

Bethel

Prayer Meeting Addresses

Number 101 The God of Hope

Reading: Romans 15. 1-13

1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

2 Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.

3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:

6 That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:

9 And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

10 And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.

11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.

12 And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Address

You notice that toward the beginning of our reading the Lord is spoken of as *“the God of patience and consolation.”* And then at the end of our reading, the Lord is spoken of as *“the God of hope.”* Now in two ways the Lord is the God of hope. First of all, as He is the Object of the hope of all His people in Christ. Every one of God’s people are blessed with this *“lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”* They are all brought to feel their helpless condition, their hopeless condition, and led to see no hope outside of the Saviour. So that hope is the foundation on which they build, the finished work of Christ, that hope as an anchor for their soul. There is so much in the Word of

God concerning hope. So first of all, the Lord Himself as the Object of our hope.

But then secondly, He is the God of hope because He is the One who gives hope, the only One who gives a true hope through grace. Now there are many vain hopes and false hopes, but we are told that the Lord blesses His people with “everlasting consolation and good hope through grace.”

Now there are those times when the Lord’s people are cast down, and what they really want then is to be confirmed in their hope. We think of scriptures likes this: “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God.” Well, here this is a prayer to the God of hope that He might make His people abound in hope.

“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.” Because all God’s people have a little hope, but they do not always abound in hope, and this is a loving prayer of the apostle that they might abound in this grace of hope, and he tells us what the secret is. It is “through the power of the Holy Ghost.” It is not something we can work up, something we can do ourselves. And joined with it, he puts this: “joy and peace in believing.” Longing, seeking souls, truly trusting in the Saviour, this is what is needed: “joy and peace in believing,” and that too is through the power of the Holy Ghost. These things cannot be separated: the God of hope from what follows, the joy and peace from the abounding in hope.

Now I have thought, this time of the year, if you follow me aright, in a sense it is a season of hope. You can think of springtime. It has been a long, dark winter. Everything seems barren and withered and dead, and then springtime comes, and the warmer weather, and all these signs that appear. They are signs of hope, life instead of death, something growing instead of barrenness. So we might go on. So when this springtime comes, may we know a springtime in the church of God, a springtime in our hearts, and may “the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.”

And then as this time comes round – not just the springtime, but the time of the Saviour’s death and resurrection – now that is a season of hope.

“Ours appeared a hopeless case;
Such it had been, but for grace.”

But it is that grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, especially revealed when He suffered and died and made an atonement for sin, and then when He rose again triumphant, all the glories of the resurrection. But it is to know the *power* of the resurrection in our midst, in the congregation, in our own hearts.

So there is that loving prayer of the apostle for it for the people of God, and then may it be made our prayer, your prayer, mine.

“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

This address was given at Bethel Chapel, Luton, by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom, on Monday, 3rd April, 2017

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Our Jesus is the God of hope;
He works it by His power;
It holds the weak believer up,
In the distressing hour.

The darkest cloud hope pierces through,
And waits upon the Lord,
Expects to prove that all is true
Throughout the sacred Word.

True hope looks out for blessings great;
And, though they're long delayed,
Yet hope's determined still to wait,
Until they are conveyed.

Hope long will wait, and wait again,
And ne'er can give it up,
Till the blest Lamb, who once was slain,
Appears the God of hope.

R. Burnham

