

December 13, 2019

Here's Hope  
by Rev. Jerry Rea

### Candles of Hope

Romans 15 is a very positive chapter. It reaches a climax of sorts in verse 13. Paul has been exhorting the Romans... encouraging them, correcting them, instructing them, and guiding them. He is reaching the end in chapter 16 and begins to summarize. So, he says, "may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (verse 13).

So he characterizes God Himself as a God of hope. It is who He is. Just like God is love, so God is hope. Twice in verse 13 he says God gives hope. First He is the God of hope... then Paul leans on God to grant us hope. Contrast that with the gloom and doom of so much of our faith today. Our faith can degenerate into rules and regulations... obligations and duties - we come away thinking (our attitude becomes), "do I have to?" If you are in touch with the God of hope, it just seems to me that you yourself will have hope. The Holy Ghost that is mentioned in this verse gives hope.

God is the source of hope, which brings us to our own experience of hope. Where do we find hope? We find it in contact with this God of hope through quiet times and in worship. Through our Bible study and prayer we touch this person of hope. To put it another way, as we abide in Him, we are abiding in hope. John's gospel teaches us to abide in Christ. In verse 13, Paul says that the "power of the Holy Ghost" grants us peace and joy, leading to an abounding hope. But don't miss this, it is the power of the Holy Ghost that accomplishes this. So, as we are filled with the Spirit - it is a spirit of hope.

This is such a hopeless generation. You would not believe the number of people who have responded with "thank you," for this little ditty - "Here's Hope." That just means people are starving for hope. You and I are to be candles in this current darkness. What type candles? Why, candles of hope of course. And, the deeper the crisis, the darker the day we live in, the brighter the light of our hope. You know, of course, that one candle can light up an entire room? You have experienced something in your contact with Christ Jesus. You have experienced peace, joy, love, forgiveness... hope. Having received hope... become a candle of hope - a lighthouse set on a hill!

Just Shining  
Jerry Rea