

THE GOSPEL FOR ALL | ROMANS SERIES | WEEK 5 | FINAL

ABOUNDING IN HOPE

Romans 12–16 - The Response

Sunday 12 July 2026 | 9AM Gawler

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”

Romans 15:13

Introduction - A Love Letter of Hope

At the heart of Romans is a love letter of hope from God to his people. Reading Romans 15 in preparation, verse 13 is amazing. You can almost hear Paul pause and take a deep breath before writing it.

After five weeks - the problem of sin, the rescue of grace, new life in the Spirit, God's faithfulness to all nations - after all of that, Paul lands here. Not with a doctrine or a command. With a prayer. That we would not merely have hope, but abound in it.

We live in an unstable, uncertain world. But so did Paul, and so did the small, vulnerable church in Rome - not the Vatican, just groups of people meeting in houses, with their own sets of fears and pressures and problems. When Paul prayed that they would abound in hope, he was not speaking from a place of comfort. He was speaking into a fire that was raging.

Abounding in hope is not just having hope. It is a cup so full it overflows and reaches the people around you.

Three questions for this morning: What is Romans hope - and is it actually for us? How does hope move the 40 centimetres from our head to our heart? And what does it look like to be a transformed person whose life is marked by this abounding hope?

The Series in Five Movements

Week 1 - Andrew: The Problem. Everyone - religious or not - has sinned and stands guilty before God. No one can earn their way back.

Week 2 - Evan: The Rescue. God makes us right with him as a free gift of grace, received by faith in Christ who died for our sin and rose again.

Week 3 - Rachel: New Life. Being joined to Christ changes who we are - we are transformed daily as we line up our earthly life with our new spiritual reality.

Week 4 - Ben: The Faithfulness of God. Even Israel's rejection of Jesus had not derailed God's plan for all nations. The gospel is for everyone who calls on his name.

Week 5: The Response. All of it was meant to produce a people who abound in hope. Scripture produces it. The Spirit anchors it in our hearts.

1 | What Is Romans Hope?

The Cave Dive

had to squeeze into a pitch-black underwater tunnel, trusting that somewhere in the dark there was a rope. The only reason he climbed into that hole was because he had already entrusted his life to the men around him. He had been through enough with them to believe what they said was true.

His hope wasn't a feeling. It was built on a foundation of past action.

And that is Romans hope. It is confidence in what God has promised, grounded in what he has already done. God has not left us to guess. He has made specific, concrete promises about our now and about our future.

Romans 15:4 *For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*

This book is not just a historical record of what God once did. It is a record of what he has done - and what he is going to do with his people. God has never asked us to hope in the dark without a record of his faithfulness in our hands. This is a book of living promises.

Revelation 21:1–4 *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth... And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.'*

Tears, mourning, crying, pain - all of them will become former things. C.S. Lewis put it this way: all those bad things are going to come untrue in heaven. That is where our hope lies.

Reflect: *This is a concrete promise, not a vague wish. What would it change about today if you truly believed that all the bad things in your life right now are going to come untrue?*

2 | From Head to Heart - The 40cm Journey

Some of us know these promises. We could teach them. But the abounding hope is missing. There are 40 centimetres between our brain and our heart, and it is the most important distance in our lives.

Why Hope Runs Low

Sometimes life just crowds hope out - the diary fills up, the phone doesn't stop, and the promises of God start to feel like a distant dream. Sometimes it is sin - when something in our lives shouldn't be there, it is like that dark muddy pool in the cave: you know the rope is there, but you just cannot find it. And sometimes you are simply tired. A diagnosis, a grief, a prayer that has not been answered. Hope can start to feel like something other Christians have, but not me.

But here is the comfort: Paul prayed this prayer for real Christians, not imaginary ones. Running low is not the exception. It is the assumed condition of God's people in a broken world. And this verse is not a rebuke for when you are running on empty. It is a promise for exactly when you are running on empty.

How God Fills the Empty Tank

Not by giving us more information - but by giving us more of himself.

Romans 15:13 *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.*

Romans 15:4 and 15:13 work together. The Word gives us content. The Spirit sets that content on fire in our hearts. If we only read this book as a book, it can stay in our heads. But the Spirit makes God's promises burn in our hearts until hope stops being something we know and becomes something we can actually stand on.

A triune God at work in our hope: the Father is the God of hope. The Son has secured every promise written in this book. The Spirit brings that hope alive in our hearts.

