

“LEAVING A LEGACY OF HOPE”
(Adapted From a Rick Warren Series)
Psalm 78:5-7, Romans 8
June 9 & 10, 2018

On December 17, 1927 the S-4 submarine SS-109 was accidentally rammed by the Coast Guard destroyer Paulding off Cape Cod near Provincetown, Massachusetts. It sank immediately. The entire crew was trapped in a prison house of death. Every effort was made to rescue the crew, but all efforts ultimately failed partially due to gale force winds and rough seas. Near the end of the ordeal, a deep-sea diver, who was doing everything in his power to find a way for the crew’s release, thought he heard a tapping on the steel wall of the sunken sub. He placed his helmet up against the side of the vessel and he realized the tapping was Morse Code. He attached himself to the side and he spelled out in his mind the message being tapped from within. It was repeated the same question. The question was, from within: “Is...there...any...hope?” The response, composed by Captain Ernest J. King of the rescue team was: “There is hope. Everything possible is being done.” Six men were still alive, but trapped in the forward torpedo compartment. But thwarted by the weather, the rescue force could not rescue the six men. All 40 men of the crew died in the tragedy.¹

Is There Any Hope? That question is asked by many in our world today. Is there any hope? We live in a world that is surrounded by catastrophe and disaster. We are plagued by chronic illness and disease. Many live in situations of oppression and persecution. And in the midst of it we cry out, “Is there any hope!” We look to others for the answer – civic leaders, government, politicians, even churches. And at last resort we cry out to God for answers.

Those of you reading through the Bible with me are reading in Job, and this terrible question is asked over and over – Is there any hope? And in the midst of it we see that there is hope found only in one person – The Lord our God.

As followers of Jesus Christ, though we may be enduring similar situations, we can respond,

¹ (Charles Swindoll, *Swindoll’s Ultimate Book of Illustrations*, [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998] pg. 275)

“There is hope. Everything possible HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE! All we need to do is to become aware of those life-saving activities that have already taken place, and we can have hope.”

This is the topic of the sermon today, leaving a lasting legacy of hope. This is the second of four sermons about influencing the lives of those around us and living a life that leaves a legacy of faith, hope, love and living by our convictions. There is faith, as we saw last week, and there is hope, when we put our trust in Jesus Christ our Lord, who has come to set the captives free, give sight to the blind, give food to the hungry, and proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor. And we are here today because we have heard this Good News. So let’s look at how we can leave a legacy of hope.

The Old Testament lesson of Psalm 78:5-7 highlights the need for us to share the hope we have with the world around us. In fact, we see that just as “*He instructed our ancestors to teach His laws to their children, so that the next generation might learn them and in turn should tell their children,*” so we also are to learn and teach the hope we have in God, through Jesus Christ. It is given to us as a condition of our faith that we give others the chance to have the faith and hope that we have.

So let’s turn to Romans 8 and look at 8 reasons that we have for faith. It begins on page 209 in the New Testament of your pew Bibles. In this chapter, Paul gives us these 8 reasons for hope, All Because We Trust In Jesus Christ.

#1. Our first reason for hope is that **I Can Live a Life WITHOUT CONDEMNATION. That means I’m forgiven!** Because I believe and trust in Jesus Christ and the work that He did for all humanity, I am no longer condemned, but I am forgiven. You see, Jesus came to the earth specifically to bring us back into a relationship with His Father. Because of the sin in this world, we are all led astray, away from the guidelines and teachings and commands that the Lord God has given us. We are all disobedient, we have all fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23), and we all deserve God’s wrath. But when Jesus went to the cross at Calvary, He took on Himself all of our sin – the sins of the whole world – and He paid the price for that sin by dying for us on that cross. He willingly took our sin, the perfect Son of God taking my sin and your sin upon Himself, and then He paid the price for that sin

which is death (Rom. 6:23). Our lives are loaded with sin and we deserve to die for that sin, but because of God's free grace to all who put their faith and trust in Jesus, we are set free from that penalty of sin and find ourselves before God hearing the words, "NOT GUILTY." When we were yet helplessly trapped in the depths of our own sin, Christ Jesus rescued us from eternal death to bring us to eternal life as we put our trust and hope in Him (Rom. 5:6).

