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## Romans 5:5-10      “The Basis of Our Sure Hope”

Intro. Suppose you were recently diagnosed with deadly disease, and you have been told that you only have a few months to live. Then your condition worsens, and you know you are dying. As a result, you will probably go through quite a bit of suffering before you reach the end. At some point soon you will close your eyes for the last time and die. As you face death, there is one thing that can give you comfort & courage to bear with the present suffering: hope. God has promised heaven and eternal life to those who repent of their sins and believe in Jesus. You know that at the end of your journey, things will get a whole lot better. In heaven “there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain...” (Rev. 21:4).

Well in this text of Scripture the apostle Paul talks about the hope we have as Christians. In v.2 Paul mentions this hope. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God. We have the hope that some day we will be with God in glory. We will enjoy all of the glories of heaven. Some of us could bypass death altogether if Jesus comes again first. That is one reason why the return of Christ is called “the blessed hope” (Titus 2:13). What a hope that we have!

But then in v.5 Paul tells us something about this hope that we have. Christian hope may be defined as sure and certain confidence of a better future. Our hope is not just wishful thinking, for Paul says, “Now hope does not disappoint...” You will never come to the point where you say, “I put all my faith in Christ and it has come to nothing.” Hope will never be disappointed, because it will receive the promised glory. One day I will be in heaven with Jesus Christ, radiating the eternal glory of God. That’s my destiny. That’s your destiny if you have placed your faith and hope in Jesus Christ.

Someone may ask, “How can we be so sure of partaking of the glory of God? How can we be so sure that we will go to heaven?” After all, we all have experienced what it is to have our hopes unfulfilled. Do you remember as a child that you had high hopes of getting something you really wanted for Christmas, only to be disappointed on Christmas morning? Or ladies, some fellow made all kinds of promises to you of love, devotion, and a good life, but after you were married, you were disappointed to discover that you have married a frog instead of Prince Charming? We all know what it is have our hopes end in disappointment.

How do we know that the promise of heaven is any different? Well Paul gives several reasons why *our* hope is so sure and certain. Is it because of confidence in our own righteousness? Are we sure that we are going to heaven because we are so dedicated? No! As we shall see, the basis of our sure hope is not in ourselves, but in God. By the way, this passage of scripture relates to the doctrine of the eternal security of the believer. Our hope is sure and certain, and these verses also demonstrate that our salvation is sure and certain. So let’s consider together some of the reasons why we can rejoice in hope of the glory of God with confidence:

### I. BECAUSE OF THE FAITHFULNESS & TRUTHFULNESS OF GOD

Paul does not deal with this reason here, but it is found in other verses of Scripture. Our hope is founded on the Word of God and guaranteed to us by the honor and integrity of our God. I believe, and I have found, that God is true to His Word. He keeps His promises. Heb. 10:23 says,

“He is faithful that promised.” Lam. 3:23 says, “Great is thy faithfulness” (KJV). 1 Thess. 5:24 says, “He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.” Hebrews 11:11 says that Sarah “judged Him faithful who had promised.”

We live in a day of unfaithfulness. Man cannot be trusted—he doesn’t keep his promises. At times husbands & wives are not faithful to the vows they made to each other. Employees are often unfaithful to the promises they make to their employers. And employers are often unfaithful to fulfill their obligations and responsibilities to their employees. In the financial realm of life there is a lack of trust. Businesses are reluctant to accept checks. There is a breakdown in trustworthiness in our society. We have to back up promises with contracts enforced by the courts.

But God is not man. Unlike man, God is always faithful and keeps every promise in full. Truth is a fundamental attribute of the character of God, and so He must keep His promises. Therefore, you can have absolute confidence that your hope will be fulfilled because of the faithfulness and truthfulness of God.

Not only do we have a confident hope because of the truthfulness of God, but also:

## II. BECAUSE OF THE LOVE OF GOD

Paul says in v.5, “Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” Paul says that God’s love is one basis for believing that our hope will be fulfilled. The more that man feels that God loves him, the less it is possible for him to believe that hope will fail to come to pass.

The result of communion with Him here on earth is a conviction of the immortality of that communion, a very, very strong guarantee for ourselves that the hope is not in vain. That divine Lover of our souls desires to have His beloved with Him. As certainly as husband and wife, lover and friend, long to be together, so surely will that divine love not be satisfied until it has gathered all its children home. Paul later said in Romans 8, “Neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Young ladies, suppose some guy that you really have a crush on asked you out for a date and you agreed. He promised that he would be by to pick you up at 7:00 o’clock Friday. Well suppose that Friday night comes and he never shows up. Talk about a disappointed hope! What would make the story end differently? First, if he is truthful, he will keep his promise. Secondly, the more he loves you, the more certain it is that he will come and take you away on that date.

Well I want you to know that I have a date with the greatest person in this whole universe! Someday Jesus has promised to come again, and when He does He will call me and other believers up to meet Him in the air, and we will live with Him forever and ever and share in His glory. My hope is certain, for He is true to His Word, and I know He loves me!

