

Romans 8:1-30

"God ain't dead"--so we have hopes we can count on"

This is a very long passage I'm going to read. To help you absorb it/ take it in, I'm going to give you something to be looking for as I read the first half (and then also for the second half):

As we read the first part of the passage, look for what controls us (who "belong to Christ Jesus") and what doesn't control us.

Romans 8:1-30 NLT

So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. ² For the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you through Christ Jesus from the power of sin that leads to death. 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. He sent his own Son in a human body like ours, except that ours are sinful. God destroyed sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. ⁴ He did this so that the requirement of the law would be fully accomplished for us who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit.

⁵ Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. ⁶ If your sinful nature controls your mind, there is death. But if the Holy Spirit controls your mind, there is life and peace. ⁷ For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. ⁸ That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.

⁹ But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them are not Christians at all.) ¹⁰ Since Christ lives within you, even though your body will die because of sin, your spirit is alive because you have been made right with God. ¹¹ The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as he raised Christ from the dead, he will give life to your mortal body by this same Spirit living within you.

¹² So, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation whatsoever to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. ¹³ For if you keep on following it, you will perish. But if through the power of the Holy Spirit you turn from it and its evil deeds, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

Any answers? --what controls us? and what doesn't control us?

[Give opportunity for 1 or 2 answers.]

Now (as I read the second half) listen for **why we (who "belong to Christ Jesus") can have hope**.

¹⁵ So you should not be like cowering, fearful slaves. You should behave instead like God's very own children, adopted into his family—calling him "Father, dear Father." ¹⁶ For his Holy Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts and tells us that we are God's children. ¹⁷ And since we are his children, we will share his treasures—for everything God gives to his Son, Christ, is ours, too. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.

¹⁸ Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will give us later. ¹⁹ For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. ²⁰ Against its will, everything on earth was subjected to God's curse. ²¹ All creation anticipates the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. ²² For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³ And even we Christians, although we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, also groan to be released from pain and suffering. We, too, wait anxiously for that day when God will give us our full rights as his children, including the new bodies he has promised us. ²⁴ Now that we are saved, we eagerly look forward to this freedom. For if you already have something, you don't need to hope for it. ²⁵ But if we look forward to something we don't have yet, we must wait patiently and confidently.

²⁶ And the Holy Spirit helps us in our distress. For we don't even know what we should pray for, nor how we should pray. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. ²⁷ And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will. ²⁸ And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And he gave them right standing with himself, and he promised them his glory.

NY Times (June 21, 1987) told story of self-made millionaire who greatly changed the lives of a sixth-grade class in East Harlem.

had been asked to speak to the class. (school he went to as child.)

What could he say to inspire these students, most of whom would drop out of school?

wondered how he could get these children even to look at him.

Scrapping his notes, decided to speak to them from his heart.

here's what said: "Stay in school, and I'll help pay the college tuition for every one of you."

At that moment the lives of these students changed. For the first time they had hope as they thot of their schooling.

Said one student, "I had something to look forward to, something waiting for me. It was a golden feeling."

article appeared 6 yrs after that speech. of those who didn't move away, 48 of 51 went on to graduate from high school. (usually less than 25 grad .)

Hope - expecting something good from the future. even one that seems full of obstacles and negatives.

Victor Frankl - Viennese psychologist & author. died in 1997.

what makes him most notable: survived Nazi death camps.

while was there, was observing that some of his fellow prisoners showed amazing stamina and ability to survive the horrible conditions.

& some - little such ability.

tried to figure out why.

looked at several factors:

health, family background, intelligence, survival skills.

concluded that none of these factors was primarily responsible.

the single most significant factor, he realized, was a sense of future vision.

saw that when a man no longer had fut to look toward, shriveled up & died.

but that those who could imagine a future that was good--a life of freedom, friends and dignity, some mission to perform/some important work left to do-- became people of strength who endured the horrors of prison life.

in his bk , *Man's Search For Meaning* (1946), wrote:

"loss of hope...can have a deadly effect on man."

he wrote: "any attempt to restore a man's inner strength in camp had first to succeed in showing him some future goal."

having sense of hope - very impor .

I pray that you have hopes that give energy and endurance.

may you have several pictures-of-the-fut that motivate .

we must ackn something, though:

some hopes prove empty/ never "pan out".

some hopes lift you up, only to let you down.

a person wrote: "probably nothing in the world arouses more false hope than the first four hours of a diet."

-IllusforBibPreaching 681

these hopes that are tenuous, that might let us down, nonetheless can fuel a lot of good energy and endurance in us.

--hope is makes the young man continue to woo the girl ...even when his chances look dim/ when objective observer: probably not be successful.

--hope is moves the farmer to plant his crops ...even tho faces bad weather & hardships. & may only get poor harvest.

I pray that you have some hopes that are motivating you --even tho , like the young man / like the farmer, they may not work out in the end.

we need to have our dreams --to try, & see what happens.

But. it's also good for us to have some hopes that are not earth-bound, that are not dependent on this fallen world which has evil & suffering & misfortune.

the *Our Daily Bread* devotional told story of terminally ill young man who came in to medical clinic for his usual treatment.

a new doctor who was on duty. said to him casually and cruelly, "You know, don't you, that you won't live out the year?"

As the young man left, he stopped by desk director of clinic and wept. choking w emotion, he blurted out, "that man took away my hope."

the director : "I guess he did. Maybe it's time to find a new one."

all of us will eventually be without hope if our hopes only center on physical/ material/ time-bound matters.

I pray also that you have hopes that can never be taken away.

want us spend rest of morn looking at some hopes that God gives. that are not tenuous. that we can count on.

