

## **“STRENGTH FOR TODAY – HOPE FOR TOMORROW**

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**BIBLE STUDY LED BY JAMES L. BOYCE**

The rich resources of Scripture confirm promises of God offering encouragement in power for living today and hope in the assurance of God's continuing presence with us into the future.

*10. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, 11. so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:10–11)*

*For in Jesus Christ every one of God's promises is a "Yes." For this reason it is through Christ that we say "Amen," to the glory of God. (2 Corinthians 1:20)*

*31 What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? ... 35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:31-39)*

### **What Do We Read and Hear**

#### ***HEARING THE PROMISES OF GOD IN SCRIPTURE***

***MARTIN LUTHER***

We must learn what St. Paul means by such words as *law, sin, grace, faith, righteousness, flesh, spirit*, and the like; otherwise we shall read and only waste our time.

law - fulfilling the law is a matter of the heart; that implies a heart given by the Spirit...."I believe that I cannot by my own reason and strength believe..." Such faith comes through the hearing of the Word of God in the gospel.

sin - is nothing more than trusting in external works, works that come not from the heart, .... not trusting that all my power comes from the power of the Spirit living in my heart through faith.

grace - the kindness or favor God bears towards us of His own choice; and through which he willingly gives us Christ, pours out the Holy Spirit and his blessings on us. It enables us to be accounted entirely and completely righteous because God's grace does not come in pieces; rather it takes us up completely in its embrace for the sake of Christ so that his gifts may take root in us.

faith - not something dreamed up or a human illusion of the mind; so it doesn't just mean to believe "things" even things about God and Jesus; rather faith is something that God effects in us; it changes us and we are reborn from God.

**Unless you give these terms this connotation, you will never comprehend Paul's epistle to the Romans, nor any other book of Holy Scripture.**

*(Martin Luther, Preface to Romans, 1522)*

### **Discoveries/ Insights/ Questions**

***THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH*****Psalm 121**

1. I lift up my eyes to the hills— from where will my help come? 2. My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

3. He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. 4. He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

5. The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade at your right hand. 6. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. 7. The LORD will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.

8. The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore.

**Psalm 143.**

1. Hear my prayer, O LORD; give ear to my supplications in your faithfulness; answer me in your righteousness.

2. Do not enter into judgment with your servant, for no one living is righteous before you. 3. For the enemy has pursued me, crushing my life to the ground, making me sit in darkness like those long dead. 4. Therefore my spirit faints within me; my heart within me is appalled. 5. I remember the days of old, I think about all your deeds, I meditate on the works of your hands. 6. I stretch out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched land. *Selah*

7. Answer me quickly, O LORD; my spirit fails. Do not hide your face from me, or I shall be like those who go down to the Pit. 8. Let me hear of your steadfast love in the morning, for in you I put my trust. Teach me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul.

9. Save me, O LORD, from my enemies; I have fled to you for refuge. 10. Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. Let your good spirit lead me on a level path.

11. For your name's sake, O LORD, preserve my life. In your righteousness bring me out of trouble. 12. In your steadfast love cut off my enemies, and destroy all my adversaries, for I am your servant.

***LIVING IS FROM THE "HEART"*****Psalm 51:10–13**

10. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

11. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. 12. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit. 13. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

**Ezekiel 36:26–28**

26. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27. I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. 28. Then you shall live in the land that I gave to your ancestors; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

***THE LORD IS MY SALVATION*****Luke 1:46–56** “And Mary said:...

“My soul magnifies the Lord, 47. and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, 48. for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; 49. for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

50. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. 51. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. 52. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; 53. he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. 54. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, 55. according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

***BECAUSE GOD IS FAITHFUL*****1 Corinthians 1:4–9**

4. I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, 5. for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind— 6. just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— 7. so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. 8. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**1 Thessalonians 5**

9. For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10. who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. 11. Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

16. Rejoice always, 17. pray without ceasing, 18. give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

23. May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

**Philippians 1:6; 2:12-13**

6. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. ()

12. Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13. for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

### **Ephesians 1:3–14**

3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4. just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. 5. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6. to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

7. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace 8. that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight 9. he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, 10. as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

11. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, 12. so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory.

13. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; 14. this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

### ***MY HOPE RESTS IN THE PROMISES OF GOD***

#### **Luke 24:19-24 Two Disciples on the Road to Emmaus**

19 He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him.

21 But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place....

25 Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared!"

#### **Romans 5:1–5**

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2. through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. 3. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4. and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5. and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been

poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

### **Galatians 5:5, 13–14**

5. For through the Spirit, by faith, we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness

13. For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. 14. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

### **Hebrews 10:19–25**

19. Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, ...22. let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

23. Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. 24. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, 25. not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching. ()

### **1 Peter 1:3–7**

3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4. and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5. who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6. In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, 7. so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

## ***MATTHEW’S SHAPING OF THE STORY***

### **Matthew 1:20–23**

20. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” 22. All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 23. “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.”

### **Matthew 11:27–30**

27. All things have been handed over to me by my Father...  
28. “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 29. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

**Matthew 28:18–20**

18. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20. and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

***PSALM 23***

***THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD***

1. The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. 2. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; 3. he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name’s sake.

4. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff— they comfort me. 5. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

6. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

What memories – what associations especially speak to you in this psalm?

Words....

Images....

Experiences....

What strength does it lift up for the living of this day?

What hopes does it inspire as you look toward tomorrow?