So Paul, begins this chapter with these tremendous words, "*There is now no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus*" (8:1). We are set free from the condemnation of death because of our sin. But we live in a sinful world! Does that mean that when we have hope in Jesus that we will never sin again? No! It means that when we sin, we have hope for forgiveness THROUGH Jesus' shed blood on the cross. His blood makes us new creatures as we trust in Him as our Savior and confess our sins to Him.

We all make mistakes. We will all fail to live up to His standards. We will all do things that we regret, things that brings a disconnect between each other and between us and God. Trusting and hoping in Jesus does not make us perfect! It means that we are forgiven when we come before Him and confess that sin to Him (I John 1:9). No matter what you've done, said, or thought, if you repent and confess it to Jesus, there is no condemnation, only forgiveness. Jesus has already paid the price for my sins, so there is no more condemnation for me when I allow Jesus Christ to be my Savior and Lord. It's all because of His grace that I am set free from the wages of sin. He paid the price 100%, so that means that as a child of God through Jesus Christ, I am forgiven. And that takes us to our second reason for hope...

#2. **God says it's possible to live a life WITH NO DOMINATION. In other words, I'm set free!** It's very easy to see that in this world every one of us is enslaved to something. There are so many things that take control of our lives – our circumstances, our genes, our environment, our family, the approval of others, our society, our habits, our passions - things that get ahold of us and dominate our lives because of that control. We live with things that control us.

This is what the Bible calls the law of sin and death. These things that take control of your life cause a spiritual gravity that holds you down, and keeps you from becoming what God fully intends you to be. We live in a world controlled by the law of sin and death and we're stuck, confined, trapped in this condition because we are creatures of this world. It is beyond our control and there is no escape for us on our own power, our own wisdom and our own doing. Our hope comes only through Jesus Christ and the power of His love for us.

Take a look at Romans 8:2 – *“Through Christ Jesus the law of the spirit of life has set me free from the law of sin and death.”* That means that we now have the power to break free from all those things that control us and confine us and hold us captive. Through Christ Jesus we are set free from what controls us. We're set free from the fear of death, from the approval of others, from the worries of today. We're set free from the bondage of guilt. We're free from meaningless life. Free from bitterness, loneliness, from boredom. We're set free from habits and hurts and hang-ups that hold you back. All the stuff that once enslaved and trapped you no longer have power over you because you have been set free from the law of sin and death. When you claim Jesus Christ as your Savior, you now have great hope that you are set free from all those things that cause hurt and pain and separation from those around you and from God, too.

And we have this promise in Romans 8:3; *“The Law of Moses could not save us, because of our sinful nature. But God put into effect a different plan to save us. God destroyed sin's control over us by giving His Son as a sacrifice for our sins.”* What we could not do by just abiding by the laws around us, Jesus has accomplished by dying for us on the cross. Jesus broke the control that sin has on our lives! He set us free from the stuff in our lives that wants to drag us to the pit of death. We are set free through Christ Alone!

So look at verses 5-6; *“Those dominated by their sinful nature think about sinful things, but those controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please God...If the Holy Spirit controls your mind, there is life and peace.”* Those who are focused on the stuff of this world are addicted to it. They keep

coming back to it over and over again. It's what they live for. Yet, as we hope in Jesus Christ to forgive us, we are set free from all that dominates our lives. By the Holy Spirit's power, we are able to begin focusing on new things, the things of God, rather than the things of this world. That frees us from the domination of the law of sin and death. It brings us peace and life.

