was shamed on the Cross, but His hope in His Father's promise to raise Him from the dead turned His shame into a glorious victory for our justification. This is the vindication in which we hope: the vindication of our risen Lord Jesus in the glory of God. This guarantee is grounded on the greatest mystery in the Bible; something more amazing than our justification by faith and more Reassuring than our present reconciliation with God through Christ, and that guarantee is the Love of God.
- b. Gospel - Romans 5:6-8 This revelation is God's proof of His love for His People. Why would God reconcile with us when we were still powerless, ungodly, sinners and His enemies? Because He loves us, and Jesus' death for our sins demonstrates this.
 - i. AND, if God loves us in this way, what could separate us from His love? (*Romans 8:38-39*)
 - ii. God's love for us is our greatest hope. May we boast and rejoice in that foundation of our faith that "brings us together". May we be mutually encouraged and united by our faith in God's reconciling love for us!

In God's eternal love, we have been justified by faith through the Blood of Jesus so that we are peacefully reconciled to God. This present reality of reconciliation, grounded on the past demonstration of God's love for us in the Cross of Christ, reassures us of our future glory. Therefore, we can boast confidently in God, glory in our sufferings, and love others, even our enemies, by the Holy Spirit Who has been given to us – God's love poured out into our hearts. The Christian's hope (NOT worldly wishful thinking) sustains us when times are difficult, especially when mocked or persecuted for our faith. Our reassurance of future glory increases our faith and glorifies God as we learned with Abraham's example back in Romans 4:20.

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Suffering for the hope we have in Jesus builds up that same hope by God's grace through His Holy Spirit. Our hope is anchored on a solid and sure foundation of God's love for us demonstrated in Christ and Him Crucified. We believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead Who was delivered over to death for our sins and raised to life for our justification. Those who believe in this Good News are now peacefully reconciled to God; because, our unrighteousness has been atoned for by the Blood of Jesus. The reconciliation Christians now enjoy reassures us as we press on in this life as servants of King Jesus. Actually, Jesus calls us His friends for Whom he died (John 15:13-15)! That's how great His love is for us! We are His "friends" set apart to share the Gospel for the Growth of His Kingdom. Enemies of Christ and His Kingdom will one day see us vindicated and ruling with Him; therefore, we can confidently proclaim Christ and Him Crucified. By His Spirit poured out into our hearts, we can love our enemies – by not returning evil for evil, by blessing them and doing good to them, as Jesus did in His earthly life; even as He hung on the Cross, and by sharing the Good News that in Jesus, there is forgiveness, love and A Reassuring Reconciliation.

AMEN.