

Based on Romans 5:1-11

*Third Sunday in Lent*

*Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.*

*For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person-- though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*

Hope is God's greatest gift to humanity. Because to have hope is to have the power to imagine a tomorrow that's different and better than today. And we must be able to imagine a better world, a better way of life, than the one we have now, before we can begin to change it. Hope is the character that allows us to even contemplate repentance.

And in the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection the power of hope is made manifest. Through his miracles and teachings, through his fidelity to God's way and his faith unto death, and finally through the example of his resurrection and our invitation to participate in that resurrection ourselves, we say the power of God, which is fundamentally the power of hope.