What controls you is what you think about the most. If it is money, money will dominate your life. If it is sex, you will be dominated by sex. If it is all the negative things of this world, you will be dominated by the negative news of this world. If it is your past, you will be dominated by your past. Whatever you think about is what will dominate your life. So when you let the Holy Spirit change your thoughts, you will find that you are set free from the garbage of the law of sin and death and you will be able to relish in the peace and life that only Jesus Christ can bring to you. Paul goes on with the third reason that we have hope.

#3 **God tells us that there is NO TERMINATION. That means I'll live forever!** Most of this world believes that death is the final victor - when we die, that's it. Yes, this life will come to an end, but that is not the end of the story. When we have faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior, when this life comes to a close, we don't just dry up and blow away. We have hope for eternal life with God when we have Jesus Christ in us as Savior and Lord.

Paul puts it clearly in Romans 8:11 "*The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. So, just as He raised Christ from the dead, He will give life to your mortal body by this same Spirit!*" No matter how bad things get here on this earth, we'll only have to face it for a little while, and then for the rest of eternity, years without measure, we will be with Jesus in God's house, where there is no more sorrow, no more sadness, no more sickness, no more suffering. There's no termination in our life when we have faith in Jesus. We'll live forever with Him.

There is a great difference in the people who trust in Jesus Christ and those that don't. Those who **do not trust** that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world look only to this life, these 80-90 years here on the earth. When death stares them in the face, there is great terror and anguish because they know

this is it – there’s nothing else good beyond this point without Christ. That’s it! It’s over! Nothing left! You don’t want to go there or be in that place.

But those who put their faith in Jesus Christ know that this life is not all there is. When we have Jesus as our Savior, death is just the door that leads us from this life to eternal life, and there is such joy and peace and love and hope beyond this life! That is the greatest hope that we can ever have, when Jesus is Lord of our life. In Jesus Christ we have a life of no condemnation because we’re forgiven no matter what. We have a life of no domination because we’re set free and we are no longer the same as we were before. Then we live a life of no termination because we will live with Jesus forever. And Paul tells us “*For this hope we were saved*” (Rom. 8:24).

Knowing that we will be with Jesus beyond this life we begin to see that we can have great hope even for this life surrounded by so much hopelessness. This leads us to our forth reason for hope.

#4. I am able to live a life with NO LIMITATIONS. That means I will share in God’s glory! So when this life ends we continue to live with Jesus in heaven since Jesus has already gone ahead of us to prepare a place for us in His Father’s house (John 14:2-3). Since we will be with Jesus we will have unlimited access to all of God’s resources there in Heaven. As children of God, we will have the whole house of God opened to us to enjoy and rejoice in. All the treasures of heaven will be ours as our inheritance with Jesus.

Paul shares this with us in Romans 8:16-17, “*God’s Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts and tells us that we are God’s children. And since we are His children, we will share His treasures – for everything God gives to His son, Jesus Christ, is ours, too!*” What amazing truth for us who believe! All that God has designated for Jesus to have in Heaven, it is ours, too, as children of God through Jesus.

Everybody is created by God, but not everyone is a child of God. You have to choose Jesus and accept His work on the cross as your redemption and sacrifice. You have to ask Jesus to come into your heart and live there. You have to commit yourself to Him. When you do that, you become a child of God and the inheritance of Jesus becomes yours, too.

Part of that decision to let Jesus be involved in your life influences the rest of how you live. Will you turn to Jesus when problems arise? Will you seek Jesus in the times of pressure and pain? Will you let God be the leading influence in your life when you need to make decisions? Do you grouch or complain about the things in your life or do you turn to Jesus for His help and guidance? What do you do with suffering and sorrow? Do you turn to Jesus OR try to solve it all by yourself? Our life becomes the test to see what we'll do as children of God. If we are faithful in letting Jesus be a part of our lives in the little things of life, then we will more than likely be willing to let Him be a part of the big things in our life, too. This life is to test us to see whom we will turn to.

