

# God of Hope

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] so my question to you this morning is how much hope did you come to church with this morning I've been having a lot of conversations about climate change I've been following all the political debates and needless to say I've not been left with a lot of hope you know it it does seem like a mess doesn't it it seems like an unsettling mess I don't know who to put my trust in I don't know to where to put my faith what hope do we have there are many things in life that seem really unsettling that leave us thinking there is no hope but we as Christians we are people who have a hope and I'd like you to keep that passage open if you have it so we can keep following it as we as we go through the passage we've heard this morning it shouts of hope and what is this hope and and where do we find it well if we look at verse four it says for everything that was written in the past was written to teach us so that through endurance and the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope so two things there what was written and the scriptures and to Paul these would have been teachings that weren't just you know an intellectual exercise he wasn't reading the scriptures to become cleverer you know these were teachings that were defining how he defining how he lived his life he wanted to be formed and shaped by what he was reading and what he was reading was giving him hope we get an insight into Paul's relationship with scripture here and Paul's relationship with scripture is intimate he wasn't you know every now and again picking it up and and having a little read just because he had to this was the very power of God breaking into his life through the written words something about these texts that provided him with hope and Paul had a really challenging life in all sorts of different ways but something about this text that he's talking about enabled endurance and actually enabled encouragement as well now Paul's scripture that he's talking about here would have been the Jewish Bible that we know as the

Old Testament and in the Old Testament we have this incredible story of how the Hebrew people found a hope in Yahweh in God and in the New Testament that we have today we have this exact same narrative but this time all people have a hope in God through Jesus Christ ultimately what Paul is pointing to in his letter to the Romans it's repeated over and over again just if you look at verses 5 6 7 and 8 Jesus Christ Christ Jesus in all that he's achieved for us on the cross gives us hope the fact that he raised to life gives us hope a hope that is life changing a hope that we can build our lives upon to be able to weather whatever storm comes in our lives in verses 8 to 12 Paul talks about the Jews and the Gentiles quoting various Old Testament passages and he's stressing to the predominantly Jewish church in Rome that this hope is for everyone and not just them so verses 7 8 and 9 are key here the Jews in the Roman church weren't convinced that the Gentiles deserve Jesus because after all he was he was a Jew he was one of them but Paul doesn't want division within the church and explains to the Jewish people that they were accepted by Jesus in their sinful state so it's no different for the Gentiles you know all fall short of God's standard and in a strange way that's great news for us Gentiles but it's also a great challenge for us as the church so we as a church are made up of all sorts of different people with different cultures and different opinions we all have different stories and different struggles but it's that message of acceptance that Paul really pushes in this passage look at verse 7 as Christ accepted us we need to be able to accept others despite any differences we may have and if you think about how damaging divisiveness is how messy disagreements can become you know even over the simplest of things you wouldn't believe the kind of things the church destroys itself arguing over but it's just a reflection of our culture isn't it we live in incredibly divisive times people just can't seem to cope with any sort of difference you know even within God's people and as a church we need that spirit of unity in verse 5 that enables us to accept one another you know despite our differences regardless of who we are or or what we think what we believe you know our stance on Brexit you know our political party that we're voting for our unity is found in that hope that we have in Christ so then accept one

another as Christ accepted us that is God's grace  
you know enabling us to say to each other I disagree with you but I choose to love I choose to honour I choose to respect you so that God may be glorified but what does this passage say about the effects of this hope on our personal lives so I want to tell you about a roller coaster at Alton Towers that gives you the effect like you're feeling of flying well you sit in this chair and these straps come down and lock you in place before being tilted horizontally and now you know before you even get on this ride there's information all around the place saying how safe this ride is and you can imagine how reassuring that is before getting on the ride itself but I know when this thing gets going I'm going to be flung this way and that way round and round and it is going to be fast and the only security you know the only guarantee that I had that I wouldn't die was in this chair holding me secure that was my only hope in getting me through safely and out the other side and I want to liken this experience to Christ in the sense that life is one heck of a roller coaster isn't it you know with circumstances way way beyond our control we do get flung this way and that way emotionally and physically at very uncomfortable speeds often we desperately need the hope you know that chair to hold us secure to endure the ride and like this specially designed chair  
Christ through his victory over sin is the one that holds us safe as we put our faith in him he is the only one we can trust totally you know because through the scriptures he has proved himself over and over again and the remarkable thing is that this hope not only will get us safely out the other side but will allow us to potentially even enjoy the ride as we go this is the perspective hope in Jesus gives us this is the resurrection hope perspective that we have this is the power of the Holy Spirit working within our lives giving us strength now beyond anything of our means and that is amazing isn't it once you know that you aren't going to fall out your hope is secure and there's a totally bizarre nonsensical feeling of peace and joy on that rollercoaster yeah you know you're going to feel like you're upside down 30 metres high above the ground at some points but despite this through the power of the Holy Spirit you can experience peace and joy and Paul speaks here of being given endurance and encouragement through reading about the faithfulness and the goodness and the love of God whatever this world throws at you put all of your trust in him and know that you are held secure by this hope that we have in Christ and then be released by the power of the Holy Spirit to cope with the twists and the turns in life you know every day as you approach that rollercoaster afresh look to Christ and hear the words of verse 13 can we get verse 13 up on the on the board quickly would that be ok amazing may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit so I just want to say to you this morning as I end if your rollercoaster is the circumstances surrounding you know politics or the current state of the world look to Christ and read this verse 13 again may the God of hope fill you with joy and peace as you trust him so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit and if your rollercoaster is circumstances surrounding maybe a family member or a situation at work or an illness to you or a loved one look to Christ and receive the prayer in verse 13 may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit if there's anyone here who feels hopeless hopeless and wants to know more about the hope that Jesus offers may I encourage you to come and have a chat with one of the team we'd be delighted to talk to you and pray with you and even if you're feeling like you already know Jesus but you're just hopeless at the moment for whatever reason please do be encouraged to speak with one of us the ministry team the prayer team we would love to pray with you to enable you to have that hope once more as you trust Jesus Amen