

061222 "Hope" Romans 5:1-5

Today is Trinity Sunday that celebrates the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, the three Persons of God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Jesus has always talked about being one with God the Father. For example, John 17:11 says, "I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name--the name you gave me--so that they may be one as we are one." Verse 21 says, "Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me."

This is similar to what Jesus said about God the Holy Spirit. John 15:26 says, "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me." Although we cannot logically explain that three become one and one becomes three, Jesus always emphasized that God the Father and God the Holy Spirit are one with Himself.

God the Father creates us. God the Son redeems us. God the Holy Spirit welcomes us and guides us. If you read the Bible verses carefully today, you will find that God the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit is already mentioned in these verses in Romans 5: Verse 1 says, "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" and verse 5 says, "God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit."

On Trinity Sunday, we wish we could only think of the Triune God, but the question is, what is our reality today? The price of gas continues to rise, and it has recently exceeded \$5 per gallon. Now, because of Russia Ukraine war, not only oil prices, but also prices of everything continue to

rise. The Western part of this country is running out of water, babies don't have enough formula, hate crimes continue, and gunshots are happening too often. As we look at today's reality, we worry and also, we pray.

Today Romans 5:5 says, "Hope does not disappoint us..." It is very disappointing when we only think about today's reality, but today's Bible verses challenge us: "Hope does not disappoint us."

Let's look at this word "hope" in our passage today. It is translated from a Greek word "elpizo". And its Hebrew word is "qavah" which means "bind together, gather together." We come upon difficult times. Even Jesus made it clear. John 16:33 says, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. **In this world you will have trouble.** But take heart! I have overcome the world."

To HOPE in this passage, means to bind ourselves to God in the face of our troubles. Maybe you want to wait for the right people, for the right timing, for the right methods, but the Bible suggest to fix your eyes to the Lord in the midst of all troubles! On this journey, we certainly learn patience.

Romans 5:3-4 says, "And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope."

Indeed, we face trials of many kinds, even when we pursue the way of faith. The one common characteristic of the people of faith in the Bible is that they all overcame tribulation. We are all imperfect, but our inadequacies are made whole through trials. In Genesis, God called Abraham. "Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe." (Genesis

12:10). Abraham came to Canaan with obedience because God had told him to go. But the land was far from perfect; there were still fights, famine, and trials in the land. However, Abraham continued to place his hopes on unchanging God, not on the ever-changing circumstances. And he lived a victorious life in God. Will you trust and obey when famine comes despite God's promises?

Edward Mote was born in London, England in 1791, to a poor family who barely made a living by running a tavern. Edward could not get a proper education because of poverty, and the environment he grew up in was not good. He wandered on the road without being cared for by anyone, and the resulting inferiority and rebelliousness led him to wander the streets. There was no one to welcome him warmly, full of resentment and complaints.

Then, when he was 16, he got a job as a carpenter in a cabinetmaking factory, where the owner of the factory treated him warmly. The factory owner, who was a devout Christian, took Edward to a church, where he received Jesus. After that, Edward wrote it in his diary. "My hammer now sings and dances. And my eyes are alive and living water springs up in my heart. Because Jesus came into my heart." As a man, he became a skilled cabinetmaker with a successful business of his own.

Regardless of the claims of his business on his time, Mote always found time to worship God. He was especially interested in Christian music, and one day felt inspired on the way to work to write down a verse that came to his mind. Before the day was finished, he had completed four verses. His new hymn began with the words, "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness."

Not long thereafter, Mote visited a friend whose wife was ill. It was a Sunday, and the friend mentioned that he and his wife liked to observe Sunday by singing a hymn, reading a scripture, and having prayer together. Mote had a copy of his hymn in his pocket, so they sang it together. The friend's wife was so taken with the hymn that she requested a copy for herself. Encouraged by her interest, Mote had copies printed—and soon found himself the author of a beloved hymn. At age 55, Mote responded to a call to the ministry. He served out the rest of his life—more than two decades— as the pastor of a Baptist Church in England.

Dear beloved sisters and brothers in Christ, today is Trinity Sunday. Just as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are one, I hope and pray that you will be with God in any situation, even in suffering. The apostle Paul said in Romans 8:38-39, "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 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." Not one thing! Fairfield Grace, may God's grace, peace, goodness, and mercy be with you and your family, and your business, and your studies, and with the lives of your children. Amen.