

Devotion for Sunday 19 September 2021

“Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer”

Romans 12:12

I am encouraged by your prayers and support for each other. I know that many of you are going the extra mile just to make sure that we are all kept in touch with one another. I believe that this situation has helped to create some connections that perhaps were not there before. Therefore, all your expression of love to the Lord and for each other is to be commended.

For this Sunday's devotion, I want us to reflect a bit more on one of the verses we had from last week, Romans 12 verse 12.

The verse encourages us to know that we can rejoice in hope and we can be patient in suffering because we have been faithful in prayer. No matter what our situation is, we can pray with joy because of our hope in Christ. We can remain patient, persevering through suffering, by presenting our requests to God with thanksgiving. Prayer is God's gift to us so that we can be patient and joyful, even when things don't appear to be going well.

To rejoice in hope is to have that unfaltering assurance in God's Word as fact - knowing that our hope of glory is secured for us in heavenly places for the eternal ages to come, simply because God's Word is true and cannot be broken. Our hope is built on nothing less than trusting in the cross of Christ and taking God at His Word. When our hope is placed in Jesus then being joyful or rejoicing in all things is easy because we know the hope to which we were called. Just knowing that one day we will be reunited with Christ is reason enough to be joyful in all things. This inexpressible and glorious joy should be evident to everyone around because of the hope we have in Christ.

To be patient in suffering is to know and accept that in this world we will have tribulation, but to wait patiently in our suffering, without murmurings and to be of good cheer, knowing that His strength is sufficient to see us through every difficulty of life, because He has already overcome sin and death and we are

united with Him and His victory. Being patient is a wonderful character to have. The letter of James tells us that we are to consider it pure joy whenever we face trials of many kinds, because the testing of our faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that we may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. This is why we can be patient in suffering, because we know the result of the trial will not destroy us but rather help us grow and mature in the Lord.

Persevere in prayer is to recognise that prayer is one of the key weapons of the spiritual warfare in which all are engaged. As children of God we should all persevere in prayer – constantly lifting our hearts to the Lord in prayers of thanks and praise and intercession, laying them before the throne of God's grace, knowing that greater is He that is in us than He that is in the world. The letter of James tells us that the prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. Through Christ Jesus, who makes us righteous, when we pray, it is powerful and effective.

When we pray in accordance with God's will, we can rest assured that God will graciously respond to what we ask for. Paul gives us an encouraging word in Romans 8 regarding praying in agreement to God's will. He says, We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Since we are called to his purpose we can pray knowing that it will work out for our good.

Therefore, let us continue in these instructions so that we may live a life that is pleasing to the Lord. When we walk in the Spirit these things will naturally occur in our lives because each one of these is a fruit of the Spirit. Joyful, patience and perseverance, are characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit. As we exercise these, we become more and more like Jesus, the one we are to conform to.

The Lord's blessings be with each of you as you continue in the Joy of the Lord.

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