

COMBINED WORSHIP SERVICE

4 December 2005

Theme: The Priceless Gifts of God

Title: The Gift of Hope

Text: Romans 5

(I) BATTLING THE TERRIBLE SENSE OF HOPELESSNESS

“And I said, ‘My strength and my hope have perished from the LORD” Lamentations 3:18

1. No one is spared from bouts of despair

2. Even great servants of God have to battle bouts of despair

(Quote from the writings of Jeremiah the prophet)

3. A person can be swallowed up in despair

4. Hope is the best antidote to the problem of despair

“This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope” Lamentations 3:21

(II) UNDERSTANDING GOD’S PROFOUND GIFT OF HOPE

“And rejoice in hope of the glory of God” Romans 5:2

“Now hope does not disappoint...” Romans 5:5

1. What is the gift of “Hope?”

a) It involves a promise from God

b) The fullness of the promise may not be realized for some time

2. Why does God give “abstract Hope?”

(When there seems to be so many concrete things He could give)

“And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.” Romans 5:4

a) The test of our understanding of the gift of “Hope”

“Tribulations”

b) Passing the test

i) Understanding that tribulation produces “perseverance”

ii) Appreciating that perseverance produces “character”

iii) Rejoicing in the fact that “character” creates the powerful spirit of “Hope”

(III) A SPECIAL CHRISTMAS PRAYER

“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” Romans 15:13

1. A prayer made to “The God of Hope”

2. A prayer for:

- a) Joy
- b) Peace
- c) Hope

3. A prayer accompanied by faith (“in believing”)

- a) That the Spirit of God would give us this great gift of Hope
- b) That His power would work mightily in our hearts creating this special Gift of Hope

POEM

SAY NOT ‘THE STRUGGLE NOUGHT AVAILETH’

Say not the struggle nought availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.

If hope were dupes, fears may be liars;
It may be, in yon smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase e’en now the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,

Seem here no painful inch to gain.
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by Eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in light
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
But westward, look, the land is bright.

- Howard Hugh Clough. -