You see, we're also told in Romans 8:17-18, "*But if we are to share His glory, we must also share His suffering. Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory He will give us later.*" Jesus suffered horribly for us, so as His followers, we will suffer for Him. BUT the reward for living and suffering for Him is incomparable to anything we have here on earth. This temporary suffering will be forgotten as we rejoice in the delights of heaven. The struggles here will end and we will rejoice in Christ Jesus. Revelation tells us clearly that when we are in Christ Jesus here, we'll be with Him there, too.

#5. This life is also WITHOUT MISCALCULATION. That means I have a purpose!

Nothing happens by accident, there's no miscalculation on God's part. I make many mistakes, but God does not! But God uses my mistakes and He turns them into good as I trust in Him and put my hope in Him.

I have many people tell me that God is causing all the evil to happen in our world and in our lives. Folks, let me tell you this straight out, GOD DOES NOT CAUSE EVIL! God is Holy and Perfect. He cannot do evil because it is completely incompatible to His nature. God CANNOT do evil! There are two things that I know of that God cannot do – One is lie and the other is evil. God cannot tell us a lie and He will not work evil against us. Satan is the instigator of all lies and evil and God allows him to do it, but God cannot lie or work evil. Nor does He ever want too. God desires only the best for

us, so He uses even the evil that we do and the evil that happens in our world today, to bring about something good. And that is precisely what Paul says in Romans 8:28, “*We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who’ve been called according to His purpose.*” So nothing comes into our lives by accident. God may allow things to happen in order to test our faith, much like He did in Job’s life, but even then God says “This much and no more.” It’s not an accident, no miscalculation.

So what this means is that when we have faith in Jesus, we are working on God’s Plan A for our lives. There is no Plan B - In spite of failures and mistakes! In spite of abuse! In spite of abortion! In spite of divorce! In spite of unfaithfulness! God knew it was coming and **ALTHOUGH HE DIDN’T MAKE IT HAPPEN**, He knew it was coming and had a plan to bring about good in the midst of it if we give it to Him.

But this is not a promise for everyone. It is for those who *are in Christ!* God knows that we are far from perfect, so He has planned to use even our mistakes to bring about His good to accomplish His plan. And this is what gives us hope, that even in the very depths of destruction, God can turn our lives around and make something good come about through the mistakes that we make in our lives.

Why do we have the most hope of the world? I’m forgiven (no condemnation). I’m free (no domination). I’m going to live forever (no termination). God is going to share with me all His resources (no limitations). And He has a purpose for my life that even if I screw it up, mess it up, He’s still going to use it. That is great news! So no matter what we’ve done in the past, no matter what we’ll do in the future, God’s purpose is bigger than my problems and He’ll use it for His good if I give it to Him. He’ll use it for good in my life.

Romans 8:29 tells us, “*For God knew His people in advance, and He chose them to become like His Son so that His Son would be the firstborn with many brothers and sisters.*” God wants you in His family so that you can become like your older brother, Jesus. God loves you so much that He gives us the help and assistance we need to live for Him, even if we blow it and mess it up. And God’s Holy

Spirit is there to walk alongside us and even intercede for us. Romans 8:26 says it like this, “*Meanwhile, the moment we get tired in the waiting, God’s Spirit is right alongside helping us along. If we don’t know how or what to pray, it doesn’t matter. He does our praying in and for us, making prayer out of our wordless signs and groans.*” So even when we’re hurting and grieving from the stuff that has happened in our lives, and we cannot put words to that hurt, the Holy Spirit works in us, and prays through our tears, and brings us into the good that God desires. That leads us to our next reason for hope.

#6. **It is possible to live WITHOUT INTIMIDATION. That means I don’t have to fear anything!** We never need to fear when we belong to Jesus Christ. Romans 8:31 tells us, “*What can we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us who can ever be against us?*” So when you are with God, you are in the majority. If God is near to you, you lose your fear. You don’t need to fear anything, because God is with you.

