

January 3, 2021

## Experiencing the Love that Creates Shameless Hope

### *Romans 5:5*

#### Intro

➤ *Paragliding Santa*

- Hope is risky business.

#### ***Romans 5:1-5***

*Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

- Hope is not passive wishing. It is a “*stretching of the appetite toward good*” (Thomas Aquinas).

➤ *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy

## Hope Does Not Put Us to Shame

- Every hope in a false love has the potential to shame you.

➤ *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman

- Why *shame*? The expectation and longing you brought to these things seems to make a statement about you: *How could you be so foolish?*
- In times of testing, questions and fears arise in your soul.
  - *Am I real?*
  - *Is God even real?*

➤ The Giant Despair in *The Pilgrim's Progress*

*“Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame” (Psalm 25:3)*

## Because God's Love Has Been Poured into Our Hearts

- Do we have to wait for the *end* of the process of provenness before having hope? How do we survive the process with our faith intact?
- Paul describes an immediate knowing—an *experience*.

➤ *Properly basic beliefs*

“God’s love poured into your heart is not the same as God’s love proven to your mind. God’s love poured into your heart is a real heart-experience of being loved by God. God’s love proven to your mind is the conclusion of an argument, with or without the sweetness of feeling loved by God in the heart. I want you to know this sweetness. I want you to enjoy this gift: the outpouring of the love of God in your hearts.”

–John Piper, “How to Experience the Outpouring of God’s Love,” (May 1, 2016)

- “Outpouring” conveys an abundant diffusion—an overflowing, an extravagance. It’s the felt reality of a heart filled with an ocean of love.
- While talking about the filling of our hearts, Paul fills our minds with God’s love:

*“For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:6-8)*

➤ *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens

*“Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.” (Romans 5:9-10)*

➤ *An a fortiori* argument

- If God moved toward us with redemptive action and sacrificial love when we had nothing to offer, do you think he will do less toward us *now*?

“Christ died to confound our intuitive assumptions that divine love has an expiration date.”  
–Dane Ortlund, *Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers*, 167

## Through the Holy Spirit Given to Us

- The love of God is so vast and unending and infinite—that it takes a *Divine Person* to contain it.

*“...by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior” (Titus 3:5-6)*

*“The Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God” (1 Cor. 2:10)*

- The Father’s love for the Son personified:

*“For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. 35 The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand.”  
(John 3:34-35)*

- It’s the Holy Spirit that enables the experience of God’s love. This is supernatural, not self-generated.
- The Spirit has been “given” to us once and for all. But we must experience the “outpouring” of God’s love ten thousand times thereafter:

“The Spirit loves nothing more than to awaken and calm and soothe us with the heart knowledge of what we have been graced with. The Spirit’s role, in summary, is to turn our postcard apprehensions of Christ’s great heart of longing affection for us into an experience of sitting on the beach, in a lawn chair, drink in hand, enjoying the actual experience. The Spirit does this decisively, once and for all, at regeneration. But he does it ten thousand times thereafter, as we continue through sin, folly, or boredom to drift from the felt experience of his heart.”

–**Dane Ortlund**, *Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers*, 109

➤ *Plugging into the phone charger*

*“May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.”  
(2 Thess. 3:5)*