Some may question God’s love. After all, nature and the difficult experiences of life tend to make people doubt God’s love for them. When we suffer, we tend to question whether God really loves us. So how we know God loves us? Paul mentions three assurances or proofs of God’s love. The more he convinces us of God’s love, the more certain our hope will be.

Now the first proof or evidence of God’s love for us is this:

A. We Know God Loves Us because of the Indwelling Holy Spirit – Notice again in the last of v.5, “the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” God’s love for us has been deposited in our hearts through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Notice that the Spirit “was given.” The Apostle is thinking of a definite moment when this great gift was bestowed upon God’s people. That takes place at conversion.

That the Holy Spirit lives within each believer is itself a great testimony to the love of God. Would God plant His Spirit within you if He didn’t love you? That alone should be enough evidence that God love you.

Not only is the gift of the Spirit an evidence of God’s love for you, but the Holy Spirit has a ministry of making us experience God’s love. Paul says in v.5 that “the love of God has been poured out in our hearts....” He produces a personal sense of God’s love. God plans for us to experience His love, and not just know it intellectually. It is the Holy Spirit, who imparts the assurance of this love.

Furthermore, notice that God doesn’t give us a little drop of love here and there. The Greek word translated “poured out” (*ekcheo*) refers to something that is being poured out abundantly or lavishly. John 7:38 says that when a man receives the Holy Spirit, “out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.” The stream that is poured out is intended to run summer as well as winter, not to be dried up in drought. I fear that the experience of most people is that they alternate times of abundance and times of drought. Furthermore, the perfect tense of the verb indicates a past completed action that has an abiding result. The love of God was poured out in our hearts the moment we were saved, but the impact of that filling continues to enable us to sense the love of God. We especially experience assurances of God’s love as we allow ourselves to be filled with the Spirit. We are filled with the Spirit as we walk in obedience to God.

In the lock of a canal, as the water pours in, the vessel rises. Even so, as the flood of the full love of God pours into our heart, our hopes are borne up and up, nearer and nearer to the heavens.

Have you received the Spirit? You received Him at the moment of faith. Are you indwelt by the Holy Spirit? Have you experienced the Holy Spirit making you feel that God loves you? God wants us to know by experience that He loves us. He wants His love to fill us like an ever-flowing refreshing stream. The stream of God’s love never runs dry. Is this your experience? Do you sense that the Holy Spirit is within you, and that He is filling you with assurances of God’s love for you? On the other hand, the unregenerate individual senses no affinity, no intimacy, and no communion with God, and no personal experience of the love of God. So if you know that God loves you, you can be certain that His promises will be fulfilled.

In vv.6-8 Paul gives another reason why we are confident that God love us, and thus our hope will surely come to pass. Even if you have not yet trusted in Christ as Savior & received the Holy Spirit, you still have objective proof that God loves you, & that is:

**B. We Know God Loves Us because of the Sacrificial Death of Christ** – In v.8 Paul says, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Now, when Paul says “demonstrates”, he uses a very significant word (*sunistao*) which sometimes means to establish, or to prove. Do you need any other proof than the fact that Jesus Christ suffered and died to save you from your sins?

One good definition of love is this: love meets needs. Well Christ saw our need. Paul says in v.6, “For when we were still without strength....” The weakness here intended is spiritual weakness, a weakness arising from, and consisting in our sinfulness. The clause in v.8 “while we were yet sinners” is parallel to “while we were yet weak” in v.6. Prior to our salvation, we were powerless and totally unable to do anything that pleased God. We were without strength to overcome sin, Satan, the world, death or hell. You have experienced what it is to try to live right, but fail.

But Christ not only saw our need, but in love He met our need. Again, in v.8 Paul said, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” The Greek word translated “for” (*huper*) in vv. 6 & 8 is better translated “on behalf of,” “instead of,” or “for the sake of.” The death of Christ on the cross was not that of a martyr for some just cause. His death demonstrates God’s love because God sent Him to die in our place, that we might be forgiven. Notice also that His death was “in due time.” Time and again man proved his weakness to please God and obey His commandments. By the time this was clearly proven, Christ died in our place to bring forgiveness and eternal life.

There is yet another reason why we are sure of the love of God:

C. We Know God Loves Us Because of the Unconditional Character of God’s Love – This really ties in with the certain hope we have as believers in Christ. Not only does God love us, but His love is unconditional. How tragic it is in our human relationships that our hopes and dreams end in disappointment because one person says, “I don’t love you anymore.” Human love is so conditional, but God’s love is not. We see this truth in the fact that God loved us even though we were ungodly sinners. Notice in the last of v.6 that “Christ died for the ungodly.” This is restated in v.8, where Paul says, “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” There was nothing in us that would cause God to love us. We were ungodly sinners. His love must arise from within a divine nature of unconditional love.

