



# A Message of Hope

December 5 - 11, 2021

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## **MAIN POINT**

Jesus Christ is the reason for the season and our only hope in the world.

## **INTRODUCTION**

What is the worst Christmas season you've ever had? What made it so bad?

What is something you hope will happen this Christmas season (i.e. your family gets along, you give gifts people love, the dog doesn't knock over the tree, etc.)

What does it look like to have hope even when the circumstances of life look hopeless?

You've probably heard the old axiom, "Jesus is the reason for the season." But knowing that Jesus is the reason we gather with family and give each other gifts is different than believing that Jesus is the reason we have hope in every circumstance. Advent is a reminder for us that our hope should be found in one place alone—Jesus Christ, whose birth we celebrate at Christmas and whose return we anxiously hope for.

## **UNDERSTANDING**

**READ [ROMANS 15:12](#).**

What would you say is the central claim Paul made from Old Testament evidence in verses 9-12?

What comfort should this bring to someone who feels they are outside of the reach of God's plan?

Romans was written to explain the gospel—how all, Jew and Gentile alike, are separated from God by their sin but can be reunited to God in Jesus Christ. If the Jews had been paying attention to God's Word, this should not have surprised them. From the beginning of time, God's plan has always included the Gentiles. His blessings to the Jews were not meant to stay there—they were to be extended to the Gentiles. Quoting well-known spiritual leaders from God's people (vv 9-12), Paul hoped to prove through the testimony of Scripture that God has a heart for all people and has extended His purpose to the Gentiles. For us, this is a clear signal that God welcomes all people. Regardless of race, gender, age, ethnicity, or any other identifying factor, God accepts all people who repent of their sins and trust in the gospel.

Practically speaking, what does it mean to hope in Jesus?

If hope is found in Jesus, then why do most people continue to place their hope in other things?

**Respond to the following statement:** To become truly hopeful, you must first acknowledge your hopelessness.

At the core of believing the gospel is an acknowledgement of our own hopelessness. We acknowledge that we have no power to save our selves and are in desperate need of salvation through Jesus alone. In this acknowledgement, we find real hope in Him.

### **READ [ROMANS 15:13](#).**

You might read this verse on a Christmas card this year. Was Paul simply wishing some friends well, or did he have bigger purpose in mind by writing these words? In your own words, what does this verse mean?

From this verse, how is it possible for you to be filled with all joy and peace?

How can hope be both a cause and an effect? How have you experienced this in your own life?

What does it mean to “overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit”?

What difference does a truth like this make as we are sharing the gospel with people in our community?

We can live with hope because we belong to the God of hope who sent Jesus, the reason for hope. We can find true and lasting joy and peace through the life of Jesus Christ, which is made effective in our lives through His Spirit. The Spirit breaks down boundaries and unites us in a new family whose membership is founded only in Jesus’ blood.

### **APPLICATION**

Share of a difficult time when Jesus gave you hope. How can this provide optimism for the future?

What would it look like for you to walk in the hope of Christ this week? How can this group pray for you in that?

Is this group a place where anybody can be grafted in and experience the hope of Jesus? How can we continually cultivate that type of atmosphere?

### **PRAYER**

Praise Jesus for being the reason for the season and your ever-present hope in this world. Ask Him to help you walk in that hope so that you might help others put their hope in Him, too.

### **COMMENTARY**

#### **ROMANS 15:12-13**

Paul cites [Isaiah 11:10](#), illustrating that it was always God’s intent for the Gentiles to be brought into the fold of God’s love and mercy. This became possible when Christ came as the Jewish Messiah (came as a servant of the Jews) and died for the sins not only of Israel but of the whole world ([1 John 2:2](#)). Thus Christ’s servanthood provided the means whereby both Jews and Gentiles were unified in one body— Paul’s goal for the church in Rome:

The Gentiles were not an afterthought in God’s plan, but were destined to inherit salvation through the instrumentality of Israel and her Messiah (see other references to the Gentiles in [Psalms 47:1](#); [67:3-5](#); [96:7](#); [98:4](#); [100:1](#)). In light of God’s plan from the beginning to bring Jews

and Gentiles together to share in his blessings ([Genesis 12:3](#)), disunity and contention among believers in a given assembly is unacceptable. By not living together in unity, they become an affront to God's purpose and plan for sending his Son as the Jewish Messiah.

Paul's final benediction to them is a gentle one. What he is asking them to do is not easy—certainly not something to be accomplished in the power of human ability. Joy and peace are supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit ([Galatians 5:22](#)), and any hope they have of learning to love those of a different racial and ethnic background than themselves can only come through him. Hope for the present—"Can I truly accept my brother or sister in Christ?"—and hope for the future—"Are my efforts going to be consummated in God's final deliverance from all of life's stresses and troubles?"—will only overflow in the believer as the believer overflows with the Spirit.