

ROMANS SEASON 4 PEOPLE OF THE GOSPEL

CONNECT *BREAK THE ICE AND GET PEOPLE TALKING*

- What's changed in your weekly schedule during the quarantine?
 - What's one thing somebody did for you during the past week that encouraged you?
 - How is your emotional well being right now?
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TRUTH *UNDERSTAND AND DISCUSS THE SCRIPTURE'S MEANING*

In chapter 15, Paul begins to wrap up his letter, and he brings the focus on himself, to show how the gospel is shaping his own plans and thoughts. The hope of the gospel is the eventual renewal of the whole world, and Paul is going to show us how that hope sends us into the world now. By owning this calling, we share in the apostolic hope of the gospel.

Where Apostolic Hope Thrives

READ: Romans 15:13-16

DISCUSS: What jumps out at you from these verses and why?

Paul wants the Roman Christians to be filled with hope. Notice, however, that Paul himself had a role in it. He encourages them, saying he's "satisfied" with their growth as disciples. But he's also written "boldly" about some areas where they needed correction. If the Roman Christians were going to be filled with hope, they needed encouragement *and* correction. The same is true for us. Hope doesn't thrive in isolation, and we will only be filled with the apostolic hope in the context of spiritual family, where we can be encouraged and corrected.

What Apostolic Hope Looks Like in Action

READ: Romans 15:17-28

DISCUSS: Why do you think it's important that apostolic hope gets put into action in "word and deed"?

Paul has two very important things on his mind—preaching the gospel in places where it hasn't been yet, and collecting financial aid for the church in Jerusalem. This exemplifies what Paul means when he says that apostolic hope is by "word and deed." Sent ones have a message to preach—the good news about Jesus Christ—and they have a way to bring it—compassionately and powerfully. In our worldwide moment of crisis, we are called to speak the message about Jesus, and we're called to meet the needs of those around us. That's what apostolic hope looks like in action.

What Apostolic Hope Needs

READ: Romans 15:30-33

DISCUSS: Why do you think prayer is essential for believers who are sent into the world?

If anyone could've gone it alone as an apostle, you'd think it'd be Paul. Yet he asked that the Romans "strive in... prayers to God" for him. He knew that the spread of the good news about Jesus and the safety and provision for the church in Jerusalem, wasn't a matter of personal determination, but of God's power. As we take the apostolic hope into our neighborhoods, cities, and world, that mission needs to be bathed in prayer.

GRACE *SEE HOW THE PASSAGE CONNECTS TO JESUS*

Notice how, for Paul, the reason for the apostolic hope always comes back to Jesus. Paul calls himself a "minister of Christ Jesus." He's proud of his work for God "in Christ Jesus," but only because of "what Christ has accomplished" through him. He appeals to them for prayer "by our Lord Jesus Christ." We are sent by Jesus to carry this hope into the world because Jesus was first sent to be our hope by his death and resurrection.

CHANGE *APPLY THE PASSAGE TO OUR THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND ACTIONS*

- How would you rate your level of hope right now? How can you rely on spiritual family and offer hope to spiritual family?
- Are you praying consistently, personally and with others? What's getting in the way?
- In what ways does Jesus's life, death, and resurrection strengthen your hope?

PRAYER *RESPOND TO THE PASSAGE IN PRAYER*

- Pray for the advance of the gospel at this time when people's hope is shaken.
- Pray for wisdom and boldness to be a "sent one" in both word and deed.

Discipleship Check-In

- Have you read your Bible consistently the past week?
- Who is someone you're praying to share Jesus with this week, and what's one way you can love them well?