God is FOR US! He’s not just with us, He is for us when we put our trust in Jesus. He is FOR His children, those who put their faith in Him. So when people start lifting up the junk in our past we can tell them, “Yep, I am quite an example of God’s grace.” When the sin and evil and rottenness of our lives get lifted up in our face or on TV before everyone, we don’t need to fear because that’s the way WE ONCE WERE. BUT we’re not there anymore! We’ve been changed by the blood of the Lamb of God and we have been forgiven, set free and redeemed into a new creature in Christ. And if God likes us, who else matters? If God is for us, who can be against us? Who can accuse us if God says that we’re ok because we claim the work of Jesus for the forgiveness of our sin? Romans 8:33 encourages us, “*Who can accuse the people God has chosen? No one, because God is the One who makes them right.*”

We can live without intimidation because we have Jesus with us and His sacrifice makes us clean. So Paul keeps encouraging us with Romans 8:37, “*No, in all these things we have complete victory through Christ who loves us!*” And that leads us to the 7th reason for hope.

#7. We can live **WITHOUT DEPRIVATION. That means I never need to worry,** because God is going to provide for all my needs. We won't ever be deprived. Philippians 4:19, a verse I have asked you all to memorize, says, "*My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches and glory in Christ Jesus.*" That means physically, emotionally, financially, relationally, mentally – all your need will be met in Christ Jesus if you trust Him. No deprivation. I never need to worry.

Paul lays out the logic of this in Romans 8:32, "*Since God did not spare even His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, won't God who gave us Christ, also give us everything else?*" There it is! If God loves us enough to take care of our biggest problem – eternal damnation and separation from God – don't you think He'll take care of your finances, your boyfriend, your girlfriend, your marriage, and whatever else that's troubling you? If we can trust God to take care of the greatest problem in our life, we can certainly trust that He'll take care of the little things, too. If God can supply all my needs, then why can't I tithe? Why can't I give my time and my energy to Him? Why can't I live for Him? There's no need to worry, no need to fear running out if He is the one to supply us with all things. So when God invites you to give generously, don't fret it, just do it! He'll make sure that you have all you need so that you can give even more, because He loves you enough to supply your every need.

#8. Finally, our last reason for hope is **there's the life of NO SEPARATION. I will always be loved.** God will never, never, never, never stop loving me. I will always be loved by God. Nothing will ever be able to force me away from the love of God.

And we see that in Romans 8:38-39. "*I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from His love. Death can't. Life can't. The angels can't. Demons can't. Our fears for today, or worries about tomorrow, even the powers of hell can't keep God's love away. Whether we're high above the sky (in an airplane) or in the deepest ocean (in a submarine), nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus my Lord.*" When you put your hand in God's, He grasps on it, and He's never letting go. There are times when you might like to let go, but He's never letting go. Once you were born into a family, you can't be unborn out of it. Once you're

born again, you can't be unborn out of the family of God. Once your name is written in the eternal book of life, it can't be erased. It's indelible ink. Jesus said, 'They are in my hand, and no man can pluck them out.' It doesn't matter how I feel, how many doubts, how many fears, or how many sins I commit, if I have put my trust in Christ Jesus, He says nothing, NOTHING will separate you from the love of God. Jude 24 says, "*He is able to keep you from falling.*" Not failing, mind you, because we are human and we will fail. He's able to keep you from falling out of His grace. No matter what you face in your life, you will never face it alone.

This is the hope we have as followers of Jesus! This is the hope that goes way beyond anything that the world offers. This is the great GOOD NEWS of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is the hope that everyone in this world needs to hear.

So what should our response be to this great Good News? Ephesians 4:1 says it perfectly, "*...Live and act in a way worthy of those who have been chosen for such wonderful blessings as these.*" We need to live with this hope in our lives each day that we are here on this earth so that others might see it in us and desire that same hope in Jesus.

So live with hope! No situation is ever hopeless when you give it to God. Be a living witness to the awesome faith and hope through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.