Paul illustrates how conditional man’s love is. He says in v.7, “For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die.” “A good man” is literally “*the* good man” (RV), a particular type of man. Self-sacrificing love is rare when a person is merely righteousness. It is more common in the case of someone who has been good and kind to us. The most that human nature could be expected to accomplish is that one should die for his benefactor, or for the good man. But the point of v.7 is that not one of us would die for a bad person. Human love is conditional.

However, God’s love is different. It is unique. In fact, in v.8 when Paul says “His own love,” he is emphasizing a love that is peculiar to God. It is amazing to realize that God, who is absolutely pure and holy, could still love beings who are repulsive to His holy nature. Although human love is attracted by the nature of the object, God’s love is built into His nature.

Now here’s the point I want to make. If God loved us because we loved him, or because we were righteous & good, He would love us only so long as we were righteous & good. Thus, our hope of salvation would depend on us. But since God loved us as sinners, our salvation depends not on our loveliness, but on the constancy of the love of God. Since nothing in us caused God to love us in the first place, what could make Him stop loving us now? Nothing! We can also be certain of God’s love for us, even when we mess up. And if we are always certain of God’s love, we can always be certain that our hope will be fulfilled.

Finally, we are sure that our hope will not end in disappointment:

### III. BECAUSE OF THE SAVING WORK OF CHRIST

In vv. 9-10 Paul presents a powerful argument for the certainty of our hope of final salvation. In these verses he restates his argument in two different ways. The first part of his argument is this:

A. Even His Enemies Were Saved from Wrath by His Blood – Paul says in v.10, “For if

when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son....” Even when we were enemies of God by our sinful rebellion, Christ died for us and made reconciliation to God possible. How? Well Paul says in v.9 that we have “now been justified by His blood.” To be justified is more than to be pardoned; it includes the idea of reconciliation or restoration to the favor of God. Now Paul advances his argument. Since we have “been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.” Part of the Christian hope is the fact that we shall be saved from the wrath of God that will be poured out upon sinful man some day. That’s because Jesus bore God’s wrath in our place. Back in 2:5 Paul said that some “are treasuring up ... wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.” Paul said in 1 Thess. 1:10 that Jesus “delivers us from the wrath to come.” (Cf. also I Thess. 5:9; cf. Matt. 3:7; Rev. 6:16, 17; 11:18). This coming wrath includes the lake of fire that burns with fire and brimstone, which is where the godless will be sent forever (Rev. 20:11-15). Are you glad that you are saved from that? By the way, if you do not believe in the wrath of God and hell, then please explain why Christ would suffer so much on the cross?

Now Paul completes his argument. If God has saved His enemies from wrath by the blood of His Son, then:

B. Surely His Friends Will Be Saved by His Life – He says in v.10, “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” Paul is confident of our ultimate salvation.<sup>1</sup> He says, “we shall be saved,” not “we may be saved.” Paul argued from the greater to the lesser. Since God has done the greater act—saving us when we were wretched sinners—will He not do the lesser, which is to keep us, & complete our salvation? If God saved us when we were enemies, surely He will keep on saving us now that we are His children. Since sin was not a barrier to reconciliation then, there is nothing to keep Him from completing our salvation. Since He redeemed us when we were His enemies, He certainly will keep us now that we’re His friends (John 15:15).

How will He keep us saved? It is “by His life” (v.10). Paul is not talking about His earthly life. He is talking about His present resurrection life at the right hand of God the Father. The guarantee of the believer’s eternal life & resurrection is the resurrection of Christ (cf. I Cor. 15:20-24). In John 14:19 Jesus said, “Because I live, you shall live also.” The fact that He lives will certainly secure our final salvation. Furthermore, Christ can save us by His life because He is alive right now at the right hand of the Father, interceding for us. Hebrews 7:25 says, “Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.” He takes our case before the Father and pleads it on our behalf. Though we have sinned and deserve hell, He tells God that He bore our sin and received God’s judgment and wrath. For that reason we are to be forgiven. We shall be saved from wrath also by His present life’s work in heaven.

Conclusion: How should we respond to a God who has given us such assurances of hope, and His unconditional love for us? First, we should make sure we have trusted in Christ as Savior. Then, those of us who are saved should respond with gratitude, obedience, and joy.

Sources: F.F. Bruce, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963); Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950 reprint);

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<sup>1</sup> It is likely that the salvation here envisaged is eschatological. The guarantee of the final and consummated salvation is the exalted life of Christ.

John MacArthur, Jr., *Eternal Security: Study Notes on Romans 5:1-11* (Panorama City, CA: Word of Grace Communications, 1989); Alexander Maclaren, *Expositions of Holy Scripture*, Vol. 12 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977 reprint); John Murray, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965); Larry Pierce, *Online Bible* [CD-ROM] (Ontario: Timnathserah Inc., 1996); Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Right: Romans* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1977). Other sources listed in the footnotes. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982).