Sometimes life looks and feels like we are trapped in a cold, dark tunnel - squeezed, blind, unable to see our own hands. But there is a rope. It has been there the whole time. It will hold. And it is not leading us deeper into the dark. It is leading us through - with hope - to light, to open air, to a life where he wipes away every single tear.

Reflect: *Is your hope more in your head than your heart right now? What would it look like to ask the Spirit specifically to set these promises on fire in your heart this week?*

3 | A Transformed, Sending Hope

When gospel hope is produced by God's Word and anchored by the Spirit, it does not stay inside. It cannot stay inside. It overflows.

The Roman Church and the Discarded Babies

At the time Paul was writing this letter, it was common practice in Rome for unwanted babies to be exposed - left in rubbish dumps or the wilderness to die. A famous letter from a husband named Hilarion to his pregnant wife, dated around 1 BC, contains one chilling line: if the baby is a boy, keep it. If a girl, expose it. That is how normal this was.

And this is where the overflow of the Roman Christian church was seen in full force. Knowing that every person - male and female, wanted and unwanted - bears the image of God, they went out and rescued these babies from death and raised them as their own. The children that Rome threw away, the church took home. Not a strategy. Not a program. Just thousands of ordinary people so certain that the future was good that they kept picking up the babies nobody wanted.

The ancient writer Diogenes described the Christians this way: 'They marry, they have children, but they do not expose their offspring.' The watching world could not explain them. The church grew not because Christians had an argument the empire could answer, but because they had an abounding hope the empire could not put out.

The world is running on thin, fragile hopes that collapse under pressure. We have been given an abounding hope.

What This Looks Like Today

1 Peter 3:15 *Be ready to speak up and tell anyone who asks you why you have the hope that is in you.*

I think the future is going to be fantastic. They looked at him like no one had ever spoken to them positively about what is coming. And from that one sentence, the conversation opened - and he was able to share that his hope was in the truth that Jesus Christ was a real man who rose from the dead, and that means there is an incredible future ahead.

One of them said: I'd love to hear more about that.

This does not happen every day. It does not require being a super Christian. It just requires small things - small overflows of the hope that is already in us.

Reflect: *What does your hope look like to the people around you? Not a formal gospel presentation - just your everyday attitude toward the future. Do people around you know you have a hope they don't?*

Closing the Series

Romans is the most careful, systematic declaration of the gospel ever written. Walking through it over five weeks - the guilt of sin, the amazing grace of justification, the power of new life in the Spirit, the faithfulness of God, and the transformed community he creates - we see what the entire letter has been driving toward all along.

All of it was meant to produce a people who abound in hope.

Scripture produces it. The Spirit anchors it in our hearts.

The abounding hope that filled the Roman church changed Rome. It will do it again. Right where you live, where you work, where you play - the world is watching. And the hope we carry, small and ordinary and overflowing, is the hope the world has been looking for.

Reflection & Discussion Questions

Use these on your own during the week, or with your LifeGroup.

1. Romans 15:13 says the God of hope fills us - but the filling requires believing. Where are you finding it hardest to believe right now, and how does that connect to your level of hope?
2. The Word gives us content but the Spirit sets it on fire in our hearts. What is a specific promise from Romans - from any of the five weeks - that you want to ask the Spirit to move from your head into your heart?
3. The Roman Christians didn't have a strategy - they just had an abounding hope that overflowed into rescuing babies. What is one small, ordinary way your hope could overflow into someone around you this week?
4. One sentence - 'I think the future is going to be fantastic' - opened a conversation about the resurrection. Is there someone in your life who would be surprised to hear you speak positively about what's coming? Could you say something this week?

Key Scriptures This Week

- Romans 15:4 - Through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope
- Romans 15:13 - May the God of hope fill you; abound in hope by the Holy Spirit
- Revelation 21:1-5 - New heaven and earth; God wipes away every tear
- 1 Peter 3:15 - Be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in you

The Full Series - The Gospel for All

- Week 1 ✓ The Gospel We Carry - Romans 1–3
- Week 2 ✓ Faith Alone - Romans 4–5
- Week 3 ✓ The Gospel That Transforms - Romans 5–8
- Week 4 ✓ The Gospel for All Nations - Romans 9–11
- Week 5 ✓ Abounding in Hope - Romans 12–16

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