

Overflow With Hope

- ✠ in Scripture (v.4)
- ✠ in unity (vv.5-7)
- ✠ in confirmation (vv.8-13)

In the name of Jesus, the Root of Jesse, dear preparing Christians:

Back in the days when the Internet was young, wasn't it exciting to get those pictures on your computer! One picture burned a warm spot in my heart by the story behind it. Two preemies, the brother doing great, but his sister growing weaker by the hour. When one of the nurses put the twins together, the sister began to thrive. Picture the brother's tiny arm wrapped around his sister. Caption: **Hope**. And isn't that how the dear Holy Spirit stands beside us as our Comforter? God makes us **Overflow With Hope**...

✠ in Scripture (v.4)

Today people love to trash the Old Testament, but that's nothing new. In Isaiah's day people demanded of the preachers: *"Tell us pleasant things, prophesy illusions. Leave this way, get off this path, and stop confronting us with the Holy One of Israel!"* And those were God's chosen people! He kept calling them through Isaiah: *"This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: 'In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it.'" (30:10f, 15 NIV84)* Isaiah leads off Chapter 53, which is one of the most vivid descriptions of Christ's suffering in our place with this lament: *"Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?" (53:1 NIV84)* Self-righteous hearts are so stubborn in unrepentant sin, that Isaiah's last verse warns us of hell for all *"those who rebelled against me; their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind."* (Isaiah 66:24 NIV84)

Our sinful hearts also ignore God's warnings like drivers blind to the yellow traffic signs. We want to cruise through life's turns and twists without caution or care of hurting others or dishonoring God. Our stubborn sin would leave us helpless, hopeless forever if God did not call us out of darkness into His wonderful light. *"Indeed, whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction, so that, through patient endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, we would have hope."*¹

Family problems feel hopeless. The best of marriages hurt. Living can be so hard. Human hope is useless as a lottery ticket. We need to **Overflow With Hope in Scripture**. Heroes of faith long ago struggled with marriage and family. Think of Jacob's soap opera life as his sister wives competed for children. Ten of Jacob's twelve sons hated his favorite. Sibling rivalry sold their brother into slavery. How could Joseph survive without **Hope in Scripture** passed on to him by father Jacob? God would send a Savior through their family. Advent **Hope** kept Joseph alive. Finally God put him in charge of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh, saving millions by wise governing. **In Scripture** – real people desperate like us for a Savior from sin. God's Gospel shouts His gift of perfection. All is finished, done in Christ!

As one of our Seminary professors wrote, "The gospel gives us a living hope. Gives us a new perspective on the past. Creates in us a new life, the kind of life where we live with backs forever turned towards death. Because of the great 'done!' of the gospel, we now live, move, and have our being under the great heaven of grace where there is no condemnation. Because of what Jesus did for us in the past, we now have a future without limit. In it, there are no more tears. The old order has passed and gone."² When you **Overflow With Hope in Scripture**, it has a profound effect on our life together...

¹ EHV ~ *Evangelical Heritage Version* (<http://wartburgproject.org>) © 2017. NPH: 800-662-6022; also Amazon-Kindle.

² Professor Paul Wendland, "What Never Dies," Κηρύγματε – *PREACH THE GOSPEL* – 2019, VOL. 16, p. 234

✚ **in unity (vv.5-7)**

There are certainly faster ways to join a church than taking twenty lessons as you a sister and brother did with your mother here. You were already baptized believers in Jesus. Your mother taught you many Bible stories at home with discussions of God's will for our lives. Sharing these experiences is one of the great blessings I receive teaching Bible Information Class. But the greatest joy is when the dear Holy Spirit works the miracle of this common confession of faith, the true common-union that joins us at the altar of His Holy Supper to receive with one heart His body and blood of all-forgiving grace.

Your adult confirmation illuminates the Holy Spirit's words through Paul: *"May God, the source of patient endurance and encouragement, grant that you agree with one another in accordance with Christ Jesus, ⁶so that with one mind, in one voice, you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷For this reason, accept one another as Christ also accepted you to the glory of God."*

You worked many Saturdays in **Hope** for this day to enjoy this congregation accepting you for Jesus' sake as communicant members. As you cling to Christ by faith **in Scripture** the Holy Spirit keeps building you up **in unity** that stretches far beyond our congregation. Already the Lord is leading you northward to our sister congregation, Saint Mark's Lutheran Church in Bemidji, Minnesota. We would have loved to keep you here with Lori teaching Sunday School, Kayla helping out in her kind and generous way, and Josh growing into strong participation using your gifts too as your family models **Hope in unity**. But *"the kingdom belongs to the LORD"* (Psalm 22:28 EHV). We are His servants who enjoy the living **Hope** we have in Jesus Christ **in unity** near and far. And my **Hope** is to hear that you become active members of Christ's body at St. Mark's, using your gifts to the glory of God building up His kingdom. Then the Lord will rejoice to see His work in you bear fruit **in unity of Hope**.

One of our pastors applied this to the pain we sometimes suffer young and old. And yet as we keep coming to Word and sacrament, our souls keep growing to **Overflow With Hope**. So "here's how **Hope** brings joy to your soul. You don't live in the past with bitterness and regrets; you are looking forward because you have an incredible future. No matter how rough life may be right now, someday soon you're going to be pain-free and celebrating in everlasting glory. **Hope** is how you face surgery or tough it out in a difficult work situation. *Hope is where your heart is when your body is limping along.*"³

✚ **in confirmation (vv.8-13)**

At this time in church history we're so used to Gentiles, non-Jews being Christians, that we miss the miracle long foretold by Jewish prophets to God's chosen people of Israel. In the last verses of our text the Lord's Apostle Paul quotes four Old Testament prophecies calling us Gentiles to rejoice as we put our **Hope** in the *"Root of Jesse...the one who will rise up to rule the Gentiles; on him the Gentiles will place their hope."* You have been strengthened and confirmed by our study of promises like these. Today you publicly confirm your solid stand on Christ alone. **Overflow With Hope in confirmation**.

Today really is another new beginning for your walk with Jesus home to heaven. Through the Spirit we can look ahead to eternity where *"these three remain: faith, hope and love."* (1 Corinthians 13:13) In heaven we will always trust God with faith perfected by the wonderful way He saved us from our sins. There love's perfect joys will be restored in God's presence (Psalm 16:11), forever close with loved ones near and dear. And in heaven there will still be **Hope**. No way can we see and experience all the joys of heaven in 10,000 years unending. "The glories of heaven are inexhaustible, and we shall never get through exploring them."⁴ We asked Dr. Becker in class how **Hope** could remain in heaven when all is fulfilled. He told us, *"Hope is the eager expectation of good."* Then he reminded us of our Creator's unlimited imagination. "In heaven around every corner we will discover a new surprise. God's grace and blessing keep producing more **Hope**." *"Now may the God of hope fill you with complete joy and peace as you continue to believe, so that you overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."* Amen.

³ Quoted from a sermon by Pastor Daron Lindemann, *PREACH THE WORD* – January / February 2007, p. 2. Emphasis mine.

⁴ R.C.H. Lenski, quoted in Carleton Toppe, *1 Corinthians – The People's Bible*, p. 126.