



TASTE AND SEE

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Overflowing with Hope

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 15:13)

As I was thinking about how to wrap up the past week of devotionals, this verse from Paul's letter to the Romans stuck out as a fitting blessing to leave with you. Like hand sanitizer, hope can be in short supply these days! There is plenty of worry and anxiety on the shelves but not much hope.

This can be a reality in my own life if I'm not careful.

It is not unusual for me to find myself struggling with worry or focused on potential problems. Craig Groeschel says that worry is "faith in the bad things rather than faith in God." That hits close to home for me - not all the time but often enough.

This verse cuts across all of that and points to a better way - the way of hope. It reminds us that we worship "the God of hope," which has become my favourite title for him these days. There is no room for despair as God's children because, as we said in Monday's devotional, he is all powerful and he is with us.

Not only that, he is *for* us. When we grasp that amazing reality, we can say with the psalmist "But as for me, I will always have hope" (Ps. 71:14).

Keeping our eyes fixed on God - trusting him with our everyday lives - makes a world of difference. It drains our doubt and fills us with two things we desperately need these days: joy and peace.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy"

Our hope is rooted in the fact that God is alive and at work in the world, extending the reach of his upside-down kingdom. His power and his love have been breaking through closed doors for two thousand years and this age of Covid is no exception! We have been encouraged to hear stories in the last few months of people experiencing healing, provision, and transformation within our church. Jesus is not practicing isolation or physical distancing! How could this lead to anything other than joy and celebration? Aslan is on the move and all of Narnia should be alive with expectation.

“May the God of hope fill you with all peace”

In a similar way, resting in God's presence brings us peace. We can trust the God of hope with our future, our family, and all the things that threaten to worry us. Jesus has assured us that he will be with us to the very end of the age (Mt. 28:20), which means we will not face any trial on our own. As we saw in Monday's devotional, even when the earth moves and the waters roar, we can be still and know that he is God.

**Joy and peace - these are things I desperately need.
And they are the very things God graciously gives.**

Not in half-measures, either! Paul's blessing envisions people overflowing with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Have you ever tried to carry a pail of water that's full to the brim? It spills and drips as you walk because it is over-full.

That's my prayer for us this week - that we would overflow with hope and make a holy mess of things. That God's joy would get all over the people we bump into at RONA and Co-op. That his peace would spill into our conversations with our neighbors. That our times with our families would be dripping with hope.

Further Reading:

Ephesians 1:11-23

Key Verse:

“I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.” (v. 18)

Calibrating Prayer:

God of hope, I confess that I sometimes get wrapped up in discouragement and worry. Today I choose to take my eyes off of my problems and concerns, fixing them on you instead. Fill me to overflowing with your joy and peace so I leave a trail of hope behind me, wherever I go.