Easter - my fav time of yr --most glorious serm material!

let's continue to ride on that wave crest.

in Eph 1 Paul says: prays for the Ephes ch often. giving thanks.

tells one thing prays: **Ephesians 1:16-20**

...I pray for you constantly,¹⁷ asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you might grow in your knowledge of God.¹⁸ I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the wonderful future he has promised to those he called [NIV - "that you may know the hope to which he has called you"]. I want you to realize what a rich and glorious inheritance he has given to his people [and] the incredible greatness of his power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power²⁰ that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms.

Easter gives us confidence any hope God offers will be able carry thru. as God works in our lives, he has available the "same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead." That's "the incredible greatness of his power for us who believe him."

look at **Romans 8:1-30** - text x read.

Rom 8 - one of greatest chpts in B .

describes whole scope of God's interacting w those who believe.

pick out 3 hopes.

hopes that you & I can always count on.

not going to wake up some day, & find not true / have to find new one.

my prayer: you would have these hopes as an anchor for you as you go thru life w some of the earthly hopes lifting you up & some letting you down.

first hope I will pick out

1) God will lead us

v14 talks about us being *led by the Spirit of God*

all thru first part of chapt talking about this.

v4 - us not *follow[ing] our sinful nature but instead follow[ing] the Spirit.*

goes on, v6 - *If your sinful nature controls your mind, there is death. But if the Holy Spirit controls your mind, there is life and peace.*

some of you: if only God would control my mind. if only I was clearly led by Sp .

woman in my sm grp : be nice if God put billboards all over the place:
"[name] is to do this & this & this on [date]."

but he doesn't.

we often don't know what God is asking/leading.

not sure if our conscience feel better if do this or this .

we can dwell on that / bemoan it.

or there is something we can do about it:

some times--pretty often, I think--you do know for sure God wants you to do such-and-such.

don't you have times where you sense God: "go over & enc that person"
"change your thots" or "go to sm grp" ?

each time respond, more apt to hear it next time. --mind "tunes in" what respond to.

(our minds receiving countless signals/sights/sounds every moment.
for our sanity, have to tune out some .)

we "tune out" what not to respond to. --

someone talking (like me!). restless child. trucks on stGod.

but moment start responding, "tune in"

if you choose to not respond to Sp when prompts, Sp will stay on fringes of life.

but as respond, led even more!

fills w hope!

Creator.

wise

2nd hope :

2) God will receive you and I back after we stray

(not say "if" we stray.)

often we yield to prompting of *sinful nature* rather than of Sp .

live by *what that nature desires* rather than by *what the Spirit desires*.

make a choice that is not God's, but is what I want.

that (v6) leads to *death* rather than *life and peace*. wages of sin is death.

feel wedge betw us & God. sinking feeling.

I "blew" it / did something dumb. God is "ticked."

what do you tend to do in that sit ?

I : I might as well stay away from God until can deserve his favor/approval.

incredible GN : we don't have to earn back his love --he will forgive us!
he will forget that "dumb" thing just did.

it's not as if God: "we'll pretend you never did it."

rather, he personally pays penalty/ wages of death. his Son dies.

vv3-4 God sent his own Son ... as a sacrifice for our sins. ⁴ He did this so that the requirement of the law would be fully accomplished for us

any "sinking feeling" now has no basis in reality. --bec he has forgiven us in cross!

v1 - now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.

that "sinking feeling" does have basis in reality if you oriented toward sinning again the next time.

but if you are turning from sin/ not wanting it be part of you anymore,

God says, "your past is forgiven. it is no more."

there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.

"God will receive you and I back after we stray"

a 3rd hope we see in Rom 8:

3) God will one day free us from groaning

this is main theme of Rom 8.

God not stop w "justifying" me (forgetting my sin --making me just as if I'd never sinned).

not stop w "sanctifying" me (leading me --making me whole & holy)

is one day going to "glorify" you & I (end v30). complete our redemption.

¹⁸ *...what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will give us later. ¹⁹ For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are.*

one day the glory of what God is giving to those he loves will be fully seen.

²⁰ *Against its will, everything on earth was subjected to God's curse. ²¹ All creation anticipates the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. ²² For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³ And even we Christians, although we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, also groan to be released from pain and suffering. We, too, wait anxiously for that day when God will give us our full rights as his children, including the new bodies he has promised us.*

given same glorious body that J had after resur .

not sure what all this mns .
but here bare minimum: one day there will be no more decay & frustration
& sin.
& not just for us --all creation.

²⁴ Now that we are saved, we eagerly look forward to this freedom. For if you already have something, you don't need to hope for it. ²⁵ But if we look forward to something we don't have yet, we must wait patiently and confidently.

people invariably grow impatient as hope wanes.
the more hopeful we are, the more patient / the more can endure.

hope prompted Paul to press on in the face of trying circs --stoning, beatings,
robbers --& even death.
v18 - *what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will give us later.*

& it can prompt you & me to persevere thru daily difficulties, disapointments.

one writer talks about seeing painting that moved him deeply.
picture of an old burned-out mountain shack. All that remained was the
chimney...the charred debris of what had been that family's sole possession.
In front of this destroyed home stood an old grandfather-looking man dressed
in what-might-have-been-his-nightclothes with a small boy clutching a pair of
patched overalls.
the child was crying.
Beneath the picture were the words which the artist felt the old man was
speaking to the boy. They were simple words, yet they presented a profound
theology and philosophy of life.
Those words were, "Hush child, God ain't dead!"

that burned-out mountain shack, that old man, that weeping child can be a
reminder of the fragility of much we hope in.
but in this picture, they did not speak of despair of life.
instead they pointed to a hope --an eternal hope, an indomitable hope! bec of
those words spoken: "God ain't dead".

God ain't dead!
you have the opportunity to
- be led by Sp
- come back to God after stray
- look fwd to a glorious new heavens/earth!