

## PATIENCE AND COMFORT FROM THE WORD

### Romans 15:4-13

"For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: "For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name." And again he says: "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!" And again: "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!" And again, Isaiah says: "There shall be a root of Jesse; and He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in Him the Gentiles shall hope." Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

This passage of Scripture from the Apostle Paul's letter to the saints in Rome, as Paul had referred to them (**Romans 1:7**), is a wonderful example to us of how Paul was not merely going by the encounter he had with Christ Jesus and in the revelation of the truth of the gospel of Christ Jesus that he received from the Holy Spirit. Paul tells his readers, including us, "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the **patience and comfort** of the Scriptures might have hope." May we today, "through the **patience and comfort of the Scriptures have** [that same] **hope** [in Christ Jesus]". In other words, to not give up, to keep clinging to the promises of God, clinging to Jesus and to His Word. In these times, and really in all times, as there is, as King Solomon stated, "nothing new under the sun-**Ecclesiastes 1:9**), from one generation to the next, therefore, we too definitely need patience and comfort to overcome in this world that is full of depravity towards God, including all forms of sin against God, of which in times past we took part in. That sin and depravity surrounds us and at times is the only thing we can see and hear. Yet we have to be like our Lord and Savior Jesus, when He would go up into the mountains and pray, and get away from the din, the loudness and the madness that surrounds us, which for us today can be found on social media, television, and in the news, and in our daily travels. The remedy to that for us is to be then spending time with God in prayer and in His Word, and also to be in the peaceful, loving fellowship with others, who are redeemed in Christ, and are children of God. Hopefully it is the same for you, as I cherish my times I have with

my Lord, God, and Savior, my Heavenly Father, reading and meditating on His Word and then praying according to what is hindering me from having patience and comfort, and to then also be praying the same for those who God has placed in my path and in my life. One of my favorite passages of Scripture is **Philippians 4:6-7**, that says, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." God has never let me down with that promise. Can anyone else testify to that?

Our hope in Christ comes from the believing on the Scriptures, that Jesus died on a cross for our sins, rose from the grave on the third day, conquering death, taking our sin upon Himself, so that we can be reconciled with God, and have a right relationship with God as a child of God's, from here through eternity. The Holy Spirit then testifies with our spirit that we are children of God (**Romans 8:16**), and then as Jesus told His disciples, "when, He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth." (**John 16:13**) All Truth, You say? Jesus stated, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (**John 14:6**) Yet He also prayed to the Father, "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." (**John 17:17**) The Apostle John in his second epistle says, "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son." (**2 John 9**) "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (**John 8:32**)

There was no greater proponent of the Scriptures than the Apostle Paul. He told his spiritual son Timothy, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**) As I asked last week, can a person be more complete than "complete"? Can a person be more equipped than "thoroughly equipped"? Is there more we should be expecting, of what God is working in us, than "every good work"? I like what Paul says in our passage of Scripture in **Romans 15** where he not only speaks of the Scriptures as it pertains to our learning and being equipped but that we find patience and comfort from God's Word! How precious of a gift it is that we have the inspired Word of God, that teaches us, equips us for service, and gives us patience and comfort to overcome and to not give up-and then we can share that blessed hope with others. Just as Paul was doing in his letter to the Romans. Once again, Paul was speaking to those who had believed on Christ and received Him. Paul, as well as all the other writers of the books in the New Testament, were not taking Jesus' Words out of context when Jesus declared to the Pharisees, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the

kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:20-21) Jesus was not telling the Pharisees that they were saved already but at best He was telling them they had the capability to be saved, just as we know a remnant of the Jews, including Paul were saved, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. The other possible interpretation of what Jesus meant was the kingdom of God was in their midst.

That is true for us today, as the kingdom of God is upon us, as God is presently building His eternal kingdom, through the gospel of Jesus Christ, saving those who are willing to repent, believe on Christ and receive Him. As we looked at previously, that word repent in the Greek is the word metaneo. "Meta" meaning to recognize a need for change" and the "noeo" is the heeding that need for change. That change is the need for a righteousness outside of ourselves for us to become right with God. That is as the Apostle Paul tells us in **1 Cor. 1:30**, that Christ Jesus is for us 1. Wisdom 2. Righteousness 3. Sanctification 4. and Redemption from God. That process begins as Jesus clearly told Nicodemus that one must be born-again, by being born of the Holy Spirit, also referred to by the apostles as the Spirit of Christ (**Romans 8:9**), to which we then become a child of God, to be "saved", and have eternal life in Christ. **Ephesians 2:8-10** explains that further by saying, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." That work that God works in us through the working of the Holy Spirit, gives us the fruit of the Spirit of "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." (**Galatians 5:22-23**)

The Holy Spirit, called the Comforter or Helper (**John 14:16**), that Jesus promised, is the Greek word "parakletos", which is a combination of "para" and then "kletos". Much could be expounded upon that, but we can see from para which means close-beside and then kletos which means "make a call" or "testifies for", that it is the Holy Spirit that testifies to us that we are children of God, but also testifies to others of who were are in Christ Jesus, and then unifies us in that testimony of the covenant we have in Christ Jesus.<sup>1</sup> In combination with the patience and comfort we have in reading, knowing, and meditating on God's Word, the Holy Scriptures, we also have the comfort and patience through the working of the Holy Spirit that keeps us firmly grounded in Christ Jesus, the Word of God. "Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." It isn't just about ourselves and our salvation alone though is it. We are told by Jesus that the great commandment of God's is to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all

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1 <https://biblehub.com/greek/3875.htm>

your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (**Mark 12:30-31**) Guess what? That is the doctrine of Christ! That is what God is working in us-to love God and to love others. As the Apostle Paul told the folks at Philippi, "fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." The Older NIV says, "having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose." (**Philippians 2:2**) While Scripture tells us that in God's presence is the fullness of joy (**Psalms 16:11**), Paul expresses the heart of God by saying our fullness of joy is in Christ Jesus, together, in His presence, as we are not in this alone! "Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: "For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name." And again he says: "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!" And again: "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!" And again, Isaiah says: "There shall be a root of Jesse; and He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in Him the Gentiles shall hope." To the glory of God! Jesus tells us, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples." (**John 15:5-8**) As WE abide in Christ, as we give praise and honor to God, in Christ Jesus, He is glorified and we are blessed!

We are being led by God through His Holy Spirit to turn from our sins and turn to God for salvation in Christ Jesus and to then be one in spirit and purpose as God's kingdom is upon us as He is presently still calling others to repentance. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." (**2 Peter 3:9**) We want to make sure that we are not a hindrance to God's purpose as He is building His eternal kingdom, to ourselves or to others. "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Our closing prayer starts as Paul prayed for the saints in Rome, "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."