

ROMANS SEASON 2

HOW THE GOSPEL WORKS

CONNECT *BREAK THE ICE AND GET PEOPLE TALKING*

- When's the last time you tried something you don't usually do—a hobby, a skill, an experience? How'd it go?
 - What's the most painful injury you sustained as a kid?
 - Give a definition of the word "hope."
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TRUTH *UNDERSTAND AND DISCUSS THE SCRIPTURE'S MEANING*

Read: Romans 5:1-11

At this point in his letter, Paul pivots from talking about why the gospel is necessary to how it works in the life of someone who believes it. He begins by telling us that the gospel produces hope, and this hope is something we can rejoice in. In the Bible, the word "hope" doesn't mean wishful thinking. Rather, hope is an expectation of God's goodness. Because of the gospel, a Christian can live with profound joy through hope. Paul's going to show us why and how.

The Foundation of Hope

READ: Romans 5:1-2

DISCUSS: Based on what we've learned in Romans, what do you think "the glory of God" means in verse two?

Sin made us God's enemies. As his enemies, we were under his wrath and judgment. Now, through Jesus Christ, believers have peace with God. But it's not just an armistice or a cease-fire. Believers stand in his grace (or favor) and can expect a glorious future. Paul's point: because all these things are true for those who believe, we can rejoice! The foundation for our hope is our peace with God, our new identity as part of his family, and his promise of glorious things to come.

The Practice of Hope

READ: Romans 5:3-5

DISCUSS: Describe an experience in your life that was difficult but that produced greater character in you.

Remember that Paul's audience wasn't up on the hill, hanging with the Roman elites. They were poor, excluded, and suffering under the boot of Rome. But they'd backed the right King, and God was using their suffering to produce formidable, unshakable character in them. If we want God to strengthen our character through suffering, our responsibility is very clear—rejoice while suffering! That doesn't mean we call the suffering itself good. It also doesn't mean plastering on a fake smile in the pain. It means remembering and rejoicing in the promise that no amount of suffering can rob us of our glorious inheritance in Jesus.

GRACE *SEE HOW THE PASSAGE CONNECTS TO JESUS*

The Proof of Hope

READ: Romans 5:6-11

DISCUSS: What stands out to you from these verses and why?

It can seem like Paul changed the subject from hope to love. But he didn't. Here's what he's saying: If you want to know the strength of your hope, look at the strength of God's love. What kind of love moves God to die for his enemies? The same God who gave us that kind of love through Jesus Christ also gives us the hope of salvation and its blessings, both in this age and the one to come. The same Jesus who loved us enough to die for us, loves us enough to save us from all our suffering.

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

- What have you learned from this discussion and how can you apply it in your life?
- Do you have peace with God through faith in Jesus? Would you like to put your faith in him today?
- How are you responding to pain in your life? How can you put into practice what Paul says here about rejoicing in hope, rejoicing in suffering, and rejoicing in God?

PRAYER *RESPOND TO THE PASSAGE IN PRAYER*

- In verse five we learn that it's through the Holy Spirit that God's love is poured into our hearts. Pray for a deep, profound experience of God's love in your heart.
- Spend some time rejoicing in hope through prayer.

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?