

Trust is Hope in action, Hope exercised ~ Midweek Reflection # 28, Dec. 10, 2008

“Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 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. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 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.” ~Romans 5:1-5 NRSV

In this beautiful passage in Romans, Paul doesn’t define hope so much as describe how God develops hope in the believer. I think in order to understand Biblical hope, which is so different from the wishful thinking in the casual “I hope so” of daily conversation, we need to approach it from a different direction than a simple dictionary or Google search.

Trust is hope in action. hope exercised. And both trust and hope need an object. Our Triune God. Father Son and Holy Spirit is always the object of hope in the scriptures. As we get to know more intimately our Heavenly Father, His incarnate Son and the Holy spirit whom they promised would dwell within us, we can better understand Biblical hope. Spending time alone with God exercises our hope, develops trust and brings us more understanding of the ultimate union with God that God desires for us.

Wherever we find ourselves challenged to put our trust or hope in God in the scriptures there are qualities or characteristics of God’s personality referred to that I believe help us understand the “reason for the hope” that is in us. and, in fact, help us to define Biblical hope.

Jeremiah rejoices in God’s great love and faithfulness, His unfailing compassion. “this I call to mind and therefore I have hope”. (Lamentations 3:21-24

The Psalmist recalls God’s forgiveness, steadfast love and great power to redeem as his reason to wait for the Lord. “My soul waits, and in his word I hope”. (Psalm 130:5.

Perhaps the simplest “definition” of Biblical hope is St. Pauls’ “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27

However we understand hope, may we all find more reason to trust our loving God through this Advent season, as we anticipate celebrating the coming of the Christ Child and look forward to his promised return.

Under God’s Mercy,

Howie